

## Peer Review

# Review of: "Square Pegs for Round Holes? Applying Historical Method to Jesus' Resurrection"

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I agree with most of the author's analysis. The conclusion that the resurrection hypothesis is credible if—and only if—one believes in a miracle-producing God and accepts the relevant testimonies in the scriptures as factual seems to me inescapable. The suggestion that a combination of personal hallucination and public delusion is the causal underpinning for the available records seems to me entirely reasonable.

I would add that a similar logic applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to other beliefs in supernatural occurrences.

One minor technical note (p.12): If several independent and essentially identical witnesses to something are (somehow) assigned reliabilities (meaning the probabilities that their assertions are true)  $r_1, r_2, \dots, r_n$ , the combined reliability of their testimonies is

$$R = 1 - (1 - r_1) * (1 - r_2) * \dots * (1 - r_n).$$

Thus, for three witnesses each with a reliability of 0.9, the combined reliability is 0.999; it drops to 0.875 for three semi-reliable ( $r=0.5$ ) witnesses and to 0.21 for 10%-reliable ones. Consilience of independent evidence matters, in science as well as in the courtroom. The point is that the testimonies for the resurrection cannot be assumed to be either independent or unbiased.

## Declarations

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.