

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS BASED ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE SWOON THEORY BASED ON JOHN

OBJECTIONS	LOCATION	BASIS
Objection #2: Break their Legs	HCA, p.183	Gospel of John
Objection #3: Blood and Water	HCA, p.183	Gospel of John
Objection #4: Winding Sheets & Entombment	HCA, p.183	Gospel of John
Objection #5: Sickly Jesus	HCA, p.183	Gospel of John

OBJECTION #2: BREAK THEIR LEGS

Here is Kreeft and Tacelli's second argument against the *Swoon Theory*:

The fact that the Roman soldier did not break Jesus' legs, as he did to the other two crucified criminals (Jn 19:31-33), means that the soldier was sure Jesus was dead. Breaking the legs hastened the death so that the corpse could be taken down before the sabbath (v. 31).
(HCA, p. 183)

IDENTIFICATION STEPS

The fact that – a *premise indicator phrase*

1. [the Roman **soldier** did not break Jesus' legs], - a *historical claim*

2. [as he did to the other two crucified criminals] – another *historical claim*

(Jn 19:31-33) - notation similar to a footnote, giving a reference to a biblical passage as evidence for a claim or claims

3. [According to the *Gospel of John* (Jn 19:31-33), claim (1) is true.] – evidence given to support claim (1)

4. [According to the *Gospel of John* (Jn 19:31-33), claim (2) is true.] –

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evidence given to support claim (2)

means that - an *inference indicator* showing that claim (5) is inferred from claims (1) and (2)

5. [the soldier was sure Jesus was dead.] - a conclusion supported by claims (1) and (2)

6. [Breaking the legs hastened the death so that the corpse could be taken down before the sabbath] - an additional historical claim that *works together with* (1) and (2) to support (5)

(v. 31). - a verse reference from the *Gospel of John* given as evidence in support of claim (6)

7. [According to the *Gospel of John* (Jn 19:31), claim (6) is true.]

CLARIFICATION STEPS

1. [the Roman soldier did not break Jesus' legs],

1a. The Roman soldiers did NOT break Jesus' legs while Jesus was still on the cross.

2. [as he did to the other two crucified criminals]

2a. The Roman soldiers DID break the legs of the other two crucified criminals while they were still on the cross.

3. [According to the *Gospel of John* (19:31-33), claim (1) is true.]

3a. According to the *Gospel of John* (19:31-33), the Roman soldiers did NOT break Jesus' legs while Jesus was still on the cross.

4. [According to the *Gospel of John* (19:31-33), claim (2) is true.]

4a. According to the *Gospel of John* (19:31-33), the Roman soldiers DID break the legs of the two other crucified criminals while they were still on the cross.

means that => THEREFORE:

5. [the soldier was sure Jesus was dead.]

5a. The Roman soldiers were sure Jesus was dead while Jesus was still on the cross.

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6. [Breaking the legs hastened the death so that the corpse could be taken down before the sabbath]

6a. Breaking the legs **of a crucified person** hastened the death so that the corpse could be taken down **from the cross** before the sabbath.

7. [According to the *Gospel of John* (Jn 19:31), claim (6) is true.]

7a. According to the *Gospel of John* (19:31), breaking the legs **of a crucified person** hastened death so that the corpse could be taken down **from the cross** before the sabbath.

FILL IN STEPS

The ultimate conclusion of the argument is left unstated by Kreeft and Tacelli:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

There are three historical claims that are each based on a passage from the *Gospel of John*. Each of those inferences involves an unstated assumption/premise:

B. The *Gospel of John* provides an historically reliable and accurate account of the life of Jesus, including his crucifixion.

The reasoning that gets us from premise (5a) to the ultimate conclusion (A) is left unstated, but it seems fairly clear that Kreeft and Tacelli had in mind the following chain of reasoning:

5a. The Roman soldiers were sure Jesus was dead while Jesus was still on the cross.

C. IF the Roman soldiers were sure Jesus was dead while Jesus was still on the cross, THEN Jesus died while Jesus was still on the cross.

D. IF Jesus died while Jesus was still on the cross, THEN the *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

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If we add premise (E) to the historical premise (1a), we can infer the key historical premise by a *modus ponens* inference:

E. IF the Roman soldiers did NOT break Jesus' legs while Jesus was still on the cross, THEN the Roman soldiers were sure Jesus was dead while Jesus was still on the cross.

1a. The Roman soldiers did NOT break Jesus' legs while Jesus was still on the cross.

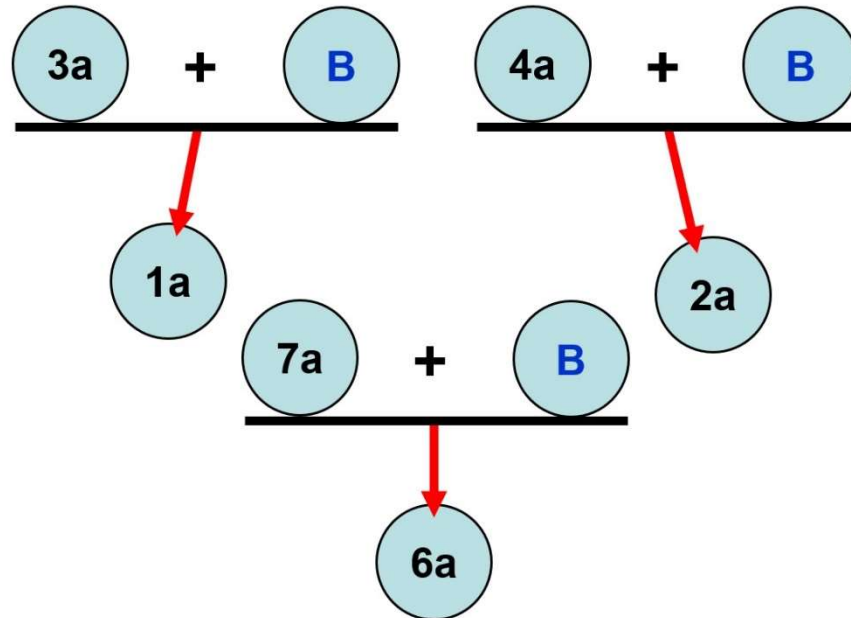
THEREFORE:

5a. The Roman soldiers were sure Jesus was dead while Jesus was still on the cross.

DIAGRAMMING THE ARGUMENT

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

Logical Structure of the Sub-Arguments for Historical Claims



1a. The Roman **soldiers** did NOT break Jesus' legs **while Jesus was still on the cross**.

2a. **The Roman soldiers DID break the legs of the other two crucified criminals while they were still on the cross.**

3a. According to the *Gospel of John* (19:31-33), the Roman soldiers did NOT break Jesus' legs **while Jesus was still on the cross**.

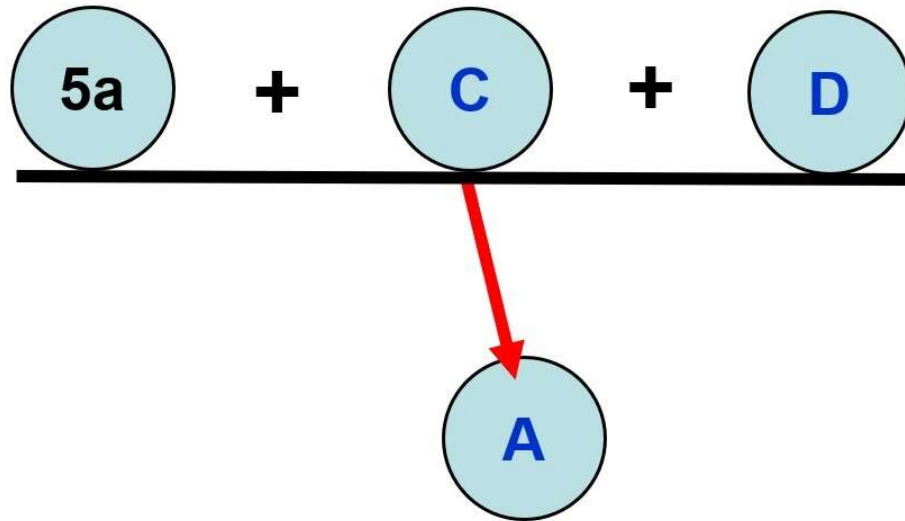
4a. According to the *Gospel of John* (19:31-33), **the Roman soldiers DID break the legs of the two other crucified criminals while they were still on the cross.**

6a. Breaking the legs **of a crucified person** hastened the death so that the corpse could be taken down **from the cross** before the sabbath.

7a. According to the *Gospel of John* (19:31), breaking the legs **of a crucified person** hastened death so that the corpse could be taken down **from the cross** before the sabbath.

B. The *Gospel of John* provides an historically reliable and accurate account of the life of Jesus, including his crucifixion.

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for the Ultimate Conclusion



5a. The Roman soldiers were sure Jesus was dead while Jesus was still on the cross.

C. IF the Roman soldiers were sure Jesus was dead while Jesus was still on the cross, THEN Jesus died while Jesus was still on the cross.

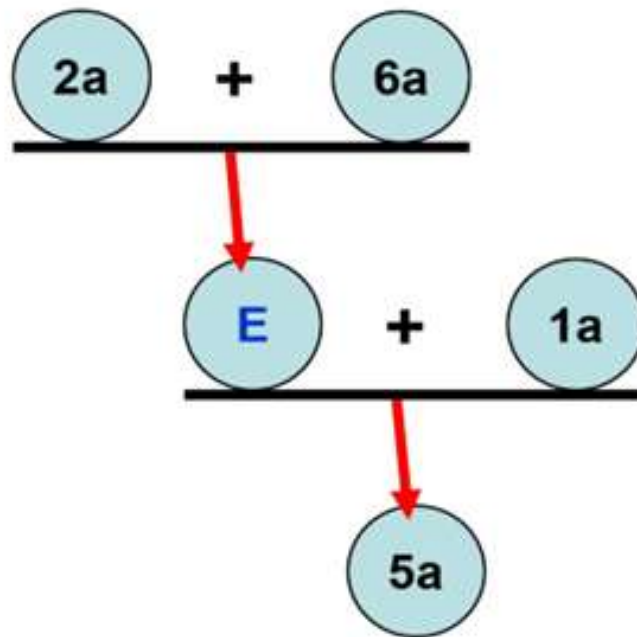
D. IF Jesus died while Jesus was still on the cross, THEN the *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

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Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for the Key Premise (5a)



2a. The Roman soldiers DID break the legs of the other two crucified criminals while they were still on the cross.

6a. Breaking the legs of a crucified person hastened the death so that the corpse could be taken down from the cross before the sabbath.

THEREFORE:

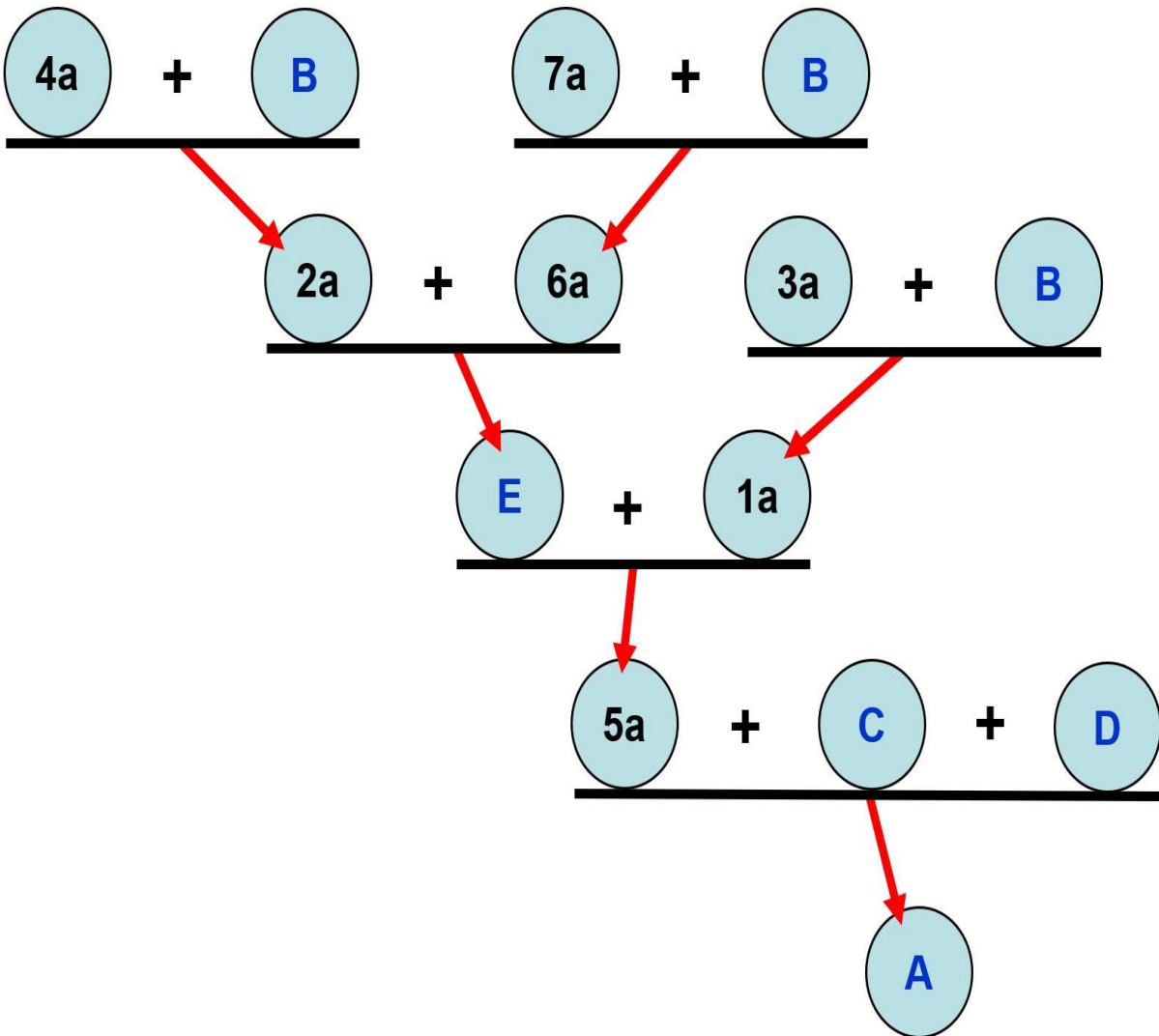
E. IF the Roman soldiers did NOT break Jesus' legs while Jesus was still on the cross, THEN the Roman soldiers were sure Jesus was dead while Jesus was still on the cross.

1a. The Roman soldiers did NOT break Jesus' legs while Jesus was still on the cross.

THEREFORE:

5a. The Roman soldiers were sure Jesus was dead while Jesus was still on the cross.

Logical Structure of Objection #2



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OBJECTION #3: BLOOD AND WATER

Here is the third objection by Kreeft and Tacelli against the Swoon Theory:

John, an eyewitness, certified that he saw blood and water come from Jesus' pierced heart (Jn 19:34-35). This shows that Jesus' lungs had collapsed and he had died of asphyxiation. Any medical expert can vouch for this. (HCA, p.183)

IDENTIFICATION STEPS

1. **[John, an eyewitness],** - an historical claim.

2. **[John...certified that he saw blood and water come from Jesus' pierced heart]** - an historical medical claim.

(Jn 19:34-35). - a passage from the Gospel of John *given as evidence* in support of the above two historical claims.

3. **[According to the *Gospel of John* (19:34-35), claim (1) is true.]** – evidence given to support claim (1)

4. **[According to the *Gospel of John* (19:34-35), claim (2) is true.]** – evidence given to support claim (2)

This shows that - this is an **inference indicator** phrase indicating that claims (1) and (2) are premises in support of claim (5) and claim (6).

5. **[Jesus' lungs had collapsed]** - an historical/medical claim.
and - a logical connective word (might be unnecessary because we can treat the conjuncts as separate claims).

6. **[he had died of asphyxiation.]** - an historical/medical claim.

7. **[Any medical expert can vouch for this.]** – a medical claim in support of inferences to claims (5) and (6).

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CLARIFICATION STEPS

1. [John, an eyewitness,]

1a. John the son of Zebedee (one of Jesus' twelve disciples) was an eyewitness to the crucifixion of Jesus.

2. [John...certified that he saw blood and water come from Jesus' pierced heart] – the Gospel passage says Jesus' "side" was pierced

2a. John the son of Zebedee (one of Jesus' twelve disciples) certified that he saw blood and water come from Jesus' pierced side immediately after one of the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross.

3. [According to the *Gospel of John* (19:34-35), claim (1) is true.]

3a. According to the *Gospel of John* (19:34-35), John the son of Zebedee (one of Jesus' twelve disciples) was an eyewitness to the crucifixion of Jesus.

4. [According to the *Gospel of John* (19:34-35), claim (2) is true.]

4a. According to the *Gospel of John* (19:34-35), John the son of Zebedee (one of Jesus' twelve disciples) certified that he saw blood and water come from Jesus' pierced side immediately after one of the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross.

5. [Jesus' lungs had collapsed]

5a. Jesus' lungs had collapsed before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

6. [he had died of asphyxiation.]

6a. Jesus had died of asphyxiation before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

7. [Any medical expert can vouch for this.]

7a. Any medical expert can vouch for the claim that: IF a Roman soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross, and blood and water immediately came from the spear wound in Jesus' side, THEN Jesus' lungs had collapsed and Jesus had died before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

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FILL IN STEPS

The ultimate conclusion of the argument is left unstated by Kreeft and Tacelli:

A. *The Swoon Theory is FALSE.*

There are two historical claims that are each based on a passage from the *Gospel of John*. Each of the inferences from the passage in the *Gospel of John* involves an unstated assumption/premise:

B. *The Gospel of John provides an historically reliable and accurate account of the life of Jesus, including his crucifixion.*

The first couple of historical claims are a sub-argument for an unstated claim/premise:

1a. *John the son of Zebedee (one of Jesus' twelve disciples) was an eyewitness to the crucifixion of Jesus.*

2a. *John the son of Zebedee (one of Jesus' twelve disciples) certified that he saw blood and water come from Jesus' pierced side immediately after one of the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross.*

THEREFORE:

C. *Blood and water came from Jesus' pierced side immediately after one of the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross.*

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Claim (7a) appears to be a reason for a key unstated claim/premise:

7a. Any medical expert can vouch for the claim that: IF a Roman soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross, and blood and water immediately came from the spear wound in Jesus' side, THEN Jesus' lungs had collapsed and Jesus had died before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

THEREFORE:

D. IF a Roman soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross, and blood and water immediately came from the spear wound in Jesus' side, THEN Jesus' lungs had collapsed and Jesus had died before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

Claim (D) can be combined with claim (C) to provide a sub-argument for claims (5a) and (6a):

D. IF a Roman soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross, and blood and water immediately came from the spear wound in Jesus' side, THEN Jesus' lungs had collapsed and Jesus had died before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

C. Blood and water came from Jesus' pierced side immediately after one of the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross.

THEREFORE:

5a. Jesus' lungs had collapsed before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

AND

6a. Jesus had died of asphyxiation before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

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From claims (5a) and (6a) we can quickly reason our way to the ultimate conclusion:

5a. Jesus' lungs had collapsed before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

6a. Jesus had died of asphyxiation before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

E. IF Jesus' lungs had collapsed while Jesus was still on the cross and Jesus had died of asphyxiation while Jesus was still on the cross, then Jesus died while he was still on the cross.

