

Reasoning Out of the Scriptures

- I. This study sets forth the Biblical method for arriving at truth, our chief pursuit. **PRO 23:23; 4:7.**
 - A. It sets forth the importance of linear, connected thought that produces sound conclusions as opposed to scattered, disconnected thought that produces invalid or indeterminate conclusions. This may be expressed:
 - 1. Valid premise + valid reasoning = valid conclusion.
 - 2. Valid premise + invalid reasoning = invalid conclusion.
 - 3. Invalid premise + valid reasoning = invalid conclusion.
 - 4. Invalid premise + invalid reasoning = indeterminate conclusion.
 - B. It sets forth the necessary subjugation of emotion to logic.
 - C. It sets forth the method of Paul, our pattern. **ACT 17:2-3; 18:4-5.**
 - 1. This implies that his hearers recognized the Scriptures as having merit.
 - 2. Mind that Paul never reasoned from rabbinical traditions/the oral law.
 - 3. He reasoned from philosophy or the creation among those who had no history with the Scriptures. **ACT 17:22-31.**
 - 4. Before you can reason with some *from* the Scriptures, it may be necessary to reason them *to* the Scriptures: setting forth the necessities of First Cause/Creator, communication in language via recorded revelation, evidences in creation and history or from your personal salvation that Scripture is true, etc. But mind that reasoning is still here a requirement.
- II. reason: *intr.* To think in a connected, sensible, or logical manner; to employ the faculty of reason in forming conclusions (in general, or in a particular instance).
 - A. The word *logic* comes from the Greek word *logos*, which means *word, speech, discourse, reason*.
 - B. The same Greek word *logos* is translated *Word* in **JOH 1:1, 14.**
 - C. The Word, Jesus Christ, is the highest expression of reason/logic.
 - D. His testimony is the spirit of prophecy, i.e., He is the author of all Scripture. **REV 19:10.**
 - E. In order to think logically you do not need to learn all the forms and figures of correct thinking taught in books on logic. You need only learn to think Biblically.
 - F. If one has the mindset of Jesus Christ, which is laid out in the Scriptures, he will think logically. **PHI 2:5-8.**
 - G. The mind of Christ is humble submission to God. Such a mindset is essential to the discovery of truth. **PRO 11:2.**
 - H. With the mind of Christ one is equipped to judge all things, to arrive at correct conclusions. **1CO 2:15-16.**
 - I. God has so structured the creation that it cannot be rightly comprehended without Jesus Christ.
 - 1. All things are created by and for the Lord Jesus Christ and God has given Him preeminence in all things so that He is the unifying whole into which all facts are fitted and related. **COL 1:16-19; 2:3.**
 - 2. Therefore, in the absence of the divine revelation that centers in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the truth (**JOH 14:6**), all reasoning no matter how sound will fall short of leading the mind to the ultimate knowledge of truth.
 - 3. For example, with just the world to study and no Bible to read, man cannot find out the beginning or the ending of the world. **ECC 3:11; HEB 11:3; 2PE 3:5-8.**
 - 4. There are things that man cannot discover with just his senses and reasoning power. **1CO 2:9-10.**

5. If a man rejects Scripture and relies solely on his own reasoning, he is doomed to folly and vanity, that is, so much money and time wasted on education that gets him nothing but a Doctor of Delusion degree from Damn U.
ROM 1:21-22; 1CO 1:20-21; 3:18-20; 2TH 2:11-12.
6. Not even God the Father can be known without Jesus Christ Who declares Him.
JOH 1:18; MAT 11:27; 1JO 2:23.
7. Recognizing Jesus Christ the *Logos/Word* as the Beginning, Ending, Center and Pinnacle of everything is the key to sound reasoning.
8. “The nature of Christ’s existence is mysterious, I admit;...Reject it and the world is an inexplicable riddle; believe it and the history of our race is satisfactorily explained.” (Napoleon Bonaparte)

III. Emotional thinking interferes with rational faith that is fixed on truth.

- A. emotion: *Psychology*. A mental ‘feeling’ or ‘affection’ (e.g. of pleasure or pain, desire or aversion, surprise, hope or fear, etc.), as distinguished from cognitive or volitional states of consciousness...
- B. faith: Belief, trust, confidence. Confidence, reliance, trust (in the ability, goodness, etc., of a person; in the efficacy or worth of a thing; or in the truth of a statement or doctrine).
- C. We are to believe truth and not believe error. **2TH 2:11-14; 1JO 4:1.**
- D. Therefore, Biblical faith requires one’s reason to discern the truth that is to be believed.
 1. By logic, we arrive at the knowledge of the truth we are called to believe.
 2. Hence, Paul *reasoned* out of the Scriptures in an effort to persuade men to believe the truth of Jesus Christ.
 3. Those who have no faith in the truth are *unreasonable*. **2TH 3:2.**
- E. When emotions dominate, they obstruct the attainment and exercise of rational faith.
 1. We probably have all experienced moments of intense excitement, joy, sadness, distress or fear, etc., where our rational thinking shut down. Ever come under the sway of an expert salesman who knew how to get you “under the ether” emotionally?
 2. Fear and joy confounded the disciples’ belief in what they saw. **LUK 24:36-41.**
 3. The fool, who is not rational, is characterized by the uncontrolled emotion of anger. **PRO 12:16; 14:17; ECC 7:9.**
 4. When the disciples were full of fear because of the storm, they had *no faith*. **MAR 4:35-40.**
 5. Rhoda’s excitement caused an irrational response. **ACT 12:13-14.**
 6. Those who “...have pleasure in unrighteousness...” (**2TH 2:12**) *believe not the truth*.
 - a. They would rather feel good even if it is something wrong.
 - b. This is the dangerous power of positive emotions for emotion’s sake.
 - c. A country song said, “If lovin’ you is wrong, I don’t want to be right.”
 7. Emotion should properly *respond to* truth (**PSA 119:128, 162; 2KI 22:11**), not be the determiner of truth.
 - a. Truth must be determined rationally, not emotionally.
 - b. Emotions need to be brought under control of the *logos*, i.e., the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the ultimate expression of *logic*.
1CO 9:27; EPH 4:17.
- F. We are to guide our hearts (the seat of emotions) not be guided by our hearts. **PRO 23:19.**
- G. Conversion demands “...repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (**2TI 2:25-26**).
 1. Emotion-led thinking is one of the things to repent of in deference to truth.
 2. Through the truth we may recover ourselves from the emotional traps by which the

devil takes us captive.

- IV. Arriving at truth by reason demands that there must be truth that can be known and known with certitude (subjective certainty...absence of doubt).
- A. truth: Conformity with fact; agreement with reality; accuracy, correctness, verity (of statement or thought).
 - B. Truth is an inescapable concept. If there is no truth, is it true that there is no truth?
 - 1. If it is true that there is no truth, then there is truth.
 - 2. If there is truth, then it is not true that there is no truth.
 - C. Without truth, there can be no profitable communication. **EPH 4:25.**
 - 1. Without truth, nothing is knowable.
 - 2. We cannot know if one is telling the truth unless we know what the truth is.
 - 3. There is no way to know what truth is if there is no truth to know.
 - 4. "There is no truth to know" is self-refuting since that statement must be true for its proposition to be valid, which means that the statement is false.
 - D. There are five states of mind with regard to knowing:
 - 1. Ignorance. The mind is without knowledge.
 - 2. Doubt. The mind is suspended between judgments and thus arrives at no decision.
 - 3. Suspicion. The mind inclines toward a position but without commitment.
 - 4. Opinion. The mind decides in favor of a judgment, but with the fear of error.
 - 5. Certitude. The mind gives a firm assent to a judgment without fear of error due to recognized valid reasons.
 - E. We can either know with certitude or we cannot.
 - 1. Sceptics deny that we can know with certitude. This doctrine is self-refuting since it demands that one certainly know that he cannot know with certitude.
 - 2. No sceptic can live daily life without practicing a belief in certitude.
 - 3. Sceptics argue that it is certain that there is no certitude. If so, there is certitude.
 - 4. Sceptics argue that we must doubt everything to avoid error.
 - a. However, this admits that there is doubt versus certainty and error versus truth.
 - b. If these distinctions are accepted as certain, then everything is not doubted.
 - c. "We must doubt everything to avoid error" is a statement of certainty.
 - d. If "We must doubt everything to avoid error" is valid, then one must doubt that statement.
 - 5. Sceptics either have valid reasons for doubting everything or they do not.
 - a. If they have valid reasons to doubt, then those reasons are known for certain and everything is not doubted.
 - b. If they have no valid reasons to doubt everything, then their scepticism is overthrown.
 - 6. Sceptics are conscious of their own doubting. If they were not, they would not be aware of it and arguing about it.
 - a. Their doubting argues for the certainty of their existence.
 - b. If they doubt their existence, then who is doing the doubting?
 - 7. Since the doctrine that we cannot know with certitude is self-refuting and irrational, it stands that we can know with certitude.
 - F. Therefore, we can know with certitude and there is truth to be known with certitude.
 - G. Because truth can be known, men are without excuse before God. **ROM 1:18-23, 28.**
 - 1. Fallen man cannot know spiritual truth because he has not the spiritual capacity. **1CO 2:14.**