THEREFORE:

F. Jesus died while he was still on the cross.

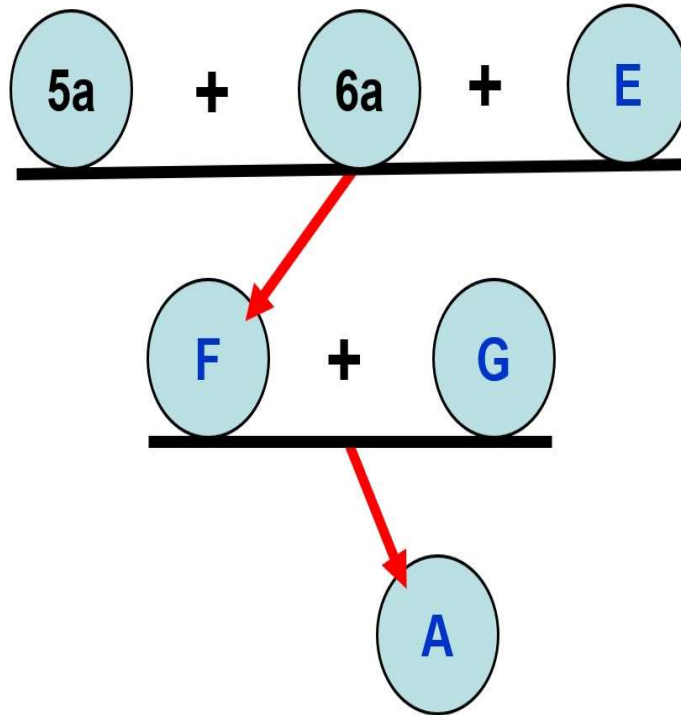
G. IF Jesus died while he was still on the cross, THEN the *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

DIAGRAMMING THE ARGUMENT

Core Argument for Conclusion (A)



5a. Jesus' lungs had collapsed before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

6a. Jesus had died of asphyxiation before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

E. IF Jesus' lungs had collapsed while Jesus was still on the cross and Jesus had died of asphyxiation while Jesus was still on the cross, then Jesus died while he was still on the cross.

THEREFORE:

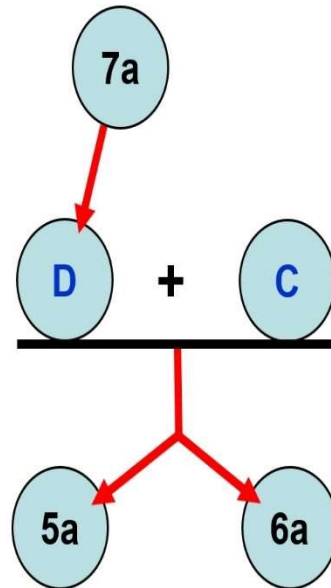
F. Jesus died while he was still on the cross.

G. IF Jesus died while he was still on the cross, THEN the *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

Argument for Premises (5a) & (6a)



7a. Any medical expert can vouch for the claim that: IF a Roman soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross, and blood and water immediately came from the spear wound in Jesus' side, THEN Jesus' lungs had collapsed and Jesus had died before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

THEREFORE:

D. IF a Roman soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross, and blood and water immediately came from the spear wound in Jesus' side, THEN Jesus' lungs had collapsed and Jesus had died before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

C. Blood and water came from Jesus' pierced side immediately after one of the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross.

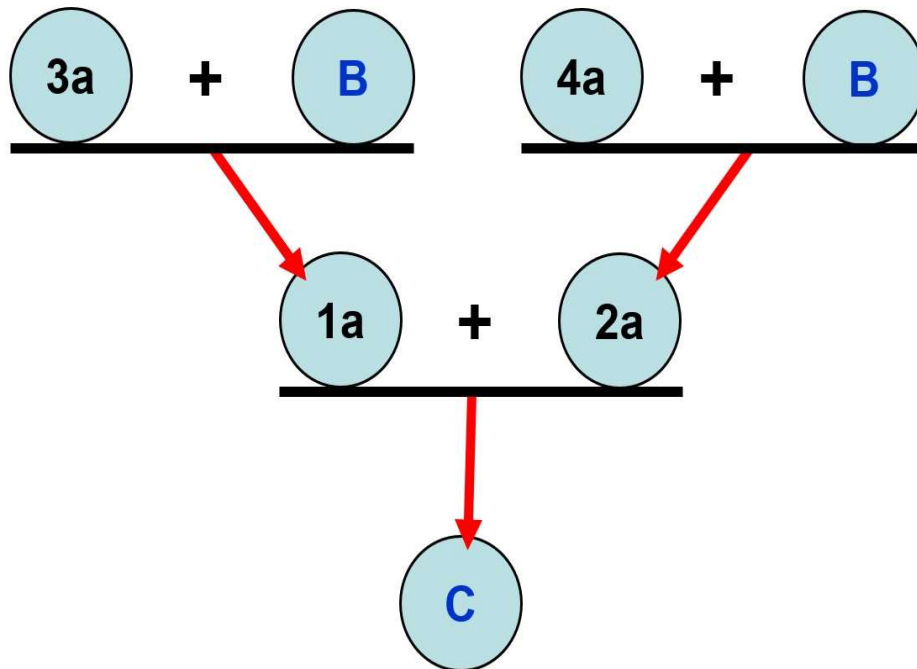
THEREFORE:

5a. Jesus' lungs had collapsed before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

AND

6a. Jesus had died of asphyxiation before his side was pierced with a spear, while Jesus was still on the cross.

Argument for Premise (C)



3a. According to the *Gospel of John* (19:34-35), John the son of Zebedee (one of Jesus' twelve disciples) was an eyewitness to the crucifixion of Jesus.

B. The *Gospel of John* provides an historically reliable and accurate account of the life of Jesus, including his crucifixion.

THEREFORE:

1a. John the son of Zebedee (one of Jesus' twelve disciples) was an eyewitness to the crucifixion of Jesus.

2a. John the son of Zebedee (one of Jesus' twelve disciples) certified that he saw blood and water come from Jesus' pierced side immediately after one of the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross.

THEREFORE:

C. Blood and water came from Jesus' pierced side immediately after one of the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross.

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Sub-Argument for Premise (2a):

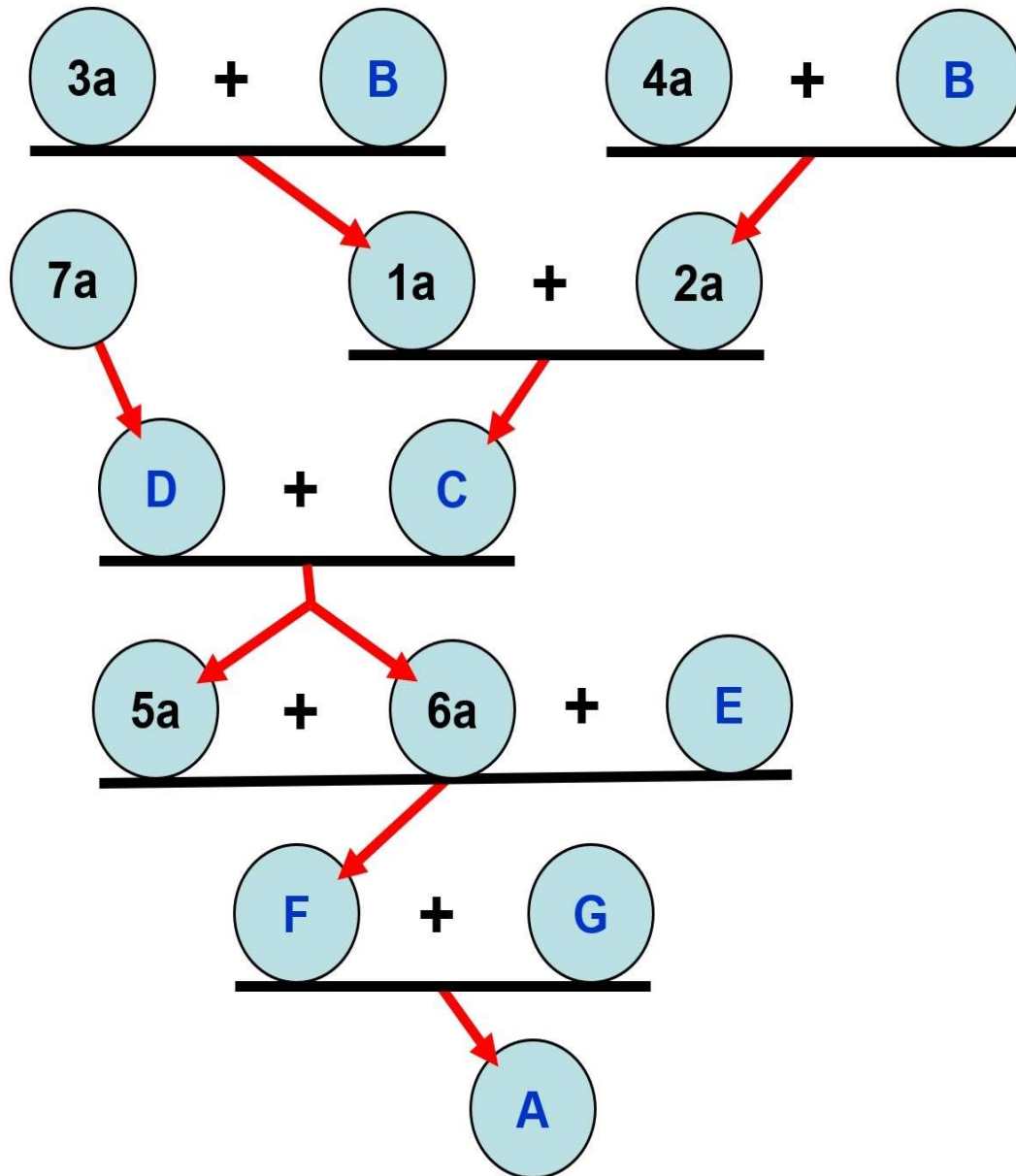
4a. According to the *Gospel of John* (19:34-35), John the son of Zebedee (one of Jesus' twelve disciples) certified that he saw blood and water come from Jesus' pierced side immediately after one of the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross.

B. The *Gospel of John* provides an historically reliable and accurate account of the life of Jesus, including his crucifixion.

THEREFORE:

2a. John the son of Zebedee (one of Jesus' twelve disciples) certified that he saw blood and water come from Jesus' pierced side immediately after one of the Roman soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear while Jesus was still on the cross.

Logical Structure of Objection #3



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OBJECTION #4: WINDING SHEETS & ENTOMBMENT

Here is Kreeft's fourth argument against the *Swoon Theory*:

The body was totally encased in winding sheets and entombed
(Jn 19:38-42). (HCA, p. 183)

IDENTIFICATION STEPS

1. [The body was totally encased in winding sheets]
2. [and entombed]

(Jn 19:38-42). – a reference to a passage from the Gospel of John given as evidence for the previous two historical claims.

3. [According to the Gospel of John (Jn 19:38-42), claim (1) is true.]
4. [According to the Gospel of John (Jn 19:38-42), claim (2) is true.]

CLARIFICATION STEPS

1. [The body was totally encased in winding sheets]
 - 1a. On Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was totally encased in winding sheets.
2. [and entombed]
 - 2a. On Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was placed into a stone tomb.
3. [According to the Gospel of John (Jn 19:38-42), claim (1) is true.]
 - 3a. According to the Gospel of John (Jn 19:38-42), on Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was totally encased in winding sheets.
4. [According to the Gospel of John (Jn 19:38-42), claim (2) is true.]
 - 4a. According to the Gospel of John (Jn 19:38-42), on Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was placed into a stone tomb.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

FILL IN STEPS

As usual, Kreeft and Tacelli fail to state the conclusion of their argument:

A. The Swoon Theory is false.

The use of a passage from the *Gospel of John* as evidence for historical claims requires the following unstated premise:

B. The Gospel of John provides a reliable and accurate account of the life of Jesus, including what happened to Jesus' body after he was crucified.

Because Kreeft and Tacelli state **Objection #4** in a single sentence, the core argument as stated clearly FAILS:

1a. On Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was totally encased in winding sheets.

2a. On Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was placed into a stone tomb.

THEREFORE:

A. The Swoon Theory is false.

Not only is this argument NOT a *valid deductive argument*, the conclusion does NOT follow from the premises even in the weaker sense of providing a *good reason to believe* the conclusion. There is a huge logical gap between the premises and the conclusion of this argument, so this is a *non sequitur*. The inference is a bad inference.

Furthermore, Kreeft and Tacelli don't even provide us with a hint at how or why these premises could be *relevant to the conclusion* of their argument. However, Kreeft and Tacelli borrow most of their arguments from other Christian apologists, such as Josh McDowell. So, we could look at how other

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apologists present this objection, to see if they indicate how to fill the significant logical gap in the argument as presented by Kreeft and Tacelli.

It turns out that McDowell does fill in the logical gap in the argument as presented by Kreeft and Tacelli:

...100-plus pounds of spices and a gummy substance were encased around His body—He must have breathed through it all...He was put into a cold, damp tomb...

Then an incredible thing happened, according to this [Swoon] theory. The cool air of the tomb, instead of killing Him, healed Him....
(*The Resurrection Factor*, p.98)

McDowell thinks that the *Swoon Theory* is “incredible” because he thinks that even if Jesus had survived crucifixion, that 100-plus pounds of spices and a gummy substance in the linen wrapping around the body of Jesus would have *suffocated Jesus*, and that the cold, damp air in the tomb would also have caused the badly wounded Jesus to die quickly.

Here, then, is the *unstated assumption* that Kreeft and Tacelli were probably making, but failed to state explicitly:

C. IF On Friday evening, after Jesus’ body was removed from the cross, Jesus’ body was totally encased in winding sheets (that included 100-plus pounds of spices and a gummy substance) and Jesus’ body was placed into a stone tomb, THEN even if Jesus had survived his crucifixion Jesus would have either quickly suffocated in his tomb or quickly died in his tomb as a result of the cold damp air in his tomb when Jesus’ body was placed into his tomb on Friday evening.

To make use of this unstated premise, claim (1a) will need to be modified slightly (to include a reference to the spices and gummy substance):

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1b. On Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was totally encased in winding sheets (that included 100-plus pounds of spices and a gummy substance).

2a. On Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was placed into a stone tomb.

C. IF On Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, Jesus' body was totally encased in winding sheets (that included 100-plus pounds of spices and a gummy substance) and Jesus' body was placed into a stone tomb, THEN even if Jesus had survived his crucifixion Jesus would have either quickly suffocated in his tomb or quickly died in his tomb as a result of the cold damp air in his tomb when Jesus' body was placed into his tomb on Friday evening.

THEREFORE:

D. IF Jesus had survived his crucifixion, THEN Jesus would have either quickly suffocated in his tomb or quickly died in his tomb as a result of the cold damp air in his tomb when Jesus' body was placed into his tomb on Friday evening.

THEREFORE:

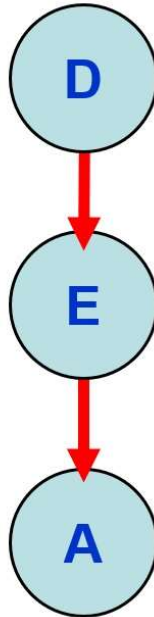
E. IF Jesus had survived his crucifixion, THEN Jesus would have quickly died in his tomb.

THEREFORE:

A. The Swoon Theory is false.

ARGUMENT DIAGRAMMING

Logical Structure of Core Argument for Objection #4



D. IF Jesus had survived his crucifixion, THEN Jesus would have either quickly suffocated in his tomb or quickly died in his tomb as a result of the cold damp air in his tomb when Jesus' body was placed into his tomb on Friday evening.

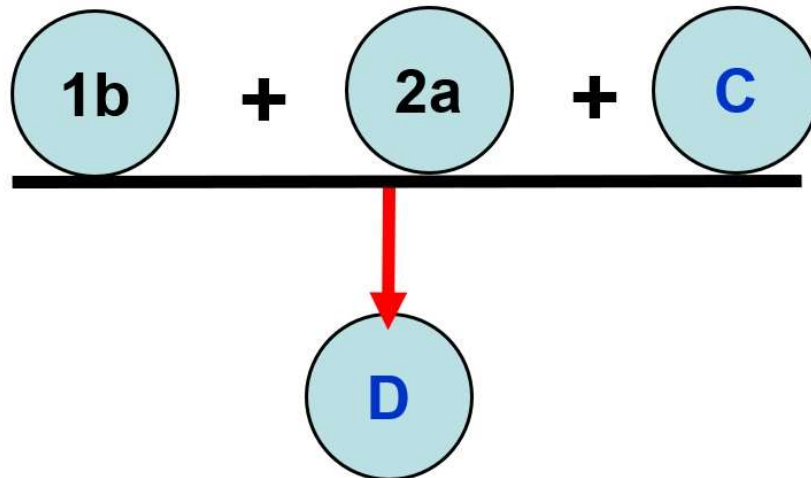
THEREFORE:

E. IF Jesus had survived his crucifixion, THEN Jesus would have quickly died in his tomb.

THEREFORE:

A. The Swoon Theory is false.

Logical Structure of Sub-Argument for (D)



1b. On Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was totally encased in winding sheets (that included 100-plus pounds of spices and a gummy substance).

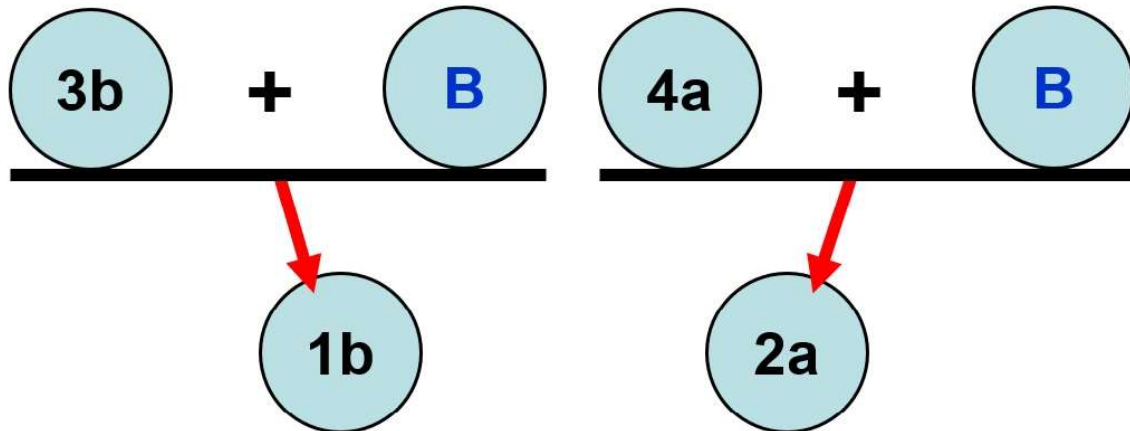
2a. On Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was placed into a stone tomb.

C. IF On Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, Jesus' body was totally encased in winding sheets (that included 100-plus pounds of spices and a gummy substance) and Jesus' body was placed into a stone tomb, THEN even if Jesus had survived his crucifixion Jesus would have either quickly suffocated in his tomb or quickly died in his tomb as a result of the cold damp air in his tomb when Jesus' body was placed into his tomb on Friday evening.

THEREFORE:

D. IF Jesus had survived his crucifixion, THEN Jesus would have either quickly suffocated in his tomb or quickly died in his tomb as a result of the cold damp air in his tomb when Jesus' body was placed into his tomb on Friday evening.

Sub-Arguments for (1b) and (2a)



3b. According to the Gospel of John (Jn 19:38-42), on Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was totally encased in winding sheets (that included 100-plus pounds of spices and a gummy substance).

B. The Gospel of John provides a reliable and accurate account of the life of Jesus, including what happened to Jesus' body after he was crucified.

THEREFORE:

1b. On Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was totally encased in winding sheets (that included 100-plus pounds of spices and a gummy substance).