2. But fallen man can know natural truth, which proves God's existence.

- V. All knowledge is based in first principles which are self-evident. These cannot be refuted without assuming them.
- A. The Principle of My Own Existence, aka, The Principle of Identity.
 - 1. I am I. If I am not, then I am not I.
 - 2. To say, "I am not," I must say, "I am." I have to affirm my existence to deny it.
 - B. The Principle of Contradiction.
 - 1. It is impossible for the same thing both to be and not to be at the same time. Otherwise stated, "A" cannot be "non-A" when all factors are identical.
 - 2. Example.
 - a. "Long hair is always good." and "Long hair is always bad."
 - b. If all factors are identical, these are contradictory statements.
 - c. These are not contradictory statements if factors differ. If the former is referring to hair on a woman but the latter is referring to hair on a man, the statements are not contradictory. The apparent contradiction was owing to a lack of detail or context.
 - 3. To deny the necessity and validity of the Principle of Contradiction would be to strip words of their fixed meaning and render speech useless, since it eliminates distinction between things. Bleach, milk and water would all be the same thing. Truth and falsity would be the same thing.
 - C. The Principle of Sufficient Reason.
 - 1. Everything that exists must have a sufficient reason for its existence.
 - 2. Otherwise stated, "Nothing produces nothing." It is logically impossible for something to be produced from nothing.
 - 3. This principle is the basis of the Law of Cause and Effect.
 - 4. The universe either exists by magic or by an outside First Cause.
 - D. The Principle of the Essential Trustworthiness of My Reason.
 - 1. This affirms that one's reason is capable of knowing truth.
 - 2. The self-evident nature of this was addressed in the foregoing refutation of scepticism.
 - E. The above four principles enable us to know with certainty truth from error, right from wrong, and they interrelate.
 - 1. The Principle of Identity affirms that a thing is as it is. Since a thing is what it is, it cannot *not* be what it is at the same time, all factors bring equal (which is the Principle of Contradiction).
 - 2. Since a thing can't be and not be at the same time with identical factors in play, this means that it has a sufficient reason for its existence (which is the Principle of Sufficient Reason).
 - 3. I know the Principle of Identity and the principles which arise from it because my reason is capable of recognizing the existence of things (which is the Principle of the Essential Trustworthiness of My Reason).
 - 4. All these principles distill down to the fact that there is truth which can be known with certitude.
 - F. All of this is known intuitively by a rational mind.
 - 1. Apart from a disruption of rational thinking because of biological, chemical, traumatic or some other tangible source of disruption, the only way of overriding this intuitive knowledge is by deception masquerading as wisdom: a lie posing as truth.

2. We are warned against the influence of philosophy and vain deceit (the wisdom of this world). **COL 2:8.**
3. “Education is useless without the Bible.” (Noah Webster)

VI. Faith is the glue which enables us to connect together what we know and it enables us to know more of what is knowable.