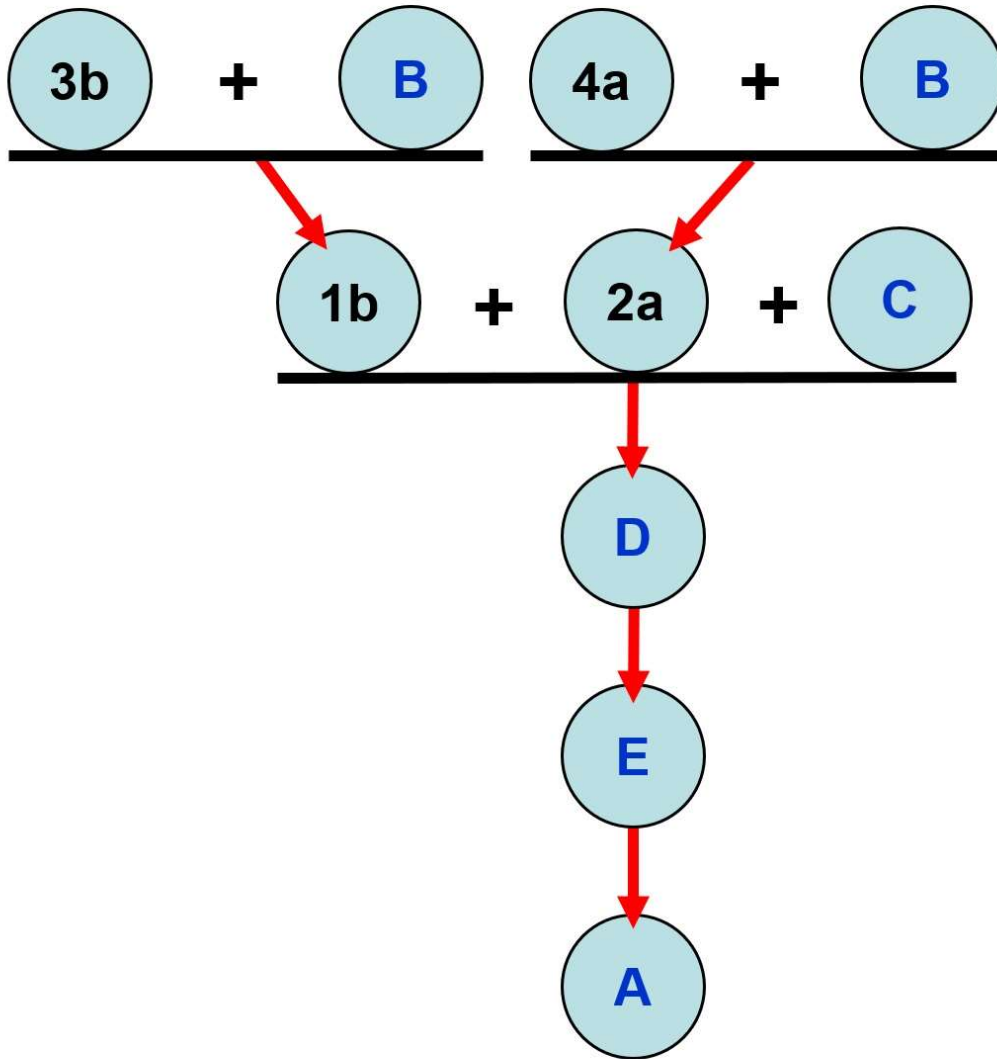
4a. According to the Gospel of John (Jn 19:38-42), on Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was placed into a stone tomb.

B. The Gospel of John provides a reliable and accurate account of the life of Jesus, including what happened to Jesus' body after he was crucified.

THEREFORE:

2a. On Friday evening, after Jesus' body was removed from the cross, it was placed into a stone tomb.

Logical Structure of Objection #4



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OBJECTION #5: THE SICKLY JESUS OBJECTION

Here is **Objection #5** by Kreeft and Tacelli against the *Swoon Theory*:

The post-resurrection appearances convinced the disciples, even “doubting Thomas,” that Jesus was gloriously alive (Jn 20:19-29). It is psychologically impossible for the disciples to have been so transformed and confident if Jesus had merely struggled out of a swoon, badly in need of a doctor. A half-dead, staggering sick man who has just had a narrow escape is not worshiped fearlessly as divine lord and conqueror of death.
(HCA, p. 183)

Kreeft and Tacelli say more about *the alleged transformation* of Jesus' disciples when they discuss the *Conspiracy Theory*:

...Their [Jesus' disciples'] sincerity is proved by their words *and* deeds. They preached a resurrected Christ and they lived a resurrected Christ. They willingly died for their "conspiracy." Nothing proves sincerity like martyrdom.

The change in their lives from fear to faith, despair to confidence, confusion to certitude, runaway cowardice to steadfast boldness under threat and persecution, not only proves their sincerity but testifies to some powerful cause of it. Can a lie cause such a transformation?
(HCA, p. 185)

They [Jesus' disciples] were hated, scorned, persecuted, excommunicated, imprisoned, tortured, exiled, crucified, boiled alive, roasted, beheaded, disemboweled and fed to lions...
(HCA, p. 186)

...the remarkable turnaround of the apostles from confused cowards to world-changing martyrs...
(HCA, p.197)

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

IDENTIFICATION STEPS

1. [The post-resurrection appearances convinced the disciples...that Jesus was gloriously alive]

2. [The post-resurrection appearances convinced even “doubting Thomas,” that Jesus was gloriously alive]

(Jn 20:19-29). – reference to a biblical passage as evidence for the previous historical claims

3. [According to the *Gospel of John* (Jn 20:19-29), claim (1) is true.]

4. [According to the *Gospel of John* (Jn 20:19-29), claim (2) is true.]

5. [It is psychologically impossible for the disciples to have been so transformed and confident if Jesus had merely struggled out of a swoon, badly in need of a doctor.]

6. [A half-dead, staggering sick man who has just had a narrow escape is not worshiped fearlessly as divine lord and conqueror of death.]

CLARIFICATION STEPS

1. [The **post-resurrection appearances** convinced **the disciples**...that Jesus **was gloriously alive**]

1a. **On the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus, and this convinced those ten disciples that God had raised Jesus from the dead and given Jesus an immortal body.** – I added specification of the timing (“On the weekend after Jesus had been crucified”) based on the comment in claim (6) that Jesus “just had a narrow escape” and based on the content of the passage from the Gospel of John referenced by Kreeft and Tacelli. The specification of the timing of appearances of the “risen” Jesus to his disciples is critical to this argument.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

2. [The **post-resurrection appearances convinced even “doubting Thomas,” that Jesus **was gloriously alive**]**

2a. On the second weekend after Jesus had been crucified, Jesus' disciple Thomas had an experience that Thomas believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus, and this convinced Thomas that *God had raised Jesus from the dead and given Jesus an immortal body.*

3. [According to the *Gospel of John* (Jn 20:19-29), **claim (1) is true.]**

3a. According to the *Gospel of John* (Jn 20:19-29), on the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experience of *seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus*, and this convinced those ten disciples that *God had raised Jesus from the dead and given Jesus an immortal body.*

4. [According to the *Gospel of John* (Jn 20:19-29), **claim (2) is true.]**

4a. According to the *Gospel of John* (Jn 20:19-29), on the second weekend after Jesus had been crucified, Jesus' disciple Thomas had an experience that Thomas believed was *an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus*, and this convinced Thomas that *God had raised Jesus from the dead and given Jesus an immortal body.*

5. [It is psychologically impossible for **the disciples to have been **so transformed and confident** if Jesus had merely struggled out of a swoon, badly in need of a doctor.]**

5a. IF sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor, THEN it would have been psychologically impossible for the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus to have been transformed (sometime after Jesus had been crucified) from *fearful doubting cowards* into *fearless and confident believers* in Jesus as divine lord and as the resurrected conqueror of death. – The phrase “had merely struggled out of a swoon” has no clear implications in terms of what this would look like, so I have eliminated that phrase. The phrase “badly in need of a doctor” is a description that is

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

similar to the phrase “A half-dead, staggering sick man” in the next sentence. Both phrases imply that Jesus would have appeared to be in bad condition. I have combined these two phrases in order to *regularize the wording* between claim (5) and claim (6), to make the *logical connection* between these claims more obvious.

6. [A half-dead, staggering sick man who has just had a narrow escape is not worshiped fearlessly as divine lord and conqueror of death.]

6a. IF sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor, THEN the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus would NOT have been transformed (sometime after Jesus had been crucified) from *fearful doubting cowards* into *fearless and confident believers* in Jesus as divine lord and as the resurrected conqueror of death.

FILL-IN STEPS

Kreeft and Tacelli again fail to state the conclusion of their argument:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

The use of passages from the *Gospel of John* to support historical claims (1) and (2), assumes the *historical reliability* of that Gospel:

B. The *Gospel of John* provides a reliable and accurate account of the life of Jesus, including alleged experiences of the risen Jesus had by the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus after Jesus' crucifixion.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

Premise (5a) is clearly providing support for premise (6a):

5a. IF sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor, THEN it would have been psychologically impossible for the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus to have been transformed (sometime after Jesus had been crucified) from *fearful doubting cowards* into *brave and confident believers* in Jesus as divine lord and as the resurrected conqueror of death.

THEREFORE:

6a. IF sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor, THEN the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus would NOT have been transformed (sometime after Jesus had been crucified) from *fearful doubting cowards* into *fearless and confident believers* in Jesus as divine lord and as the resurrected conqueror of death.

The problem is that the sub-conclusion (6a) says NOTHING about the *Swoon Theory*, but the intended conclusion (A) is about the *Swoon Theory*. So, we need to figure out the missing premises and inferences that Kreeft and Tacelli had in mind but failed to state explicitly.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

There is *an obvious inference* that can be made from claim (6a), and we should go ahead and make that inference, because it might well help us to see the unstated reasoning that leads to conclusion (A):

6a. IF sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor, THEN the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus would NOT have been transformed (sometime after Jesus had been crucified) from *fearful doubting cowards* into *fearless and confident believers* in Jesus as divine lord and as the resurrected conqueror of death.

C. The eleven remaining disciples of Jesus WERE transformed (sometime after Jesus had been crucified) from *fearful doubting cowards* into *fearless and confident believers* in Jesus as divine lord and as the resurrected conqueror of death.

THEREFORE:

D. It is NOT the case that sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

With this sub-conclusion (D), we can form a *modus tollens* argument for the intended conclusion (A):

E. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

D. It is NOT the case that: sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

This unstated argument is *the core argument* of **Objection #5**. We have figured out the reasoning the Kreeft and Tacelli used to infer the key premise (D), but it is not yet clear how they would support the key premise (E). It seems likely that claims (1a) and (2a) are part of an argument in support of the key premise (E).

However, it is UNCLEAR how the claims (1a) and (2a) provide support for the key premise (E). Let's focus on premise (1a) for now:

1a. On the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus, and this convinced those ten disciples that God had raised Jesus from the dead and given Jesus an immortal body.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

The *specific timing* mentioned here is crucial: “On the weekend after Jesus had been crucified”. Kreeft and Tacelli fail to emphasize this crucial point, but they do reference it in their original wording of premise (6):

A half-dead, staggering sick man *who has just had a narrow escape is not worshiped fearlessly as divine lord and conqueror of death.*

(HCA, p.183, *emphasis added*)

Jesus “just had a narrow escape” *from death*, meaning that Jesus was crucified on Friday, and his first appearance to ten out of the eleven remaining disciples took place that weekend, on Sunday evening. The *timing of this appearance* of Jesus is according to the passage that Kreeft and Tacelli referenced from the *Gospel of John*. The idea here is that if Jesus had been beaten, flogged, nailed to the cross, and stabbed with a spear in his side *on Friday*, then he would probably still be in pretty bad shape (“a half-dead, staggering sick man” who was “badly in need of a doctor”) *two days later on Sunday*, if he had somehow survived the crucifixion without any divine intervention.

According to the *Swoon Theory*, an appearance (or appearances) of Jesus to some of his disciples sometime after his crucifixion was what convinced his disciples that *God had raised Jesus from the dead*. According to the *Gospel of John*, and according to Kreeft and Tacelli, the first appearance of Jesus to ten (out of eleven) of his inner circle of disciples took place on the weekend following Jesus’ crucifixion.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

So, the combination of *this timing of the first appearance(s) of Jesus* to his disciples along with the *Swoon Theory* implies that *Jesus was in bad shape when he first appeared* to ten of his eleven disciples:

1a. On the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus, and this convinced those ten disciples that God had raised Jesus from the dead and given Jesus an immortal body.

F. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true and on the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus, THEN on the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus and Jesus would have appeared to those ten disciples to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

THEREFORE:

G. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN on the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to those ten disciples to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

Conclusion (G) gets us most of the way to the key premise (E). We just need to formulate a similar argument concerning Jesus' disciple Thomas:

2a. On the second weekend after Jesus had been crucified, Jesus' disciple Thomas had an experience that Thomas believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus, and this convinced Thomas that *God had raised Jesus from the dead and given Jesus an immortal body.*

H. IF the first appearance of Jesus to his disciple Thomas (after Jesus' crucifixion) took place on the second weekend after Jesus had been crucified and the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus would have appeared to Thomas to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

THEREFORE:

I. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN on the second weekend after Jesus had been crucified, Jesus' disciple Thomas had an experience that Thomas believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to Thomas to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

The combination of sub-conclusions (G) and (I) will get us to the key premise (E):

G. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN on the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to those ten disciples to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

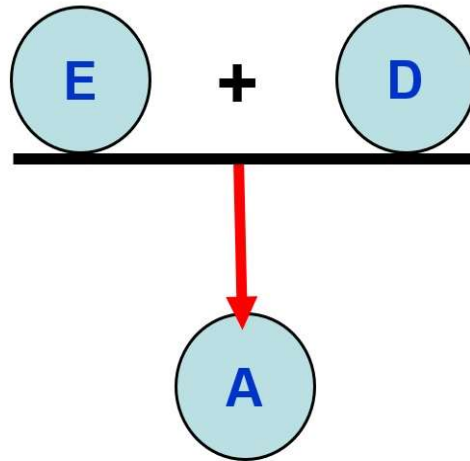
I. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN on the second weekend after Jesus had been crucified, Jesus' disciple Thomas had an experience that Thomas believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to Thomas to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

THEREFORE:

E. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to those disciples to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

DIAGRAMMING THE ARGUMENT

Logical Structure of the Core Argument for Objection #5



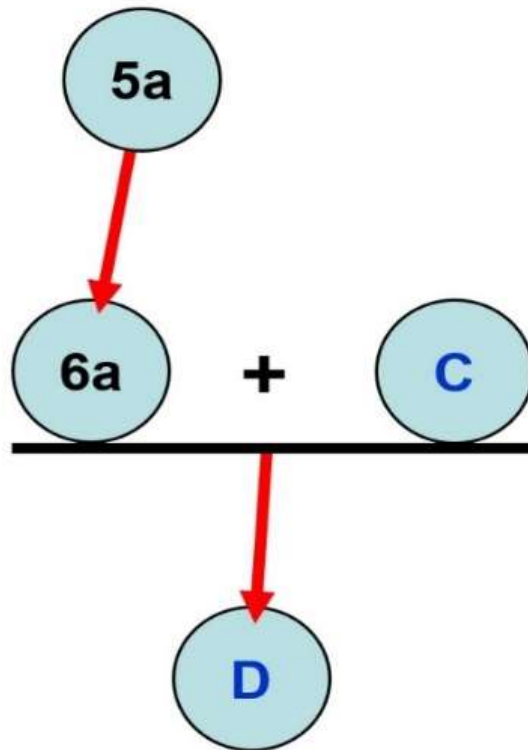
E. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

D. It is NOT the case that: sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for (D)



ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

5a. IF sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor, THEN it would have been psychologically impossible for the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus to have been transformed (sometime after Jesus had been crucified) from *fearful doubting cowards* into *brave and confident believers* in Jesus as divine lord and as the resurrected conqueror of death.

THEREFORE:

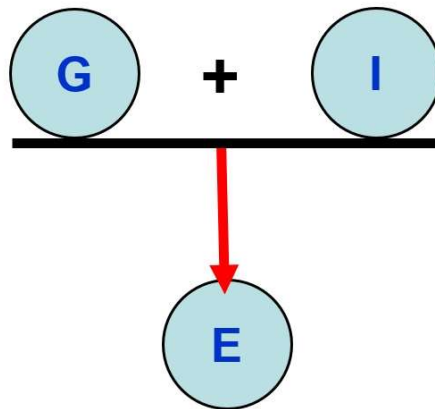
6a. IF sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor, THEN the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus would NOT have been transformed (sometime after Jesus had been crucified) from *fearful doubting cowards* into *fearless and confident believers* in Jesus as divine lord and as the resurrected conqueror of death.

C. The eleven remaining disciples of Jesus were transformed (sometime after Jesus had been crucified) from *fearful doubting cowards* into *fearless and confident believers* in Jesus as divine lord and as the resurrected conqueror of death.

THEREFORE:

D. It is NOT the case that sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

Logical Structure of the Core Argument for (E)



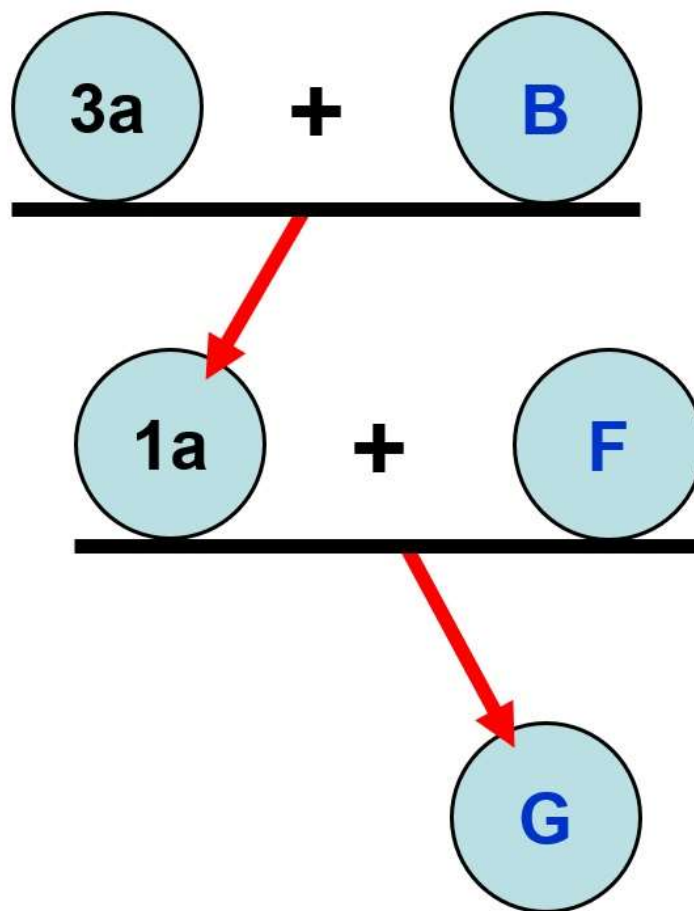
G. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN on the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to those ten disciples to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

I. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN on the second weekend after Jesus had been crucified, Jesus' disciple Thomas had an experience that Thomas believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to Thomas to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

THEREFORE:

E. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN sometime after Jesus had been crucified, the eleven remaining disciples each had experiences that they believed were experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to those disciples to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for (G)



ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

3a. According to the *Gospel of John* (Jn 20:19-29), on the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus, and this convinced those ten disciples that God had raised Jesus from the dead and given Jesus an immortal body.

B. The *Gospel of John* provides a reliable and accurate account of the life of Jesus, including alleged experiences of the risen Jesus had by the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus after Jesus' crucifixion.