- A. Faith and knowledge work in tandem. **EPH 4:13; 1TI 4:3; 1JO 4:16.**
 1. faith: Belief, trust, confidence. Confidence, reliance, trust (in the ability, goodness, etc., of a person; in the efficacy or worth of a thing; or in the truth of a statement or doctrine).
 2. knowledge: The fact of knowing a thing, state, etc., or (in general sense) a person; acquaintance; familiarity gained by experience... Acquaintance with a fact; perception, or certain information of, a fact or matter...
- B. Knowing the facts of Christ, we believe them. Knowing Christ Himself, we trust Him.
- C. If one does not believe on the Lord Jesus, he lacks that which connects all facts together.
- D. The knowledge of God provides the basis for faith (**PSA 9:10**). The more one knows the Lord, the more reason one sees to trust Him.
- E. Just as knowledge provides the information upon which faith acts, the act of faith grasps the knowledge that is available.
- F. Unbelief hinders the acquisition of knowledge even when the information is right in front of us. **JOH 14:7-11; LUK 16:31.**
 1. Consider the failure of the disciples to understand the teaching of our Lord regarding the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees. **MAT 16:5-12 c/w MAR 8:14-21.**
 - a. The disciples *knew* that our Lord Jesus fed the multitudes with a little bread and fishes as their answers revealed.
 - b. But lacking faith, that knowledge did not affect them as it should. They did not connect the facts they knew to the present situation.
 - c. They reasoned (**MAT 16:7; MAR 8:16-17**) but their reasoning process was defective because it lacked faith.
 2. Consider the evil example of Israel in the wilderness. **HEB 3:17-19.**
 - a. They *knew* the miracles God had already performed for them.
 - b. But they did not connect that knowledge to fresh challenges because their knowledge was not coupled with faith.
 - c. Hence, their knowledge did not profit them (**HEB 4:1-2**). It was all the same as if they did not know at all.
 3. These examples are basic issues with which we all may struggle. We may *know* that God is all powerful and faithful to His own words of promise but that knowledge will not have the strengthening and transforming effect in us if we do not *trust* His power and promises.
 - a. It is one thing to know a fact and to believe that fact to be true. Devils do as much. **MAR 1:24; JAM 2:19.**
 - b. It is another thing to trust that fact so that it influences my life.
 - c. This is the difference between “belief that” and “belief in.”
 - (1) One may, based upon evidence, *believe that* a bulletproof vest stops a pistol round.
 - (2) The real test is when one wearing that vest is forced to rely on it to do what one *believes that* it can do. That’s “*belief in*.”

- VII. There are two types of reasoning in formal logic: inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning. Another form of reasoning is *abductive reasoning*.
- VIII. Abductive reasoning is also called “inference to the most reasonable explanation” and is a common process used in everyday thought.
- A. Abductive arguments are not necessarily deductively valid.
 - B. Abductive arguments can be challenged by coming up with a better explanation for the premises or by finding additional relevant evidence that isn’t well-explained by the conclusion (in criminal trials this is called *exculpatory* evidence).
 - C. Evidential data is collected, collated, and compared with background knowledge to form a conclusion.
 1. Example: Bill tells Fred that Ann has a crush on him. Fred’s face turns red and Bill concludes it is because Fred was embarrassed.
 - a. The conclusion is not *guaranteed* by the premises. Fred’s red face may be a coincidence caused by a hot pepper he just swallowed or by some random sickness recently contracted and which coincidentally flared up.
 - b. In lieu of valid evidence for these other explanations, and knowing human nature, Bill is justified in concluding that Fred was embarrassed by the news. Other evidences like body language or speech might confirm this.
 2. Good explanations tend to fit with current details and background knowledge and are simpler than alternatives. This is basically the principle of “Occam’s Razor” (*for purposes of explanation, things not known to exist should not, unless it is absolutely necessary, be postulated as existing*).
 - D. Possible explanations for something are reduced to the most reasonable explanation.
 1. Example: You come home to find the goldfish gone from its bowl. The door was locked. The windows are closed and locked. The alarm system is secure. There is water on the countertop around the bowl. The cat is gagging on something. Possible explanations:
 - a. Aliens beamed the fish, Star Trek style, to their craft for experiments. The cat was eating something when this happened, which made it choke.
 - b. The goldfish evolved legs and is hiding. The cat’s gagging is incidental.
 - c. Somebody with a goldfish obsession has a duplicate key and a means of defeating your alarm system. The cat was choked while trying to defend the goldfish.
 - d. The cat ate the goldfish.
 2. Example: The planet Neptune was discovered by abductive reasoning.
 - a. In the early 1800’s astronomers noticed discrepancies in the observed orbit of Uranus and what Newton’s Theory of Motion predicted the orbit should be.
 - b. It was possible that Newton’s Theory was wrong but it had held consistent in all other applications. This possibility did not agree with existing background knowledge.
 - c. It was possible that there was a cosmic warp unique to Uranus. But this was would have been speculation based upon nothing ever observed.
 - d. A better, simpler explanation was that there was an uncharted body that was affecting Uranus’ orbit. Further investigation confirmed this.
 - E. Of the possible explanations for something, the one that meets the following criteria is the most likely explanation (the truth):