THEREFORE:

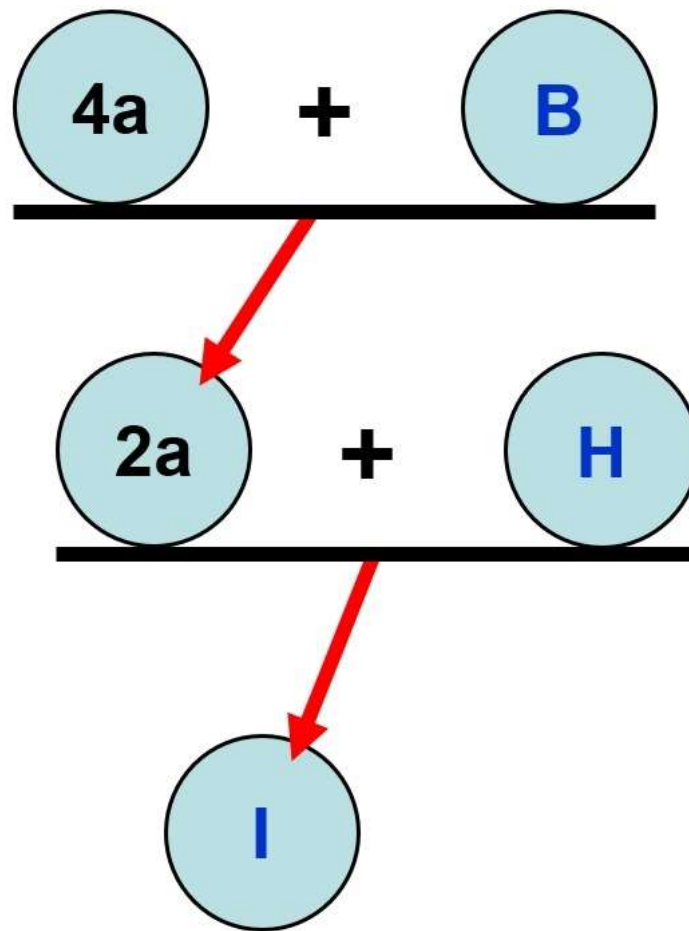
1a. On the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus, and this convinced those ten disciples that God had raised Jesus from the dead and given Jesus an immortal body.

F. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true and on the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus, THEN on the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus and Jesus would have appeared to those ten disciples to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

THEREFORE:

G. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN on the weekend after Jesus had been crucified, ten of the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus (not including Thomas) each had an experience that the disciples believed was an experiences of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to those ten disciples to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for (I)



ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

4a. According to the *Gospel of John* (Jn 20:19-29), on the second weekend after Jesus had been crucified, Jesus' disciple Thomas had an experience that Thomas believed was *an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus*, and this convinced Thomas that *God had raised Jesus from the dead and given Jesus an immortal body*.

B. The *Gospel of John* provides a reliable and accurate account of the life of Jesus, including alleged experiences of the risen Jesus had by the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus after Jesus' crucifixion.

THEREFORE:

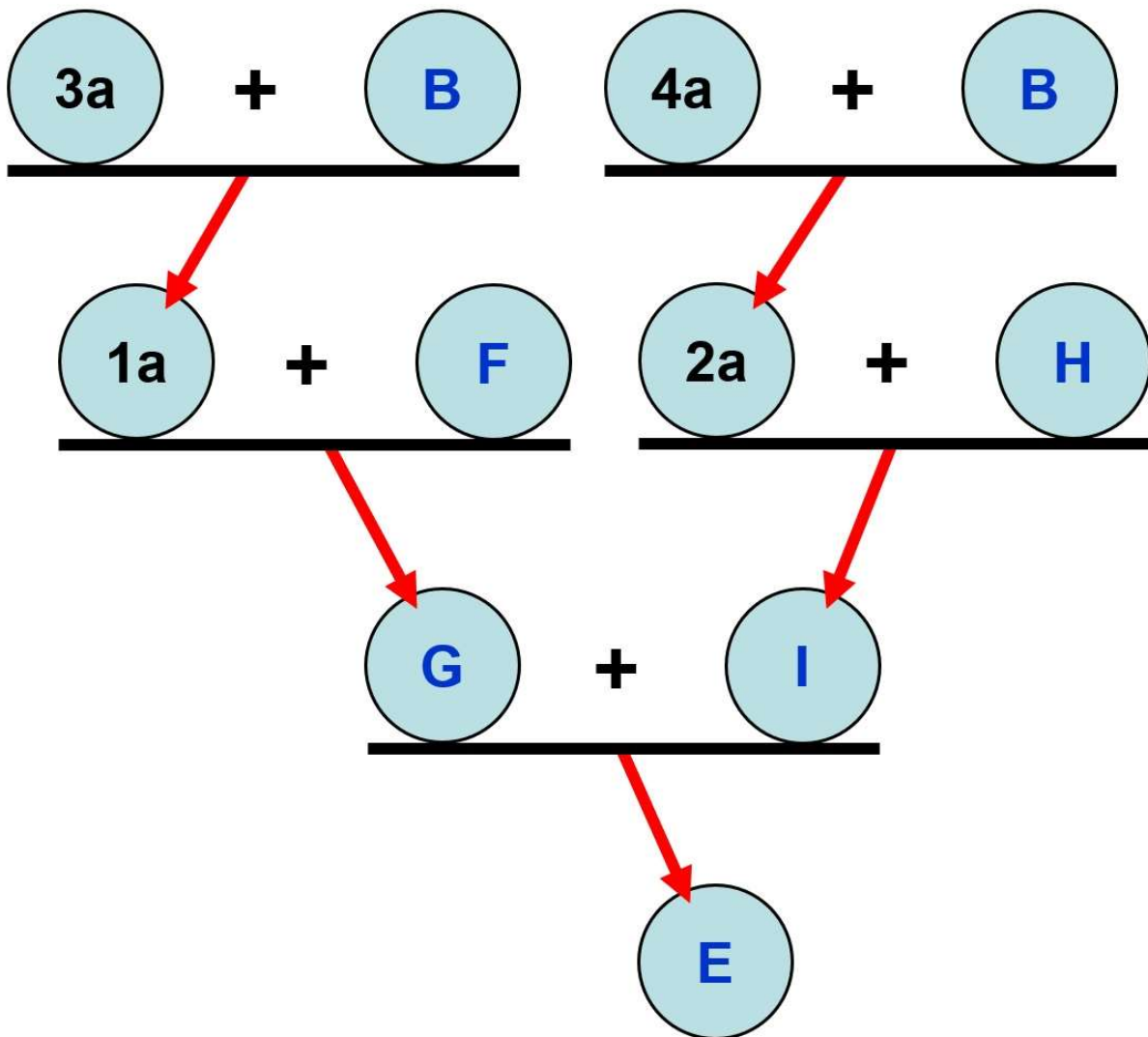
2a. On the second weekend after Jesus had been crucified, Jesus' disciple Thomas had an experience that Thomas believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus, and this convinced Thomas that *God had raised Jesus from the dead and given Jesus an immortal body*.

H. IF the first appearance of Jesus to his disciple Thomas (after Jesus' crucifixion) took place on the second weekend after Jesus had been crucified and the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus would have appeared to Thomas to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

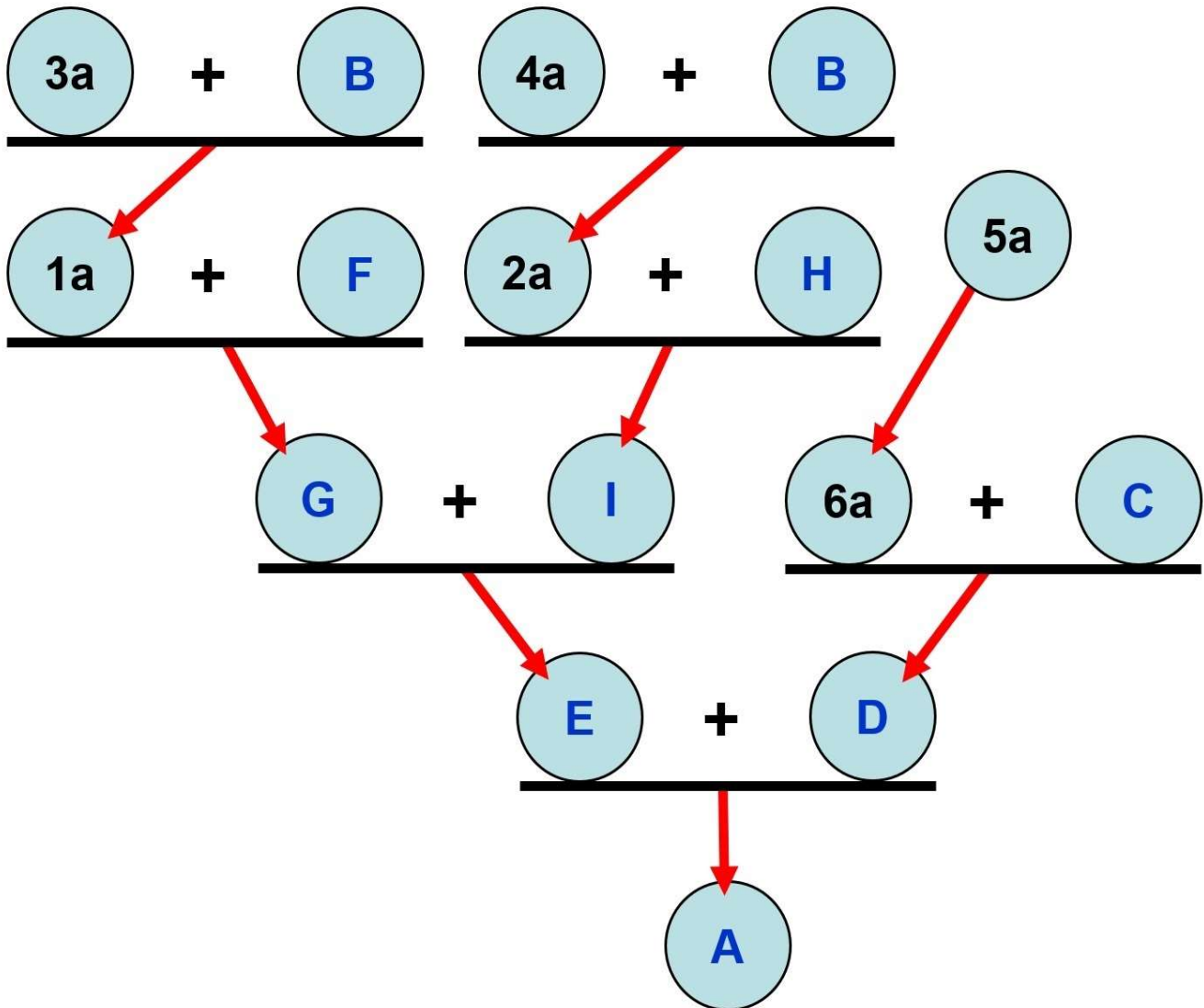
THEREFORE:

I. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN on the second weekend after Jesus had been crucified, Jesus' disciple Thomas had an experience that Thomas believed was an experience of seeing a living and physically embodied Jesus in which Jesus appeared to Thomas to be a half-dead, staggering sick man who was badly in need of a doctor.

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for (E)



Logical Structure of Objection #5



ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS BASED ON THE OTHER GOSPELS

Here are the objections that I will analyze in the following section:

OBJECTIONS AGAINST *SWOON THEORY* BASED ON OTHER GOSPELS

OBJECTIONS	LOCATION	BASIS
Objection #6: Who Overpowered the Guards?	HCA, p.183	Gospel of Matthew
Objection #7: Who Moved the Stone?	HCA, p.183-184	All Four Gospels
Objection #9: Swoon Theory implies False Theories	HCA, p.184	All Four Gospels

OBJECTION #6: WHO OVERPOWERED THE GUARDS?

Objection #6 focuses on the presence of guards at the tomb of Jesus:

How were the Roman guards at the tomb overpowered by a swooning corpse? Or by unarmed disciples? And if the disciples did it, they knowingly lied when they wrote the Gospels, and we are into the conspiracy theory, which we will refute shortly.
(HCA, p.183)

IDENTIFICATION STEPS

How were the Roman guards at the tomb overpowered by a swooning corpse? – This is a rhetorical question, so it needs to be restated as a claim or claims. The main historical claim they are asserting is this:

1. [IF Jesus survived his crucifixion, THEN Jesus was too weak and frail to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb.]

Or by unarmed disciples? – This is a rhetorical question, so it needs to be restated as a claim or claims. The historical claims they are asserting are these:

2. [Jesus' disciples were unarmed.]

3. [IF Jesus' disciples were unarmed, THEN Jesus' disciples would have been unable to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb.]

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

The third sentence asserts at least *three claims* that constitute a sub-argument:

4. [if the disciples did it, they knowingly lied when they wrote the Gospels,]
5. [and we are into the conspiracy theory,]
6. [which we will refute shortly.]

CLARIFICATION STEPS

1. [IF Jesus survived his crucifixion, THEN Jesus was too weak and frail to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb.]
 - 1a. IF Jesus survived his crucifixion, THEN Jesus was too weak and frail to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.
2. [Jesus' disciples were unarmed.]
 - 2a. Jesus' eleven remaining disciples were unarmed on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.
3. [IF Jesus' disciples were unarmed, THEN Jesus' disciples would have been unable to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb.]
 - 3a. IF Jesus' eleven remaining disciples were unarmed on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples would have been unable to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.
4. [if the disciples did it, they knowingly lied when they wrote the Gospels,]
 - 4a. IF some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN the disciples among Jesus' eleven remaining disciples who wrote the Gospels knowingly lied about the resurrection of Jesus when they wrote the Gospels.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

5. [and we are into the conspiracy theory,]

5a. IF the disciples among Jesus' eleven remaining disciples who wrote the Gospels knowingly lied about the resurrection of Jesus when they wrote the Gospels, THEN the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

6. [which we will refute shortly.]

6a. Kreeft and Tacelli refuted the *Conspiracy Theory* (in Chapter 8 of HCA).

FILL IN STEPS

Once again, Kreeft and Tacelli failed to state the conclusion of their argument:

A. *The Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

The first rhetorical question not only implies claim (1a) but also a *sub-argument* based on (1a):

B. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus survived his crucifixion.

1a. IF Jesus survived his crucifixion, THEN Jesus was too weak and frail to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

C. IF Jesus was too weak and frail to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN Jesus did NOT overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

D. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus did NOT overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

The second rhetorical question implies two claims that form part of a *sub-argument*:

2a. Jesus' eleven remaining disciples were unarmed on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

3a. IF Jesus' eleven remaining disciples were unarmed on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples would have been unable to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

E. IF some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples would have been unable to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after his crucifixion, THEN it is NOT the case that some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding the tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

F. It is NOT the case that some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding the tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

The third sentence makes three claims that provide another *sub-argument* supporting claim (F):

4a. IF some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN the disciples among Jesus' eleven remaining disciples who wrote the Gospels knowingly lied about the resurrection of Jesus when they wrote the Gospels.

5a. IF the disciples among Jesus' eleven remaining disciples who wrote the Gospels knowingly lied about the resurrection of Jesus when they wrote the Gospels, THEN the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

6a. Kreeft and Tacelli refuted the *Conspiracy Theory* (in Chapter 8 of HCA).

THEREFORE:

F. It is NOT the case that some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

The *first rhetorical question* makes a sub-argument for claim (D):

D. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus did NOT overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

The *second rhetorical question* and the *third sentence* both provide sub-arguments for claim (F):

F. It is NOT the case that some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

If we add one more *unstated premise* to (D) and (F), we will have an argument for conclusion (A):

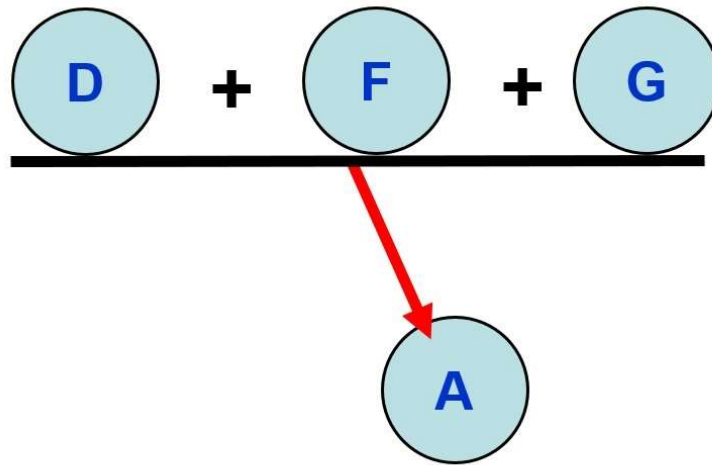
G. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN either (a) Jesus overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified or (b) some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

DIAGRAMMING THE ARGUMENT

Logical Structure of the Core Argument for Objection #6



D. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus did NOT overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

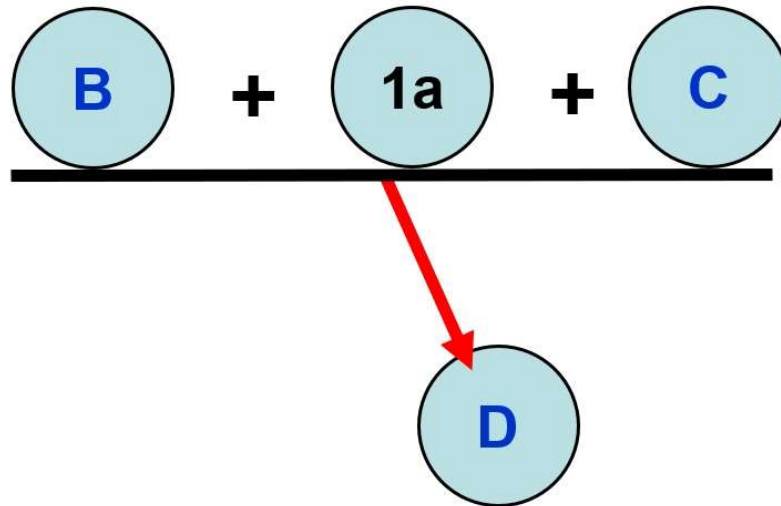
F. It is NOT the case that some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

G. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN either (a) Jesus overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified or (b) some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument from the 1st Rhetorical Question



B. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus survived his crucifixion.

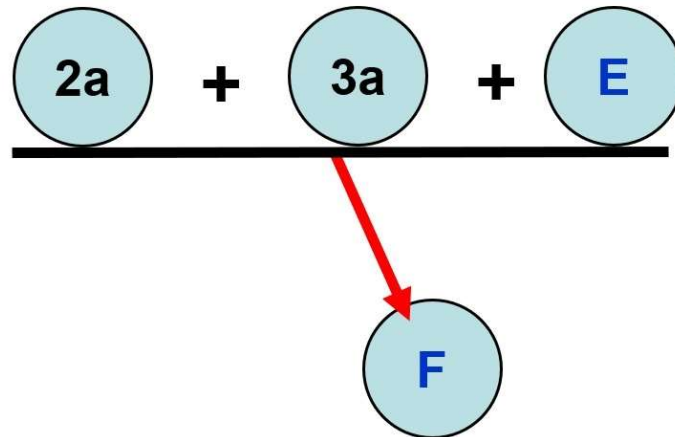
1a. IF Jesus survived his crucifixion, THEN Jesus was too weak and frail to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

C. IF Jesus was too weak and frail to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN Jesus did NOT overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

D. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus did NOT overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument from the 2nd Rhetorical Question



2a. Jesus' eleven remaining disciples were unarmed on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

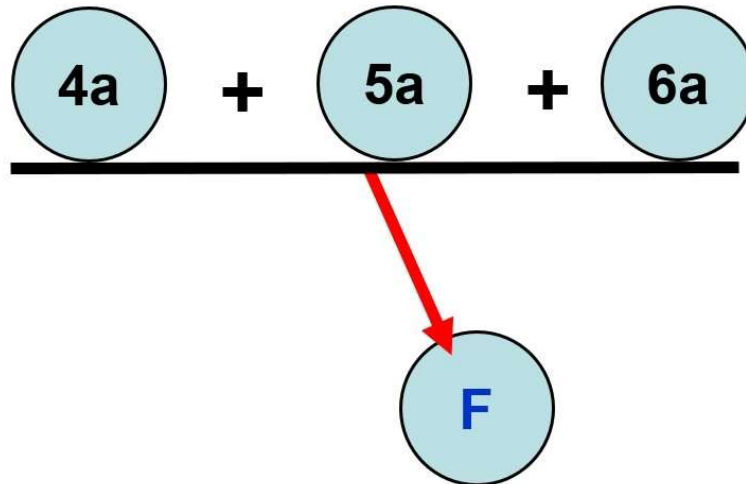
3a. IF Jesus' eleven remaining disciples were unarmed on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples would have been unable to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

E. IF some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples would have been unable to overpower the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after his crucifixion, THEN it is NOT the case that some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding the tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

F. It is NOT the case that some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding the tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument from the 3rd Sentence



4a. IF **some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples** overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb **on the weekend after Jesus was crucified**, THEN the disciples **among Jesus' eleven remaining disciples who wrote the Gospels** knowingly lied about the resurrection of Jesus when they wrote the Gospels.