1. The truth must be *feasible*. It has explanatory viability.
 2. The truth will usually be *straightforward*. The explanation demonstrates explanatory simplicity.
 3. The truth should be *exhaustive*. The explanation displays explanatory depth.
 4. The truth must be *logical*. The explanation possesses explanatory consistency.
 5. The truth will be *superior*. The explanation achieves explanatory superiority. It is the best conclusion from the evidence. “The true solution of every complicated problem proves itself by the fact that it explains and agrees with every feature thereof.” (Philip Mauro)
- F. The existence and power of God are evident from a fair evaluation of the creation by abductive reasoning. **PSA 19:1-3; ROM 1:18-20; ACT 14:17.**
1. There are four possibilities which would explain the existence of the universe.
 - a. *The universe spontaneously emerged from nothing*. All observation denies this. Something has never been seen to come out of nothing of its own accord.
 - b. *The universe is eternal*. This is refuted by the Second Law of Thermodynamics: the Law of Entropy. This law states that although the total amount of energy remains unchanged, there is a tendency for energy to become less available for useful work. In time, all matter tends to lose available energy. In other words, everything is wearing out.
 - (1) Even evolutionists are forced to measure time by decay rates.
 - (2) At present observed rates of entropy, if the universe has been here forever, it has long since been reduced to a net total of zero energy.
 - (3) The Bible confirms the Law of Entropy. **PSA 102:25-26.**
 - c. *The universe does not exist*. This position supposes that everything is imagined. This is legal and clinical insanity: the inability to cope with reality.
 - d. *A force greater than the universe brought it into existence*. In other words, “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth” (**GEN 1:1**).
 2. From observable evidence and the background knowledge of scientific principles, only the 4th alternative (above) explains the present phenomena.
 - a. There was a time when energy was being concentrated, not dissipated, through a process not presently observed.
 - b. Scripture affirms this very principle. **HEB 11:3.**
 - c. Then something happened and entropy began. The Bible identifies this as sin which caused universal death and corruption. **ROM 5:12; 8:21-22.**
 3. Furthermore, the existence of the present material universe is only part of the problem. If all the material of the universe did come into existence from nothing of its own accord, or if the material has always been here, how did life come from non-life? Where has non-living matter ever been seen to become living matter of its own accord?
 - a. Observation confirms the Law of Biogenesis (life only comes from life).
 - b. Atheistic evolution affirms (in the absence of proof) that life must have come from non-life sometime in the past. Mind that the same people tend to mock the idea of a bodily resurrection from death.
 - c. Further, if the evolutionist theorizes that there must always have been life, he has therefore granted that there is such a thing as eternal life.
 - d. The other alternative is that there has always been an intelligent source of life Who instilled that principle into matter in a creative act.

GEN 1:11, 21, 24; 2:7; ACT 17:24-25.

- G. Abductive reasoning supports the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
1. There are five minimal facts substantiated by both foes and friends of Christianity:
 - a. Jesus was a real person.
 - b. Jesus died on the cross and was buried.
 - c. Jesus' tomb was empty and nobody ever produced his body.
 - d. Jesus' disciples believed that they saw the resurrected Jesus.
 - e. Jesus' disciples were transformed following their alleged resurrection observations.
 2. Here is a list of possible alternative explanations for the resurrection story:
 - a. The disciples were wrong about Jesus' death. He survived and reappeared.
 - b. The disciples lied about the resurrection. Perhaps they stole the body.
 - c. The disciples were delusional. Perhaps they hallucinated.
 - d. The disciples were fooled by an imposter.
 - e. The disciples' observations were distorted later. Jesus may have been a real person but the resurrection is a legendary and historically late exaggeration.
 3. *Were the disciples wrong about the death?* Were their narratives (the gospels) based upon faulty, biased information?
 - a. Many first and early second-century *unfriendly* Roman and Jewish sources (Josephus, Babylonian Talmud) affirmed that Jesus was crucified and died.
 - b. Roman guards faced death if they allowed a prisoner to survive crucifixion. Would they be careless enough to remove a living person from the cross?
 - c. Jesus would have had to control His blood loss from the abuse in order to survive but He was pinned to the cross and unable to do so.
 - d. Jesus displayed wounds after the resurrection but never behaved as one who was severely wounded and recovering in spite of the fact that He appeared only days after the trauma.
 - e. Jesus disappeared from the historical record after His reported resurrection and ascension and was not sighted again (as one might expect of a 33-year old recovered from his wounds and ambitious to establish himself as a leader of a movement).
 4. *Did the disciples lie about the resurrection? Did they steal His body?*
 - a. This would not account for the transformed lives of the apostles who went on to imperil themselves rather than deny the resurrection.
 - b. If the whole resurrection story was a fantasy, that would have become evident in short order and the wisest thing for the authorities would have been to let it fizzle and self-destruct (**ACT 5:38**), yet they persistently tried to silence the disciples' efforts.
 - c. People local to the event would have known it was a lie but years later there were still hundreds of corroborating witnesses to the resurrection.
1CO 15:3-8.
 - d. Mass conspiracies involving many people over extended periods of time virtually never hold up and remain consistent but the resurrection account of witnesses remained consistent.
 - e. The Jewish authorities took precautions against the body being stolen and used as a prop for a movement (**MAT 27:62-66**). In so doing, they actually contributed to the integrity of the resurrection account.
 5. *Were the disciples delusional? Did they hallucinate?*
 - a. Individuals may have hallucinations, but the evidence of large groups of

- people having the same hallucination is scant.
- b. Short, momentary group hallucination may seem possible but long, sustained, detailed and consistent hallucination lack historical support and are intuitively unreasonable.
 - c. Not all the disciples were inclined favorably toward such a hallucination. To the contrary, they were skeptical and they didn't try to hide their skepticism in their narratives. **MAT 28:16-17; MAR 16:11-13; JOH 20:26-29.**
 - d. The hallucination theory doesn't account for the empty tomb and missing body.
6. *Were the disciples fooled by an imposter?*
- a. The impersonator would have had to duplicate the wound marks, including the flayed flesh on the back, torn-out beard, scalp wounds, piercings and stabbings.
 - b. The impersonator would have to be familiar enough with Jesus' mannerisms and statements to convince the disciples who knew the topic of the con better than anyone who could con them.
 - c. The disciples' skepticism was contrary to the necessary naivete that a con man could play to.
 - d. The impersonator would have had to be able to perform miracles (**JOH 20:30; ACT 1:2-3**), which supposes that the supernatural is a possibility.
 - e. Who would try to start a world religious movement if not one of the hopeful disciples? This theory requires someone with more motivation than the apostles themselves.
 - f. This theory does not account for the empty tomb and missing body.
7. *Were the disciples' observations later distorted?*
- a. In the earliest accounts of the disciples' activity after the crucifixion, they are seen citing the resurrection of Jesus as their primary piece of evidence that Jesus was God.
 - b. Students of the apostles (Ignatius, Polycarp, etc.) also recorded that the resurrection was a key component of the apostles' eye-witness testimony.
 - c. This theory does not account for the empty tomb or the missing body of Jesus. The tomb or the body of Jesus have not been exposed to demonstrate that this so-called late legend was false.
8. Abductive reasoning demands that the simplest, most reasonable explanation of the empty tomb and missing body of Jesus is that He arose bodily, appeared unto many with infallible proofs, transformed them from skepticism to life-forfeiting belief and dedication, and the disciples' writings which included their unbelief and belief are valid.
- a. When you have eliminated the impossible, the ridiculous and the unreasonable, whatever is left, however unsavory to the jurist, must be the truth.
 - b. An unbiased, reasonable jury would have to conclude in favor of Jesus.
 - c. It is not only the abundance of good evidences for the resurrection but also the lack of reasonable arguments against it that condemns unbelief in it.
 - d. "Much of the skepticism leveled at the biblical historical account is based on the presumption, even without evidential support, that the account is false unless corroborated. In essence, the gospel writers are guilty until proved innocent. There is no presumption of innocence for the authors of the New

Testament. Unlike other ancient historical witnesses, the writers of the Gospels are not afforded the luxury of presumed credibility when there is silence on a particular claim from other ancient sources.”