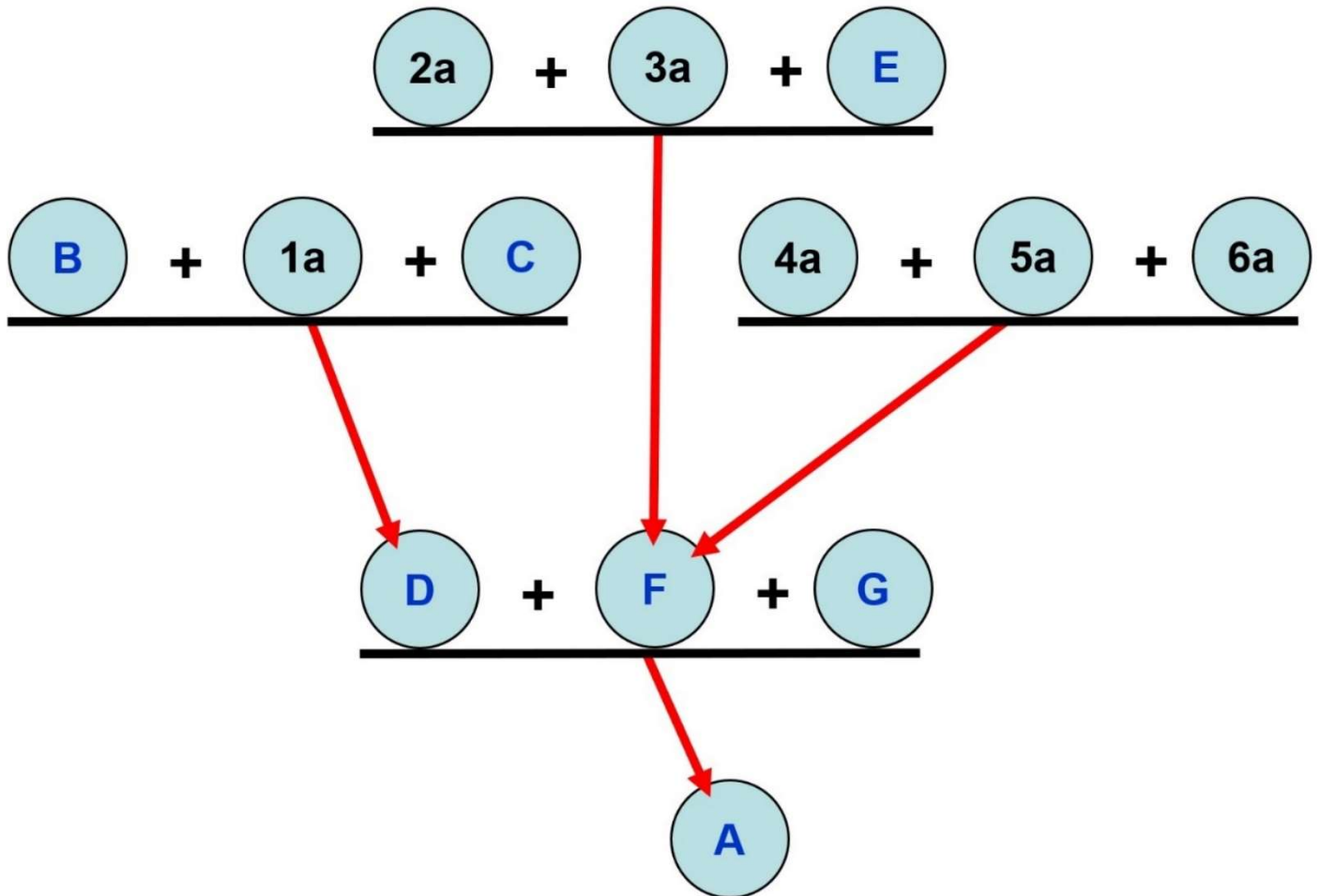
5a. IF the disciples **among Jesus' eleven remaining disciples who wrote the Gospels** knowingly lied about the resurrection of **Jesus** when they wrote the Gospels, THEN the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

6a. **Kreeft and Tacelli** refuted the *Conspiracy Theory* (in Chapter 8 of HCA).

THEREFORE:

F. It is NOT the case that some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

Logical Structure of Objection #6



ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

OBJECTION #7: WHO MOVED THE STONE?

Here is the first of two paragraphs of Kreeft and Tacelli's presentation of **Objection #7** (Who Moved the Stone?) against the *Swoon Theory*:

How could a swooning half-dead man have moved the great stone at the door of the tomb? Who moved the stone if not an angel? No one has ever answered that question. Neither the Jews nor the Romans would move it, for it was in both their interests to keep the tomb sealed: the Jews had the stone put there in the first place, and the Roman guards would be killed if they let the body "escape." (HCA, p. 183)

IDENTIFICATION STEPS FOR FIRST PARAGRAPH

1. [How could a swooning half-dead man have moved the great stone at the door of the tomb?] - this is a *rhetorical question*.

2. [Who moved the stone if not an angel?] - this is a *rhetorical question*.

3. [No one has ever answered that question.]

4. [Neither the Jews...would move it,]

5. [nor the Romans would move it,]

for - this indicates that a reason or reasons are about to be given for a previous claim.

it was in both their interests to keep the tomb sealed - I'm going to separate the two claims that are being made here:

6. [it was in the interest of the Jews to keep the tomb sealed]

7. [it was in the interest of the Romans to keep the tomb sealed]

: - this colon indicates that a reason (or reasons) is about to be given in support of the previous claim.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

8. [the Jews had the stone put there in the first place,]

and

9. [the Roman guards would be killed if they let the body “escape.”]

Here is the second paragraph of their presentation of **Objection #7**:

The story the Jewish authorities spread, that the guards fell asleep and the disciples stole the body (Mt 28:11-15), is unbelievable. Roman guards would not fall asleep on a job like that; if they did, they would lose their lives. And even if they did fall asleep, the crowd and the effort and the noise it would have taken to move an enormous boulder would have wakened them. Furthermore, we are again into the conspiracy theory, with all its unanswerable difficulties (see next section). (HCA, p. 183-184)

IDENTIFICATION STEPS FOR SECOND PARAGRAPH

10. [The story ~~the Jewish authorities spread~~, that the guards fell asleep and the disciples stole the body is unbelievable.]

(Mt 28:11-15) - This functions like a footnote, providing biblical evidence in support of the claim that *the Jewish authorities spread this story*:

According to the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 28:11-15), **the Jewish authorities spread the story** that the guards fell asleep and the disciples stole the body. - The claim that *the Jewish authorities spread this story* is NOT relevant for the purposes of this argument, so I will ignore this claim and the evidence provided for it from the *Gospel of Matthew*. Because this is NOT relevant to the argument, I will not assign a number to this claim. The passage from the *Gospel of Matthew* does NOT show that this story is *unbelievable*, which is the primary claim made in statement (10).

11. [Roman guards would not fall asleep on a job like that;]

12. [if they did, they would lose their lives.]

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

13. [And even if they did fall asleep, the crowd and the effort and the noise it would have taken to move an enormous boulder would have wakened them.]

Furthermore, - this word indicates that another reason is about to be provided for a previous conclusion.

14. [we are again into the conspiracy theory,]

15. [with all its unanswerable difficulties]

(see next section) - an indication that claim (15) is supported by Kreeft and Tacelli's objections against the *Conspiracy Theory* in Chapter 8 of HCA:

16. [The next section shows that it has a number of unanswerable difficulties.]

CLARIFICATION STEPS

1. [How could a swooning half-dead man have moved the great stone at the door of the tomb?] - this is a *rhetorical question* that needs to be re-stated as a claim:

1a. A weak and frail half-dead man would have been unable to have moved the great stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

2. [Who moved the stone if not an angel?] - this is a *rhetorical question* that needs to be re-stated as a claim:

2a. An angel moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

3. [No one has ever answered that question.] - this is an *unclear statement* of a key claim:

3a. There is no plausible natural explanation for how the stone was moved from door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

4. [Neither the Jews...would move it,]

4a. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem would NOT have moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

5.[nor the Romans would move it,]

5a. The Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb would NOT have moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

for - this indicates that a reason or reasons are about to be given for a previous claim.

6. [it was in the interest of the Jews to keep the tomb sealed]

6a. It was in the interest of the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem to keep the tomb of Jesus sealed on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

7. [it was in the interest of the Romans to keep the tomb sealed]

7a. It was in the interest of the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb to keep the tomb of Jesus sealed on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

: - this colon indicates that a reason or reasons are about to be given in support of the previous claim.

8. [the Jews had the stone put there in the first place,]

8a. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem had the stone put in place at the door of Jesus' tomb in the first place.

9. [the Roman guards would be killed if they let the body "escape."]

9a. The Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb would be killed if they let Jesus leave the tomb or if they let someone take Jesus' body from the tomb.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

10. [The story that the guards fell asleep and the disciples stole the body is unbelievable.]

10a. The story that the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb fell asleep and that some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb and stole the body is unbelievable.

11. [Roman guards would not fall asleep on a job like that;]

11a. The Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb would NOT have fallen asleep while on duty to guard Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

12. [if they did, they would lose their lives.]

12a. IF the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb fell asleep while on duty to guard Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb would have been executed for failure to perform their guard duty.

13. [And even if they did fall asleep, the crowd and the effort and the noise it would have taken to move an enormous boulder would have wakened them.]

13a. IF the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb fell asleep while on duty to guard Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified and some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples attempted to move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN the noise from the attempt to move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb would have wakened the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb.

14. [we are again into the conspiracy theory,]

14a. IF the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb fell asleep while on duty to guard Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified and some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples attempted to move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

15. [with all its unanswerable difficulties]

15a. The *Conspiracy Theory* has a number of unanswerable difficulties.

16. [The next section shows that the *Conspiracy Theory* has a number of unanswerable difficulties.]

16a. In Chapter 8 of HCA, Kreeft and Tacelli show that the *Conspiracy Theory* has a number of unanswerable difficulties.

FILL IN STEPS

The logic of **Objection #7** is similar to the logic of Kreeft and Tacelli's general case for the resurrection of Jesus. They eliminate a number of skeptical or *natural explanations* for the movement of the stone, and then conclude that the only reasonable explanation is the *supernatural explanation* that an angel moved the stone. Such an elimination-of-alternatives argument assumes that all of the possible natural explanations have been covered and eliminated.

The ultimate conclusion is once again left UNSTATED by Kreeft and Tacelli:

A. The Swoon Theory is FALSE.

I take it that claim (3a) is a key sub-conclusion of their argument:

3a. There is no plausible *natural explanation* for how the stone was moved from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

All or nearly all of Kreeft and Tacelli's objections against the *Swoon Theory* have been reduction-to-absurdity arguments, which can generally be summarized with a *modus tollens* inference. So, it is reasonable to infer that premise (3a) is part of a *modus tollens* inference in support of their

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

ultimate conclusion (A):

B. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN there is a plausible *natural explanation* for how the stone was moved from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

3a. There is no plausible *natural explanation* for how the stone was moved from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

I take it that the above argument is the core argument of **Objection #7**.

Kreeft and Tacelli do not explicitly claim that there are *only four possible natural explanations* of how the stone was moved from the door of Jesus' tomb, but the logic of this argument, like the logic of their overall case for the resurrection, requires such an assumption:

C. There are *only four possible natural explanations* for how the stone was moved from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified: (a) Jesus moved the stone, (b) the Roman soldiers moved the stone, (c) the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem moved the stone, or (d) some (or all) of Jesus' remaining eleven disciples moved the stone.

If those four natural explanations are *the only possible natural explanations*, then refuting those four explanations would refute and eliminate all possible natural explanations. So, in addition to premise (C), *four other premises* are needed in order to show that key premise (3a) is true:

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

D. Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

E. The Roman soldiers did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

F. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

G. NONE of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

C. There are *only four possible natural explanations* for how the stone was moved from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified: (a) Jesus moved the stone, (b) the Roman soldiers moved the stone, (c) the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem moved the stone, or (d) some (or all) of Jesus' remaining eleven disciples moved the stone.

THEREFORE:

3a. There is no plausible *natural explanation* for how the stone was moved from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

The rest of the explicitly stated claims asserted by Kreeft and Tacelli in this argument provide support for the denials or rejections of the above-mentioned *four natural explanations*.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

Premises (8a), (6a), and (4a) form a chain of reasoning supporting the premise (F):

8a. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem had the stone put in place at the door of Jesus' tomb in the first place.

THEREFORE:

6a. It was in the interest of the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem to keep the tomb of Jesus sealed on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

4a. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem would NOT have moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

F. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

A similar chain of reasoning is provided to “refute” the theory that the Roman soldiers moved the stone:

9a. The Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb would be killed if they let Jesus leave the tomb or if they let someone take Jesus' body from the tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

7a. It was in the interest of the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb to keep the tomb of Jesus sealed on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

5a. The Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb would NOT have moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

E. The Roman soldiers did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

Kreeft and Tacelli also provide various arguments against the theory that *the Roman soldiers fell asleep* and that some (or all) of Jesus' remaining eleven disciples then moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified. Here is one such argument:

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

12a. IF the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb fell asleep while on duty to guard Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb would have been executed for failure to perform their guard duty.

THEREFORE:

11a. The Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb would NOT have fallen asleep while on duty to guard Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

10a. The story that the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb fell asleep and that some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb and stole the body is unbelievable.

Here is another such argument:

13a. IF the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb fell asleep while on duty to guard Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified and some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples attempted to move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN the noise from the attempt to move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb would have wakened the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb.

H. IF the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified were wakened by the noise from the attempt of some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples to move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb, THEN Roman soldiers would have prevented those disciples from moving the stone.

THEREFORE:

10a. The story that the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb fell asleep and that some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb and stole the body is unbelievable.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

Here is a third argument for the same conclusion:

16a. In Chapter 8 of HCA, Kreeft and Tacelli show that the *Conspiracy Theory* has a number of unanswerable difficulties.

THEREFORE:

15a. *The Conspiracy Theory* has a number of unanswerable difficulties.

THEREFORE:

I. It is NOT the case that the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

14a. IF the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb fell asleep while on duty to guard Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified and some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples attempted to move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

THEREFORE:

10a. The story that the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb fell asleep and that some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb and stole the body is unbelievable.

However, the above three arguments do NOT get us to the desired conclusion:

G. NONE of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

One problem is that there are *other ways* that Jesus' disciples could have successfully moved the stone besides having the good luck that the Roman soldiers all fell asleep. For example, the disciples could have overpowered

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

the Roman soldiers, or they could have distracted the Roman soldiers with wine, women, and song, or they could have bribed the Roman soldiers, etc.

Refuting *one very specific theory* about how Jesus' disciples might have managed to move the stone despite the Roman soldiers does NOT refute all of the different possible ways that the disciples could have managed to move the stone from the door of Jesus tomb. So, it appears that Kreeft and Tacelli have gone astray in this argument, and that the rather specific theory that the Roman soldiers fell asleep is something of a Red Herring.

However, the third argument above is based on an argument that Kreeft and Tacelli used in their **Objection #6** against the *Swoon Theory*. But the previous argument from **Objection #6** was not limited to the specific theory that the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb fell asleep. So, the third argument above can be modified to work against more than just this one specific theory about how the disciples of Jesus might have moved the stone.

I suggest that we set aside their arguments against *the theory that the Roman soldiers fell asleep while guarding the tomb of Jesus*, and concentrate on an argument that is *more general* in scope. Let's modify their third argument to make it more general:

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

16a. In Chapter 8 of HCA, [Kreeft and Tacelli](#) show that the *Conspiracy Theory* has a number of unanswerable difficulties.

THEREFORE:

15a. [The Conspiracy Theory](#) has a number of unanswerable difficulties.

THEREFORE:

I. It is NOT the case that the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

J. IF some (or all) of Jesus eleven remaining disciples somehow managed to move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb, THEN the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

THEREFORE:

G. NONE of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

In **Objection #6**, they supported a claim similar to (J) this way:

IF some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb, **THEN** the disciples among Jesus' eleven remaining disciples who wrote the Gospels knowingly lied about the resurrection of Jesus.

IF the disciples among Jesus' eleven remaining disciples who wrote the Gospels knowingly lied about the resurrection of Jesus, **THEN** the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

THEREFORE:

IF some (or all of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples overpowered the Roman soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb, **THEN** the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

This argument is about the possibility of Jesus' disciples *overpowering the Roman soldiers*, but we can modify the argument to make it more general:

K. IF some (or all) of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples somehow managed to move the stone from the door of Jesus tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified, THEN the disciples among Jesus' eleven remaining disciples who wrote the Gospels knowingly lied about the resurrection of Jesus.

L. IF the disciples among Jesus' eleven remaining disciples who wrote the Gospels knowingly lied about the resurrection of Jesus, THEN the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

THEREFORE:

J. IF some (or all) of Jesus eleven remaining disciples somehow managed to move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb, THEN the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

There is one more *natural explanation* that Kreeft and Tacelli need to address: the possibility that *Jesus himself moved the stone* from the door of his tomb. Here is the claim they need to establish:

D. Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

Premise (1a) is part of an argument for the key premise (D), but we have to add an unstated assumption/premise to (1a) in order to get to (D):

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

1a. A weak and frail half-dead man would have been unable to have moved the great stone at the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

M. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus would have been a weak and frail half-dead man on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

N. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus would have been unable to have moved the great stone at the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

O. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door at Jesus' tomb on the weekend after he was crucified.

This does not quite get us to the desired conclusion (D), but consideration of the alternative, namely that the *Swoon Theory is false*, it could be argued, would have the same implication:

P. IF the *Swoon Theory* is false, THEN Jesus died on the cross, and thus (apart from a supernatural resurrection), Jesus would have been unable to move the stone from the door of his tomb on the weekend after he was crucified.

Q. IF Jesus would have been unable to move the stone from the door of his tomb on the weekend after he was crucified (unless he experienced a supernatural resurrection), THEN Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after he was crucified (unless he experienced a supernatural resurrection).

THEREFORE:

R. IF the *Swoon Theory* is false, THEN Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after he was crucified (unless he experienced a supernatural resurrection).

The combination of (R) and (O) get us to the desired conclusion:

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

R. IF the *Swoon Theory* is false, THEN Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after he was crucified (unless he experienced a supernatural resurrection).

O. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door at Jesus' tomb on the weekend after he was crucified.

S. EITHER the *Swoon Theory* is true OR the *Swoon Theory* is false.

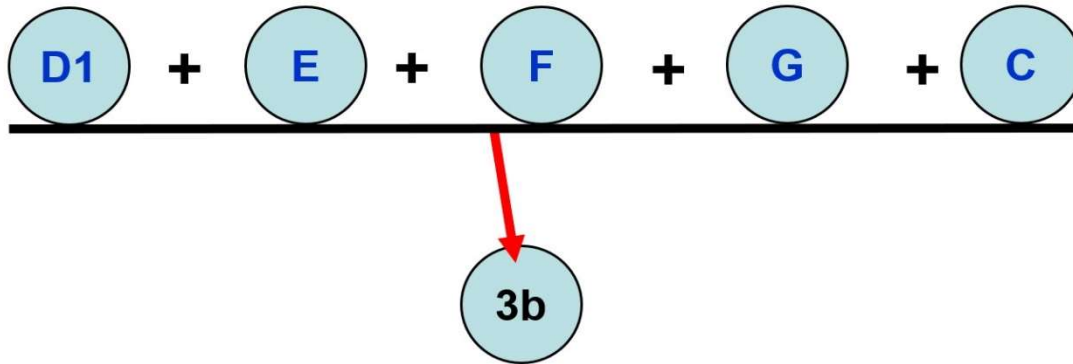
THEREFORE:

D1. Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified (unless he experienced a supernatural resurrection).

Because Kreeft and Tacelli fail to address the implications of the *Swoon Theory being false* for the natural explanation that *Jesus himself moved the stone from the door of his tomb*, it is uncertain how they would argue about this possibility. However, the above line of reasoning seems a plausible way to fill the logical gap in their argument against this possible natural explanation. So, I will add this sub-argument to their overall argument constituting **Objection #7**, in order to give their argument *at least a fighting chance* of being successful.

DIAGRAMMING THE ARGUMENT

Logical Structure of a Key Sub-Argument for Objection #7



D1. Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified (unless Jesus experienced a supernatural resurrection).

E. The Roman soldiers did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

F. The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

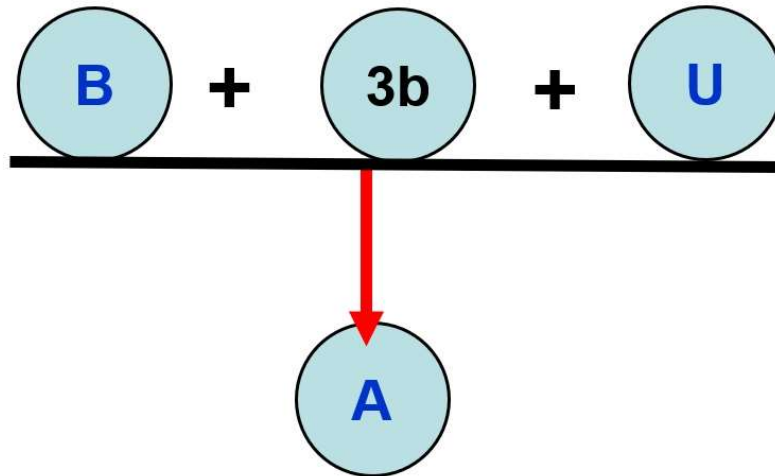
G. NONE of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

C. There are *only four possible natural explanations* for how the stone was moved from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified: (a) Jesus moved the stone, (b) the Roman soldiers moved the stone, (c) the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem moved the stone, or (d) some (or all) of Jesus' remaining eleven disciples moved the stone.

THEREFORE:

3b. There is no plausible *natural explanation* for how the stone was moved from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified (unless Jesus experienced a supernatural resurrection).

Logical Structure of the Core Argument for Objection #7



B. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN there is a plausible *natural explanation* for how the stone was moved from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

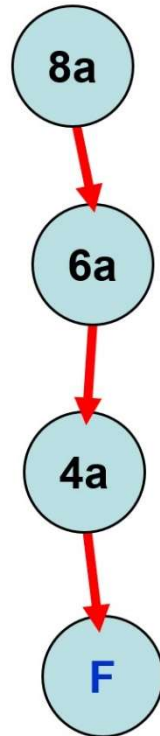
3b. There is no plausible *natural explanation* for how the stone was moved from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified (unless Jesus experienced a supernatural resurrection).

U. IF Jesus experienced a supernatural resurrection, then the *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for (F)



8a. The Jewish **authorities in Jerusalem** had the stone put in place at the door of Jesus' tomb in the first place.

THEREFORE:

6a. It was in the interest of the Jewish **authorities in Jerusalem** to keep the tomb of Jesus sealed on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

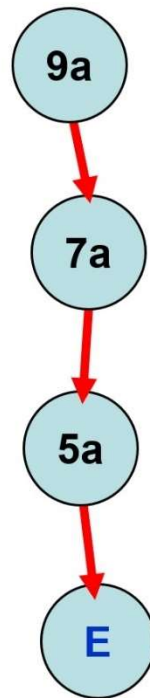
THEREFORE:

4a. The Jewish **authorities in Jerusalem** would NOT have moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

F. The Jewish **authorities in Jerusalem** did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for (E)



9a. The Roman **soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb** would be killed if they **let Jesus leave the tomb** or if they **let someone take Jesus' body from the tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.**

THEREFORE:

7a. It was in the interest of the Roman **soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb** to keep the **tomb of Jesus sealed on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.**

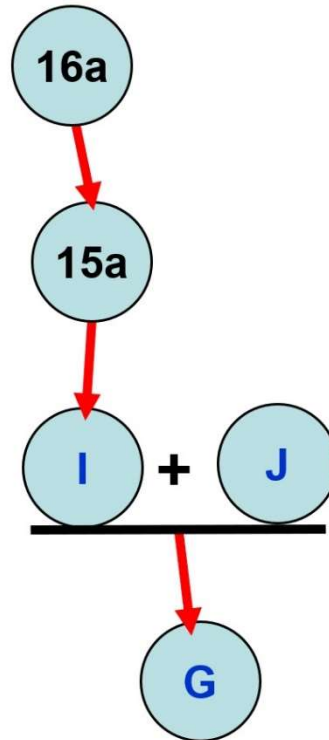
THEREFORE:

5a. The Roman **soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb** would **NOT** have moved **the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.**

THEREFORE:

E. The Roman **soldiers did NOT** move the stone from the door of **Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.**

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for (G)



16a. In Chapter 8 of HCA, [Kreeft and Tacelli show that](#) the *Conspiracy Theory* has a number of unanswerable difficulties.

THEREFORE:

15a. [The Conspiracy Theory](#) has a number of unanswerable difficulties.

THEREFORE:

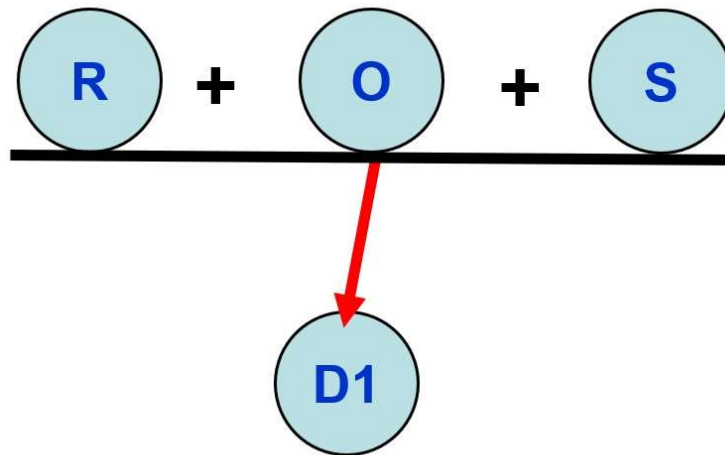
I. It is NOT the case that the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

J. IF some (or all) of Jesus eleven remaining disciples somehow managed to move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb, THEN the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

THEREFORE:

G. NONE of Jesus' eleven remaining disciples moved the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

Logical Structure of the Core Argument for (D1)



R. IF the *Swoon Theory* is false, THEN Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after he was crucified (unless he experienced a supernatural resurrection).

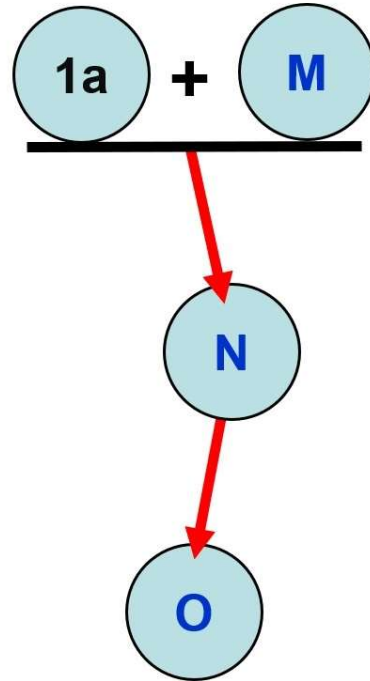
O. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door at Jesus' tomb on the weekend after he was crucified.

S. EITHER the *Swoon Theory* is true OR the *Swoon Theory* is false.

THEREFORE:

D1. Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified (unless he experienced a supernatural resurrection).

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for (O)



1a. A weak and frail half-dead man would have been unable to have moved the great stone at the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

M. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus would have been a weak and frail half-dead man on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

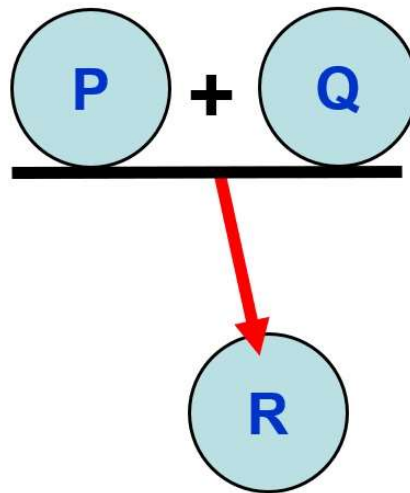
THEREFORE:

N. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus would have been unable to have moved the great stone at the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after Jesus was crucified.

THEREFORE:

O. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door at Jesus' tomb on the weekend after he was crucified.

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for (R)



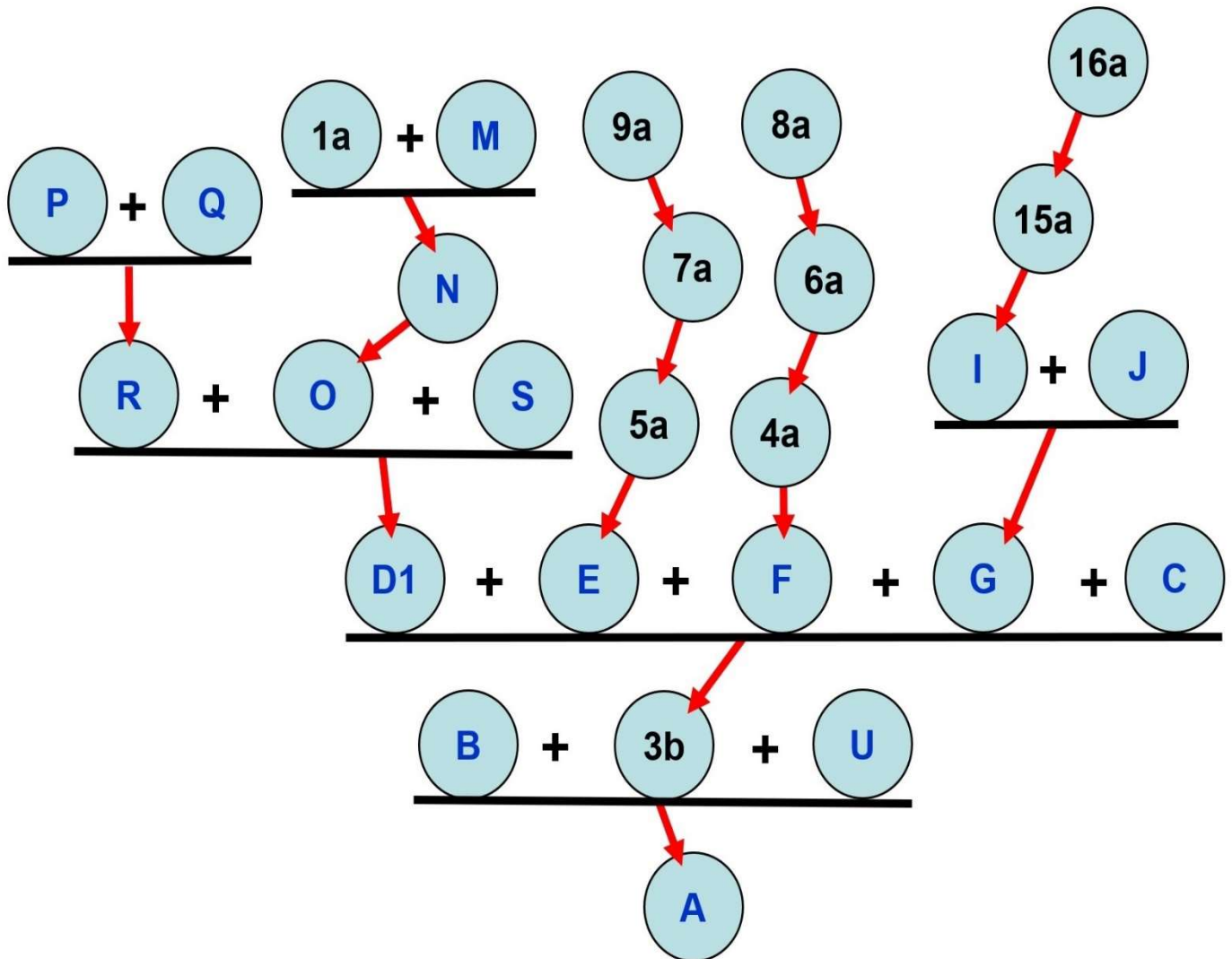
P. IF the *Swoon Theory* is false, THEN Jesus died on the cross, and thus (apart from a supernatural resurrection), Jesus would have been unable to move the stone from the door of his tomb on the weekend after he was crucified.

Q. IF Jesus would have been unable to move the stone from the door of his tomb on the weekend after he was crucified (unless he experienced a supernatural resurrection), THEN Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after he was crucified (unless he experienced a supernatural resurrection).

THEREFORE:

R. IF the *Swoon Theory* is false, THEN Jesus did NOT move the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb on the weekend after he was crucified (unless he experienced a supernatural resurrection).

Logical Structure of the Argument for Objection #7



ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

OBJECTION #9: SWOON THEORY IMPLIES FALSE THEORIES

Kreeft and Tacelli's presentation of **Objection #9** argues that the *Swoon Theory* is false because it implies other theories that are false:

Most simply, the swoon theory necessarily turns into the conspiracy theory or the hallucination theory, for the disciples testified that Jesus did not swoon but really died and really rose.
(HCA, p.184)

IDENTIFICATION STEPS

Most simply, - an unnecessary comment

1. [the swoon theory necessarily turns into the conspiracy theory or the hallucination theory,]

for - an *inference indicator* that indicates the next statement or statements are reasons that support the previous claim. Claim (2) and claim (3) are reasons in support of claim (1).

2. [the disciples testified that Jesus did not swoon]

3. [the disciples testified that Jesus...really died and really rose.]

CLARIFICATION STEPS

1. [the swoon theory necessarily turns into the conspiracy theory or the hallucination theory,]

1a. IF the Swoon Theory is true, THEN either (a) the Conspiracy Theory is true or (b) the Hallucination Theory is true.

2. [the disciples testified that Jesus did not swoon]

2a. The eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified that Jesus did not faint while Jesus was on the cross.

3. [the disciples testified that Jesus...really died and really rose.]

3a. The eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified that Jesus really died while he was on the cross and that Jesus really came back to life sometime after he was taken down from the cross.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

FILL-IN STEPS

Kreeft and Tacelli fail to state the conclusion of this argument:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

From claim (1a), we can infer the conclusion (A) by *modus tollens*, if we add the following *unstated claim*:

B. It is NOT the case that either (a) the *Conspiracy Theory* is true or (b) the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

So this is *the core argument* of **Objection #9**:

1a. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN either (a) the *Conspiracy Theory* is true or (b) the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

B. It is NOT the case that either (a) the *Conspiracy Theory* is true or (b) the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.

We know that Kreeft and Tacelli argue that the *Conspiracy Theory* is false, and that the *Hallucination Theory* is also false, so we know how they would argue in support of claim (B):

C. It is NOT the case that the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

D. It is NOT the case that the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

THEREFORE:

B. It is NOT the case that either (a) the *Conspiracy Theory* is true or (b) the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

Furthermore, we know how Kreeft and Tacelli would support claims (C) and

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

(D):

E. Kreeft and Tacelli have refuted the *Conspiracy Theory* (in Chapter 8 of HCA).

F. Kreeft and Tacelli have refuted the *Hallucination Theory* (in Chapter 8 of HCA).

Claim (E) supports claim (C), and claim (F) supports claim (D).

Kreeft and Tacelli have provided a sub-argument for the key premise (1a):

2a. The eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified that Jesus did not faint while Jesus was on the cross.

3a. The eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified that Jesus really died while he was on the cross and that Jesus really came back to life sometime after he was taken down from the cross.

THEREFORE:

1a. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN either (a) the *Conspiracy Theory* is true or (b) the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

I have emphasized that one needs to develop a CLEAR UNDERSTANDING of an argument BEFORE attempting to evaluate the argument. However, in this case, some *preliminary evaluation* helps to analyze and CLARIFY this argument.

The argument presented in support of premise (1a) appears to be a *BAD argument* because it is UNCLEAR HOW claims (2a) and (3a) support claim (1a). There is a significant LOGICAL GAP between the premises and the conclusion here. This *evident problem* with the argument as presented should motivate us *to try to figure out* what Kreeft and Tacelli were thinking,

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

and to try to fill in the LOGICAL GAP they left between these premises and this sub-conclusion.

I think the key here is a *dilemma* that Kreeft and Tacelli mention on the page *just before they begin to lay out their various objections* against the *Swoon Theory*:

Theories 2 [i.e. the *Hallucination Theory*] and 4 [i.e. the *Conspiracy Theory*] constitute a dilemma: if Jesus didn't rise, then the apostles, who taught that he did, were either deceived (if they thought he did) or deceivers (if they knew he didn't). (HCA, p.182)

Given this supposed *dilemma* between the "apostles" (i.e. the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus) being either *deceived* or *deceivers*, we can construct a line of reasoning that starts with claims (2a) and (3a) and that concludes with the key claim (1a):

2a. The eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified that Jesus did not faint while Jesus was on the cross.

3a. The eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified that Jesus really died while he was on the cross and that Jesus really came back to life sometime after he was taken down from the cross.

G. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus fainted while Jesus was on the cross, and Jesus did NOT die while he was on the cross, and Jesus did NOT come back to life sometime after he was taken down from the cross.

THEREFORE:

H. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified to three false claims: that Jesus did NOT faint while he was on the cross, that Jesus really died while he was on the cross, and that Jesus came back to life sometime after he was taken down from the cross.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

Based on claim (H), we can construct a line of reasoning that makes use of the alleged dilemma between the disciples being DECEIVED or being DECEIVERS about the resurrection of Jesus:

H. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified to three false claims: that Jesus did NOT faint while he was on the cross, that Jesus really died while he was on the cross, and that Jesus came back to life sometime after he was taken down from the cross.

I. IF the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified to three false claims: that Jesus did NOT faint while he was on the cross, that Jesus really died while he was on the cross, and that Jesus came back to life sometime after he was taken down from the cross, THEN either (a) the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus were DECEIVERS who lied to others about the alleged resurrection of Jesus, or (b) the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus were themselves DECEIVED into sincerely but mistakenly believing that Jesus had risen from the dead.

J. IF the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus were DECEIVERS who lied to others about the alleged resurrection of Jesus, THEN the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

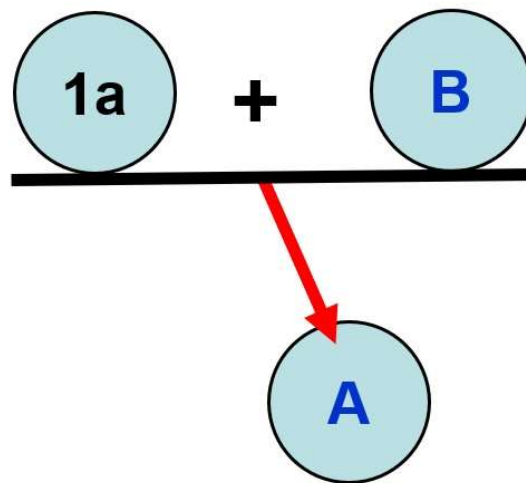
K. IF the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus were themselves DECEIVED into sincerely but mistakenly believing that Jesus had risen from the dead, THEN the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

THEREFORE:

1a. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN either (a) the *Conspiracy Theory* is true or (b) the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

DIAGRAMMING THE ARGUMENT

Logical Structure of the Core Argument for Objection #9



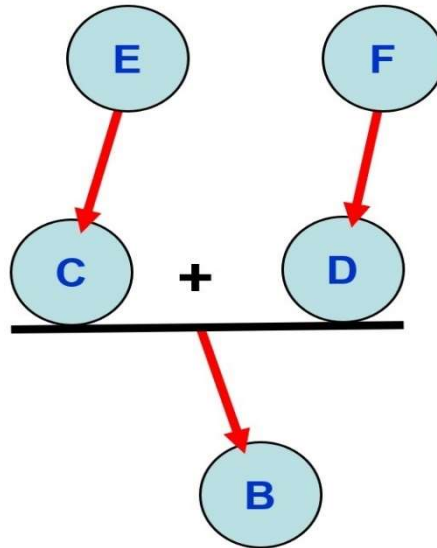
1a. **IF** the *Swoon Theory* is true, **THEN** either (a) the *Conspiracy Theory* is true or (b) the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

B. It is **NOT** the case that either (a) the *Conspiracy Theory* is true or (b) the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

THEREFORE:

A. **The *Swoon Theory* is FALSE.**

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for (B)



C. It is NOT the case that the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

D. It is NOT the case that the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

THEREFORE:

B. It is NOT the case that either (a) the *Conspiracy Theory* is true or (b) the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

SUB-ARGUMENTS FOR PREMISES (C) AND (D)

E. Kreeft and Tacelli have refuted the *Conspiracy Theory* (in Chapter 8 of HCA).

THEREFORE:

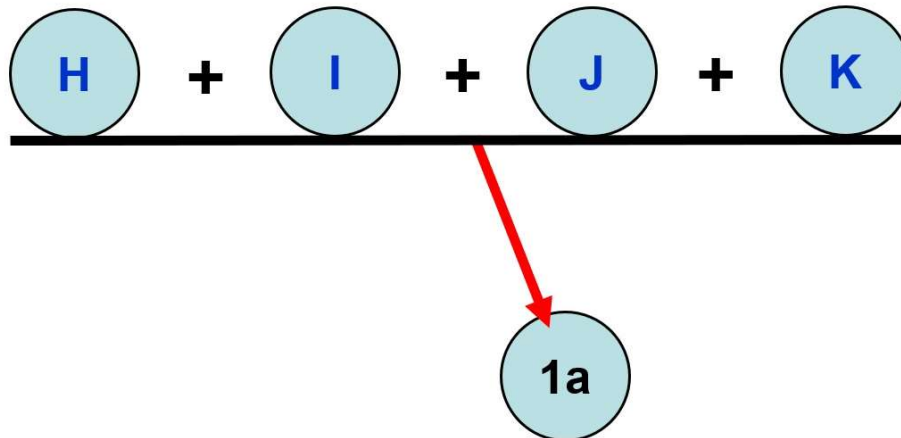
C. It is NOT the case that the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

F. Kreeft and Tacelli have refuted the *Hallucination Theory* (in Chapter 8 of HCA).

THEREFORE:

D. It is NOT the case that the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

Logical Structure of the Argument for (1a)



H. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified to three false claims: that Jesus did NOT faint while he was on the cross, that Jesus really died while he was on the cross, and that Jesus came back to life sometime after he was taken down from the cross.

I. IF the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified to three false claims: that Jesus did NOT faint while he was on the cross, that Jesus really died while he was on the cross, and that Jesus came back to life sometime after he was taken down from the cross, THEN either (a) the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus were DECEIVERS who lied to others about the alleged resurrection of Jesus, or (b) the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus were themselves DECEIVED into sincerely but mistakenly believing that Jesus had risen from the dead.

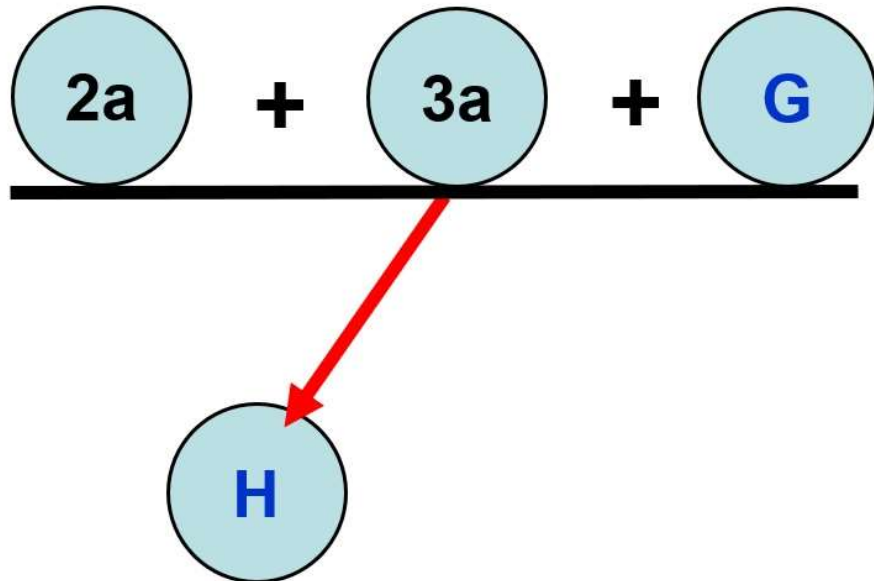
J. IF the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus were DECEIVERS who lied to others about the alleged resurrection of Jesus, THEN the *Conspiracy Theory* is true.

K. IF the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus were themselves DECEIVED into sincerely but mistakenly believing that Jesus had risen from the dead, THEN the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

THEREFORE:

1a. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN either (a) the *Conspiracy Theory* is true or (b) the *Hallucination Theory* is true.

Logical Structure of the Sub-Argument for (H)



2a. The eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified that Jesus did not faint while Jesus was on the cross.

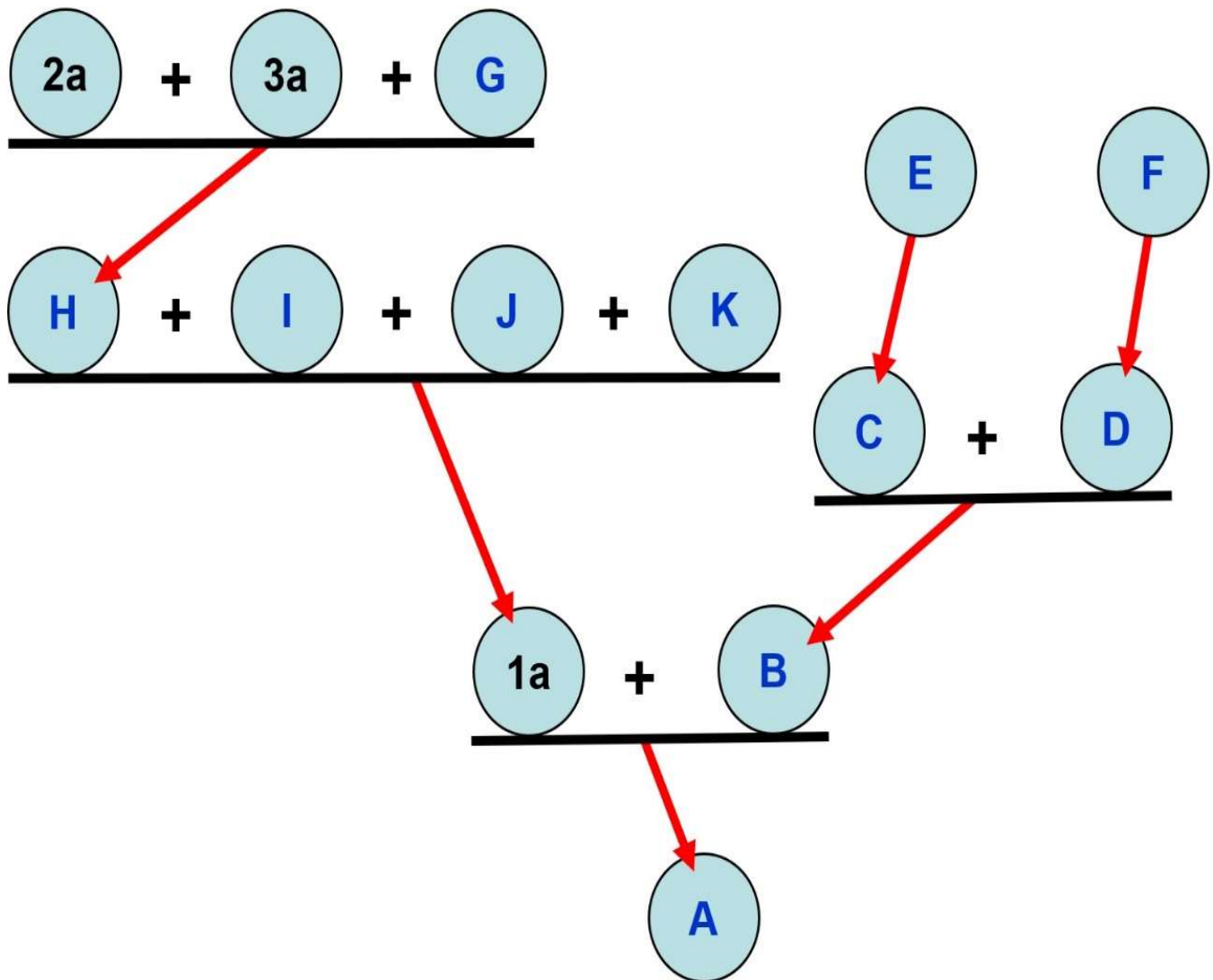
3a. The eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified that Jesus really died while he was on the cross and that Jesus really came back to life sometime after he was taken down from the cross.

G. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN Jesus fainted while Jesus was on the cross, and Jesus did NOT die while he was on the cross, and Jesus did NOT come back to life sometime after he was taken down from the cross.

THEREFORE:

H. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN the eleven remaining disciples of Jesus testified to three false claims: that Jesus did NOT faint while he was on the cross, that Jesus really died while he was on the cross, and that Jesus came back to life sometime after he was taken down from the cross.

Logical Structure of Objection #9



ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS NOT BASED ON THE GOSPELS

Here are the objections that I will analyze in the following section:

OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE *SWOON THEORY* NOT BASED ON THE GOSPELS

OBJECTIONS	LOCATION	BASIS
Objection #1: Deadliness of Roman Crucifixion	HCA, p.183	NOT the Gospels
Objection #8: Where Did Jesus Go?	HCA, p.184	NOT the Gospels

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTION #1: THE DEADLINESS OF ROMAN CRUCIFIXION

Kreeft and Tacelli's **Objection #1** against the *Swoon Theory* does not rest on Gospel passages:

Jesus could not have survived crucifixion. Roman procedures were very careful to eliminate that possibility. Roman law even laid the death penalty on any soldier who let a capital prisoner escape in any way, including bungling a crucifixion. It was never done. (HCA, p.183)

The Gospels do not specify "Roman procedures" for executions or crucifixions. The Gospels do not specify what punishment was given to Roman soldiers who let a capital prisoner escape or who bungle a crucifixion. The Gospels do not assert generalizations about the deadliness of Roman crucifixion or about how Roman crucifixion ALWAYS resulted in the death of a crucified person. None of Kreeft's explicitly stated historical claims in **Objection #1** are based on a Gospel passage.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

IDENTIFICATION STEPS

1. [Jesus could not have survived crucifixion.]
2. [Roman procedures were very careful to eliminate that possibility.]
3. [Roman law even laid the death penalty on any soldier who let a capital prisoner escape in any way,]
4. [including bungling a crucifixion.]
5. [It was never done.]

CLARIFICATION STEPS

1. [Jesus could not have survived crucifixion.]
 - 1a. Jesus could not have survived crucifixion **by Roman soldiers.**
2. [Roman procedures for crucifixion were very careful to eliminate that possibility.]
 - 2a. Roman **military** procedures for crucifixion were very careful to eliminate the possibility **of a person surviving crucifixion.**
3. [Roman law even laid the death penalty on any **soldier** who let a capital prisoner escape in any way,]
 - 3a. Roman law even laid the death penalty on any **Roman** soldier who let a capital prisoner escape in any way.
4. [**including** bungling a crucifixion.]
 - 4a. **Roman law even laid the death penalty on any Roman soldier** who bungled a crucifixion, **so that the victim survived the crucifixion.**
5. [It was never done.] - I will split this into two claims.
 - 5a. No **Roman soldier** ever let a capital prisoner escape.
 - 6a. No **Roman soldier** ever **bungled a crucifixion, so that the victim survived the crucifixion.**

FILL IN STEPS

As usual, Kreeft and Tacelli fail to state the conclusion of this argument:

A. The Swoon Theory is false.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

Premise (1a) gets us close to the ultimate conclusion. There is just one unstated premise that needs to be made explicit:

1a. Jesus could not have survived crucifixion by Roman soldiers.

THEREFORE:

B. Jesus did NOT survive crucifixion by Roman soldiers.

THEREFORE:

A. The Swoon Theory is false.

Premises (5a) and (6a) would suffice by themselves to imply (1a):

5a. No Roman soldier ever let a capital prisoner escape.

6a. No Roman soldier ever bungled a crucifixion, so that the victim survived the crucifixion.

THEREFORE:

1a. Jesus could not have survived crucifixion by Roman soldiers.

If we take it that (5a) and (6a) provide a separate argument for (1a), then there is a very serious problem with the argument: premises (5a) and (6a) clearly beg the question. For example, the claim that *no Roman soldier ever bungled a crucifixion* ASSUMES that the crucifixion of Jesus was NOT “bungled”, i.e. that Jesus did NOT survive his crucifixion. But that is the very question at issue. So, on this interpretation the argument clearly

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

commits the FALLACY of BEGGING THE QUESTION, at least the argument of consisting of premises (5a) and (6a) as a separate argument in support of (1a).

Because the argument clearly BEGS THE QUESTION on that interpretation, it is more reasonable to adopt a different interpretation of the logical structure of this argument, where premises (2a), (3a), and (4a) are understood as part of an argument for premises (5a) and (6a). This way Kreeft and Tacelli are not simply ASSUMING (5a) and (6a) to be the case, but are providing an argument in support of those claims.

I take it that the basic logic of this argument concerns the concept of being “willing and able” to do something. The basic idea is that Roman soldiers were both highly motivated to make sure that the people the crucified did NOT survive the crucifixion, and that the Roman military procedure for crucifixion fully enabled them to consistently accomplish this goal:

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

3a. Roman law even laid the death penalty on any Roman soldier who let a capital prisoner escape in any way.

4a. Roman law even laid the death penalty on any Roman soldier who bungled a crucifixion, so that the victim survived the crucifixion.

THEREFORE:

C. All Roman soldiers were highly motivated to make sure that they never let a capital prisoner escape, and that no person they crucified ever survived the crucifixion.

2a. Roman military procedures for crucifixion were very careful to eliminate the possibility of a person surviving crucifixion.

THEREFORE:

5a. No Roman soldier ever let a capital prisoner escape.

AND

6a. No Roman soldier ever bungled a crucifixion, so that the victim survived the crucifixion.

The inferences in the above sub-argument are NOT deductively VALID inferences. However, premises (3a) and (4a) seem at least initially to provide a good reason in support of premise (C). Also, premises (C) and (2a) seem at least initially to provide a good reason in support of (6a).

The inference from (C) and (2a) to (5a), however, is very dubious. The fact that Roman soldiers were highly motivated to make sure that they never let a capital prisoner escape does NOT show that no Roman soldier ever let a capital prisoner escape. Strong motivation to do X (or to avoid doing X) is not sufficient reason to conclude that someone did NOT do X (or did NOT avoid doing X). Roman soldiers would also need to have the

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

ABILITY (not just the motivation) to never let a capitol prisoner escape, and there is no premise asserting they had such an ABILITY.

The inference from (C) and (2a) to (6a) seems to be a better and stronger inference than from (C) and (2a) to (5a), because (2a) suggests that Roman soldiers had the ABILITY to make sure that people did not ever survive crucifixion. Since (6a) is sufficient to support the sub-conclusion (1a), we can simply toss aside premise (5a) as unnecessary and irrelevant:

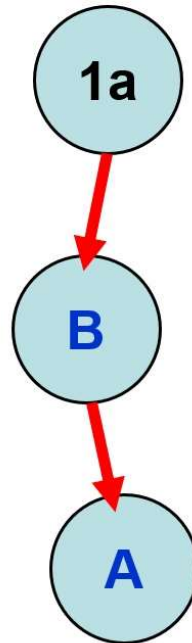
6a. No Roman soldier ever bungled a crucifixion, so that the victim survived the crucifixion.

THEREFORE:

1a. Jesus could not have survived crucifixion by Roman soldiers.

DIAGRAMMING THE ARGUMENT

Logical Structure of Final Inferences in Objection #1



1a. Jesus could not have survived crucifixion by Roman soldiers.

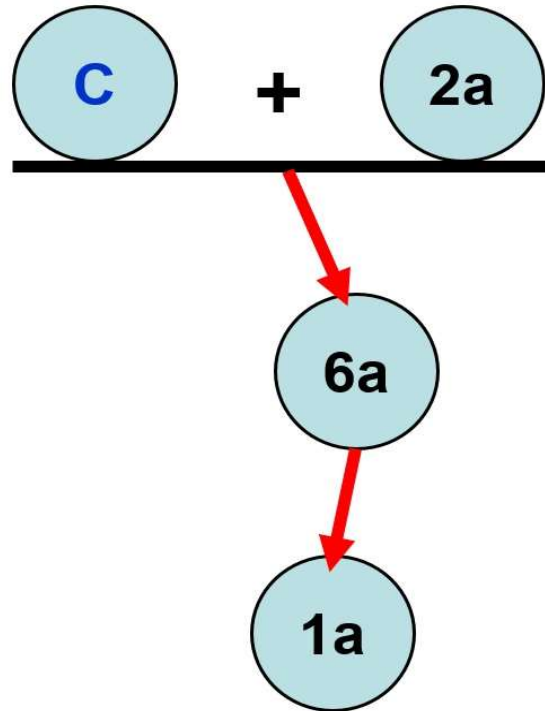
THEREFORE:

B. Jesus did NOT survive crucifixion by Roman soldiers.

THEREFORE:

A. The Swoon Theory is false.

Logical Structure of Sub-Argument for (1a)



C. All Roman soldiers were highly motivated to make sure that they never let a capitol prisoner escape, and that no person they crucified ever survived the crucifixion.

2a. Roman military procedures for crucifixion were very careful to eliminate the possibility of a person surviving crucifixion.

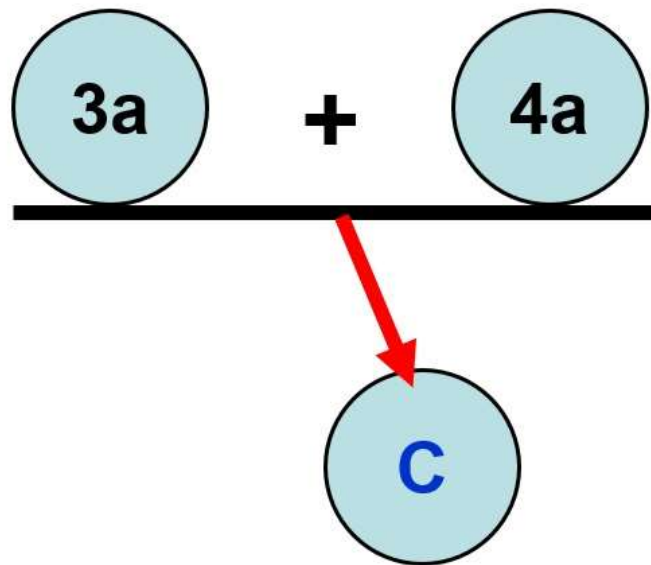
THEREFORE:

6a. No Roman soldier ever bungled a crucifixion, so that the victim survived the crucifixion.

THEREFORE:

1a. Jesus could not have survived crucifixion by Roman soldiers.

Logical Structure of Sub-Argument for (C)



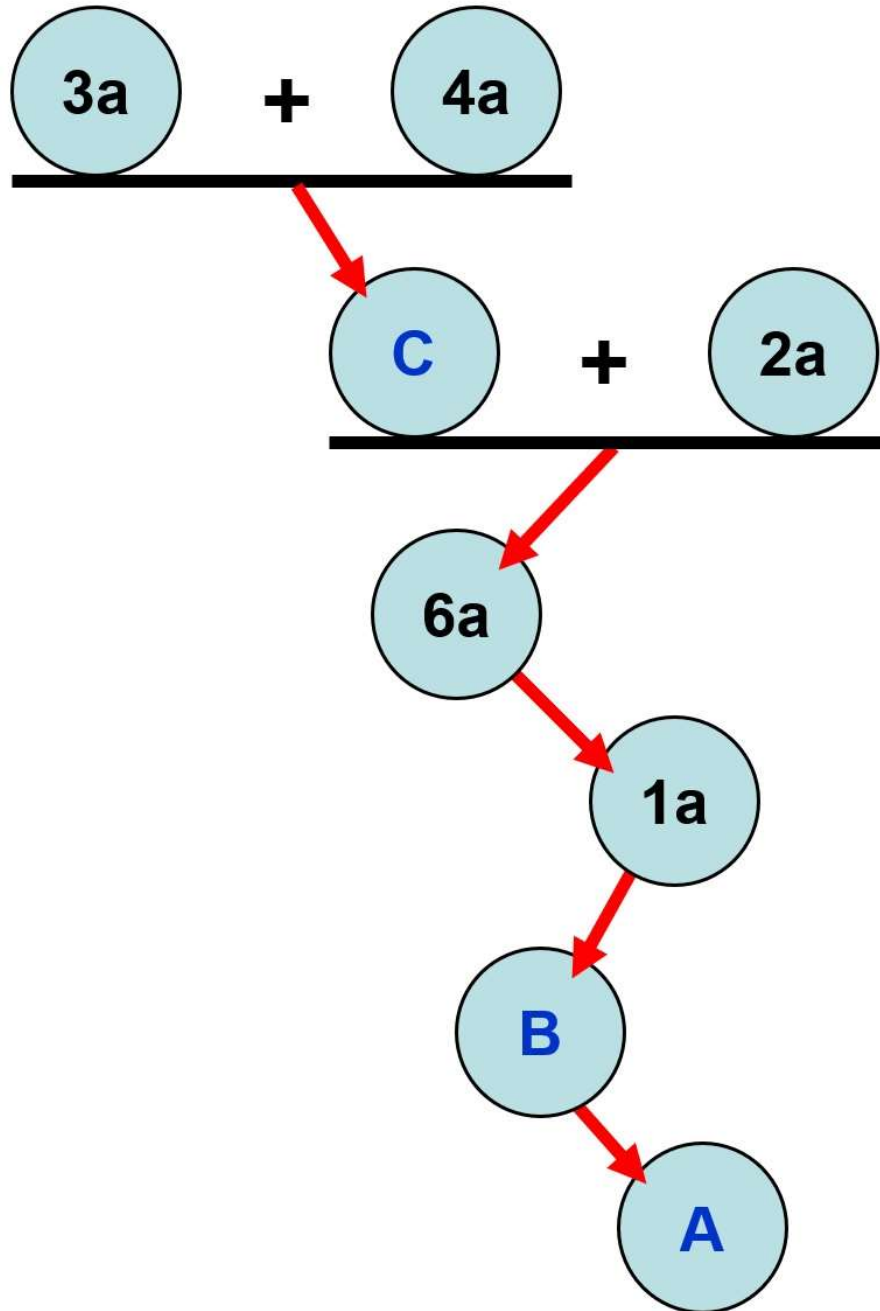
3a. Roman law even laid the death penalty on any Roman soldier who let a capital prisoner escape in any way.

4a. Roman law even laid the death penalty on any Roman soldier who bungled a crucifixion, so that the victim survived the crucifixion.

THEREFORE:

C. All Roman soldiers were highly motivated to make sure that they never let a capital prisoner escape, and that no person they crucified ever survived the crucifixion.

Logical Structure of Objection #1



ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTION #8: WHERE DID JESUS GO?

Kreeft and Tacelli's **Objection #8** against the *Swoon Theory* does not rest on Gospel passages:

If Jesus awoke from a swoon, where did he go? Think this through: you have a living body to deal with now, not a dead one. Why did it disappear? There is absolutely no data, not even any false, fantastic, imagined data, about Jesus' life after his crucifixion, in any sources, friend or foe, at any time, early or late. A man like that, with a past like that, would have left traces. (HCA, p. 184)

IDENTIFICATION STEPS

If Jesus awoke from a swoon, where did he go? – This is not a rhetorical question. This sentence does not appear to make any claim.

Think this through: you have a living body to deal with now, not a dead one. This sentence makes a claim, but it does not seem to be a significant claim.

Why did it disappear? This is also not a rhetorical question, although it does assume something:

- 1. [After Jesus was crucified and then allegedly came back to consciousness, he disappeared.]**
- 2. [There is absolutely no data, not even any false, fantastic, imagined data, about Jesus' life after his crucifixion, in any sources, friend or foe, at any time, early or late.]**
- 3. [A man like that, with a past like that,]**
- 4. [would have left traces.]**

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

CLARIFICATION STEPS

1. [After Jesus was crucified and then allegedly came back to consciousness, **he disappeared.**] I'm not going to clarify this claim, because it is just a less clear version of claim (2).
2. [There is absolutely no data, not even any false, fantastic, imagined data, about Jesus' life after his crucifixion, in any sources, friend or foe, at any time, early or late.] This claim seems sufficiently clear as it stands.
3. [A man like that, with a past like that,] This is a very unclear claim. I have no idea what Kreeft and Tacelli mean by these two instances of the phrase "like that". Perhaps a review of other Christian apologists who raise a similar objection against the *Swoon Theory* might provide a hint at what Kreeft and Tacelli had in mind here.
4. [would have left traces.] Because this is an objection against the *Swoon Theory*, it makes sense to restate this claim in terms of the *Swoon Theory*. Also, most of the objections that Kreeft and Tacelli make against the *Swoon Theory* can be understood as reduction-to-absurdity arguments, so it makes sense to understand claim (4) as a conditional claim indicating an implication of the *Swoon Theory*.
 - 4a. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN there would be historical data about Jesus' life after his crucifixion.

FILL IN STEPS

The core of the argument for **Objection #8** is clear:

4a. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN there would be historical data about Jesus' life after his crucifixion.

2. There is absolutely no data, not even any false, fantastic, imagined data, about Jesus' life after his crucifixion, in any sources, friend or foe, at any time, early or late.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is false.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS TO THE SWOON THEORY

Claim (3a) is supposed to be a reason in support of claim (4a), but (3a) is *very unclear* as it stands. Before we attempt to figure out what (3a) might mean, there is an obvious problem with premise (2) that needs to be addressed.

Premise (2) is clearly and obviously FALSE. We could just interpret premise (2) as meaning what it says, and immediately toss this argument aside as being UNSOUND. But it would be more reasonable and fairer to Kreeft and Tacelli, to see if there is a way to make some minor modifications to premise (2), so that it was not *clearly and obviously* FALSE, so that this key premise of their argument was true or at least *somewhat plausible*.

According to the Gospels and the book of Acts, and according to Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, a living Jesus made various appearances to his disciples and followers after he had been crucified. Kreeft and Tacelli are well aware of this, and yet premise (2) *directly contradicts these obvious facts* about the New Testament writings. The most reasonable conclusion is that Kreeft and Tacelli neglected to make some qualifications to premise (2), so that this claim would not clearly contradict these obvious facts about the New Testament.

Here is how I would modify premise (2) so that it does not directly contradict the above facts about the New Testament and is at least somewhat plausible:

2a. There is absolutely no data, not even any false, fantastic, imagined data, about Jesus' life after his crucifixion, other than some stories in the New Testament about alleged appearances of a living Jesus to some of his disciples that took place for a few weeks after Jesus was crucified and then the appearances ceased, in any sources, friend or foe, at any time, early or late.

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But if we make this modification to premise (2), the logic of the core argument for **Objection #8** will no longer be VALID:

4a. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN there would be historical data about Jesus' life after his crucifixion.

2a. There is absolutely no data, not even any false, fantastic, imagined data, about Jesus' life after his crucifixion, other than some stories in the New Testament about alleged appearances of a living Jesus to some of his disciples that took place for a few weeks after Jesus was crucified and then the appearances ceased, in any sources, friend or foe, at any time, early or late.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is false.

This argument is no longer a VALID *modus tollens* argument, because premise (2a) does not *deny the consequent* of the conditional claim made by (4a). Instead of denying the consequent, (2a) *affirms the consequent* of (4a), because it implies that the New Testament contains *historical data about Jesus' life after his crucifixion*.

In order to preserve the logical validity of the original argument, we must now also modify premise (4a), so that premise (2a) *denies the consequent* of the conditional claim.

4b. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN there would be historical data about Jesus' life after his crucifixion and after his alleged appearances to some of his disciples that took place for a few weeks after Jesus was crucified.

2a. There is absolutely no data, not even any false, fantastic, imagined data, about Jesus' life after his crucifixion, other than some stories in the New Testament about alleged appearances of a living Jesus to some of his disciples that took place for a few weeks after Jesus was crucified and then the appearances ceased, in any sources, friend or foe, at any time, early or late.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is false.

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As I stated previously, premise (3) is too UNCLEAR to provide any significant support for the key premise (4b), so the following sub-argument is a bad argument:

3. A man like that with a past like that would have left traces.

THEREFORE:

4b. IF the Swoon Theory is true, THEN there would be historical data about Jesus' life after his crucifixion and after his alleged appearances to some of his disciples that took place for a few weeks after Jesus was crucified.

In order to try to clarify premise (3), I took a look at Josh McDowell's objections against the *Swoon Theory*, to see if McDowell put forward a similar objection, and if so, how he supported the key premise (4b) or a similar key premise. There was no similar objection in McDowell's book *The Resurrection Factor*, but I did find a similar objection in his book *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (hereafter: EDV). The very last objection that McDowell raises against the *Swoon Theory* is given in a quote from William Milligan (*The Resurrection of Our Lord*, 1881, p78):

everything upon such a chance. It would have proved Him to be simply an excited enthusiast if He had.

Still further, if the Resurrection of our Lord was only recovery from a swoon, what became of Him for the remainder of His days? There can be no more thought of Resurrection or Ascension into heaven. He must have retired to some solitary retreat unknown even to the most attached of His disciples. While His Church was rising around Him, shaking the old world to its foundations, and introducing everywhere amidst many difficulties a new order of things,—while it was torn by controversies, surrounded by temptations, exposed to trials, placed in short in the very circumstances that made it most dependent on His aid,—He was absent from it, and spending the remainder of His days, whether few or many, in what we can describe by no other term than ignoble solitude. And then at last He must have died—no one can say either where, or when, or how! There is not a ray of light to penetrate the darkness, and these early Christians, so fertile, we are told, in legends, have not a single legend to give us help.

What has been said is a sufficient answer to the theory we are dealing with. But there is another still more conclusive. If the Risen Jesus was thus Jesus recovered from a swoon, He must have been exactly the same as He was before He died upon the cross, He must have had the same

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According to Milligan, if the *Swoon Theory* is true, then Jesus “must have retired to some solitary retreat unknown even to the most attached of His disciples.” In order for there to be no historical record of Jesus’ activity after the few weeks of appearances of the “risen” Jesus to his disciples.

Furthermore, Milligan clearly finds this to be implausible or very improbable, because Jesus would have wanted to give “aid” to his disciples in their struggles to establish the Christian church. Thus, Milligan thinks that the *Swoon Theory* is improbable, because it implies that Jesus would have remained in “ignoble solitude” when his disciples were in desperate need of his guidance.

Since Kreeft and Tacelli appear to have borrowed many of their objections against the *Swoon Theory* from Josh McDowell, it is reasonable to use McDowell’s final objection (the quote from Milligan) against the *Swoon Theory* in EDV, which was published in 1972, more than two decades before Kreeft and Tacelli published HCA, as a supplement to clarify their UNCLEAR argument in support of the key premise (4b):

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B. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN either (a) after his crucifixion and after a few weeks of appearing to his disciples Jesus retired to some solitary retreat unknown even to the most attached of his disciples, or (b) there would be historical data about Jesus' life after his crucifixion and after his alleged appearances to some of his disciples that took place for a few weeks after Jesus was crucified.

C. It is NOT the case that: after his crucifixion and after a few weeks of appearing to his disciples Jesus retired to some solitary retreat unknown even to the most attached of his disciples.

THEREFORE:

4b. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN there would be historical data about Jesus' life after his crucifixion and after his alleged appearances to some of his disciples that took place for a few weeks after Jesus was crucified.

Premise (C) is based on an assumption about Jesus' character and motivations:

D. IF after his crucifixion and after a few weeks of appearing to his disciples Jesus retired to some solitary retreat unknown even to the most attached of his disciples, THEN Jesus refused to provide guidance to his disciples when his disciples were in desperate need of his guidance.

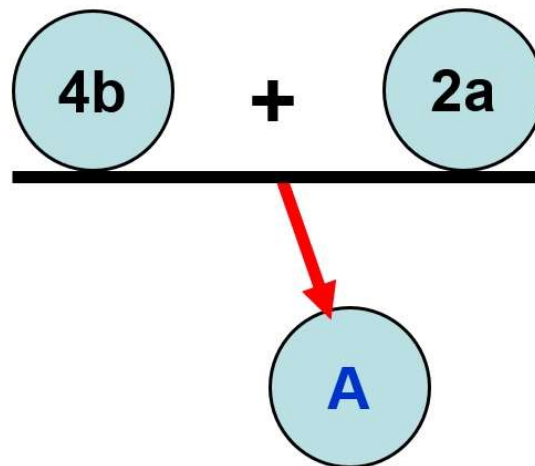
E. Jesus would NOT ever refuse to provide guidance to his disciples when they were in desperate need of his guidance.

THEREFORE:

C. It is NOT the case that: after his crucifixion and after a few weeks of appearing to his disciples Jesus retired to some solitary retreat unknown even to the most attached of his disciples.

DIAGRAMMING THE ARGUMENT

Logical Structure of the Core Argument for Objection #8



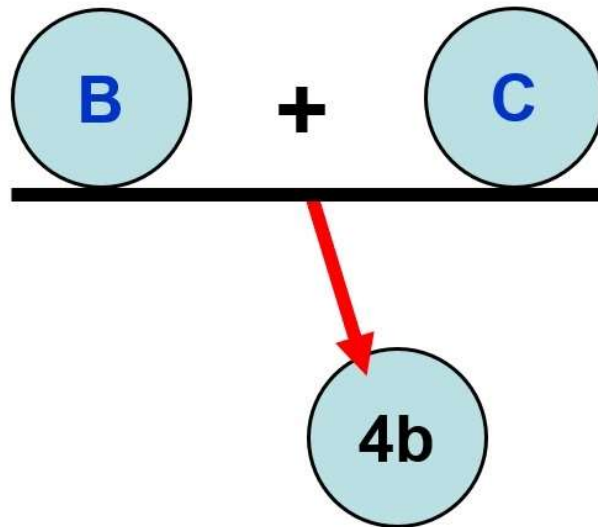
4b. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN there would be historical data about Jesus' life after his crucifixion and after his alleged appearances to some of his disciples that took place for a few weeks after Jesus was crucified.

2a. There is absolutely no data, not even any false, fantastic, imagined data, about Jesus' life after his crucifixion, other than some stories in the New Testament about alleged appearances of a living Jesus to some of his disciples that took place for a few weeks after Jesus was crucified and then the appearances ceased, in any sources, friend or foe, at any time, early or late.

THEREFORE:

A. The *Swoon Theory* is false.

Logical Structure of Argument for (4b)



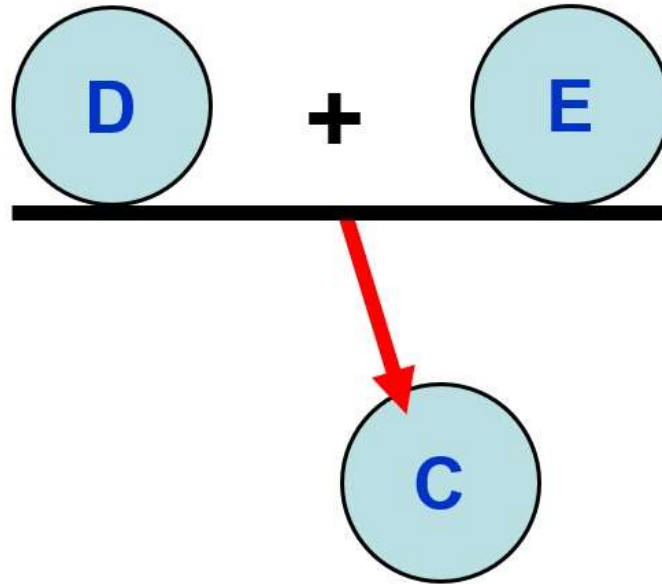
B. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN either (a) after his crucifixion and after a few weeks of appearing to his disciples Jesus retired to some solitary retreat unknown even to the most attached of his disciples, or (b) there would be historical data about Jesus' life after his crucifixion and after his alleged appearances to some of his disciples that took place for a few weeks after Jesus was crucified.

C. It is NOT the case that: after his crucifixion and after a few weeks of appearing to his disciples Jesus retired to some solitary retreat unknown even to the most attached of his disciples.

THEREFORE:

4b. IF the *Swoon Theory* is true, THEN there would be historical data about Jesus' life after his crucifixion and after his alleged appearances to some of his disciples that took place for a few weeks after Jesus was crucified.

Logical Structure of Sub-Argument for (C)



D. IF after his crucifixion and after a few weeks of appearing to his disciples Jesus retired to some solitary retreat unknown even to the most attached of his disciples, **THEN** Jesus refused to provide guidance to his disciples when his disciples were in desperate need of his guidance.

E. Jesus would NOT ever refuse to provide guidance to his disciples when they were in desperate need of his guidance.

THEREFORE:

C. It is NOT the case that: after his crucifixion and after a few weeks of appearing to his disciples Jesus retired to some solitary retreat unknown even to the most attached of his disciples.

Logical Structure of Objection #8