(J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity*, p. 208)

- H. As noted earlier, abductive reasoning does not guarantee a true conclusion, only the most reasonable conclusion based upon a reasonable interpretation of evidences in the light of background knowledge.
1. It may be deficient because of presuppositional error or bias (a faulty premise is the basis of how evidence is interpreted). Hasty conclusions are a result.
 2. It may be deficient because contrary evidences were not available or overlooked.
 3. For such reasons, a good legal system provides an appeal process to challenge a verdict.
- I. Distinctions need to be made between errors in *abductive* reasoning and errors in *inductive* reasoning or *deductive* reasoning.
1. “A material error may be due to the simple ignorance or the plain misapprehension of facts...Many mistakes in everyday life are due to hasty conclusions based on incomplete or faulty knowledge. There is no remedy for such errors except a careful study of the nature and circumstances of things. No rules of logic can hinder the mind from falling into errors of this type. Other errors, though, are *errors of argumentation*, based on the use of words or ideas which have a *deceptive resemblance to truth* and thereby lead to avoidable false conclusions.”
(Celestine Bittle, *The Science of Correct Thinking*)
 2. Making an error based upon inadequate data or imperfect background knowledge is one thing. Forcing an error by illogical argumentation is another.
 3. An errant conclusion from *abductive reasoning* may be owing to a logical error in *inductive reasoning*.
 - a. Example: Islamic law tends to discount a woman’s testimony. There are at least fourteen countries where a woman’s testimony is worth only half of a man’s testimony.
 - b. This presupposition corrupts the likelihood of arriving at truth by an error called *inadequate sampling* (more on this later). A false conclusion may result because of the sex of the witness, not because of the available facts.
 - c. Jesus did not trivialize a woman’s testimony. **MAR 16:9-14.**
- IX. *Deductive reasoning* is reasoning from a generalization to a particular case. This kind of reasoning involves the syllogism which consists of *major premise*, *minor premise*, *conclusion*.
- A. The major premise is a statement of general principle upon which the reasoning is based.
 - B. The minor premise is the particular case to which the general principle is applied.
 - C. The conclusion is the application of the general principle to the particular case. Example:

<u>Major premise:</u>	Hawkins Cheezies are the best cheesy-corn snack.
<u>Minor premise:</u>	Cheetos are not Hawkins Cheezies.
<u>Conclusion:</u>	Cheetos are not the best cheesy-corn snack.
- D. The general principle of the major premise may be arrived at by inductive reasoning.
- X. *Inductive reasoning* is reasoning from particular facts to a general principle which covers them or indicates what they have in common.
- A. We utilize inductive reasoning all the time when studying the Bible.

1. We compare spiritual things with spiritual, verses with verses, and arrive at doctrinal conclusions that account for all the facts related in the verses we compare.
 2. For example, the Bible does not expressly state that there are two salvations: (1) unconditional salvation to sonship, (2) conditional salvation to fellowship.
 - a. We see verses that clearly teach that we become children of God without any choice or works on our part: it is unconditional.
 - b. We see verses that clearly teach that our fellowship with God is conditioned upon our faith and works.
 - c. Because of the *law of contradiction* we know that things that are different cannot be the same.
 - d. We also know that since God's words (plural) are truth (singular), there are no contradictions in any of its teaching. **PSA 119:151; PRO 8:8.**
 - e. We conclude, therefore, that there are two different salvations, one unconditional and one conditional.
 - f. This conclusion covers all the facts in all the verses that speak of salvation.
- B. Inductive reasoning out of the Scriptures is based upon two logical foundations:
1. The Scriptures are the word of God Who cannot lie and are, therefore, absolute truth.
 2. Being absolute truth, the Scriptures are, therefore, without error and without contradiction internally and externally (nothing from without overthrows it).
 - a. In general, conclusions from inductive reasoning, like those from abductive reasoning, tend to be *probable* as opposed to *certain* because of the possibility of incomplete or faulty facts.
 - b. However, the Scriptures are a complete closed system and faultless. Therefore, conclusions logically derived from their information are guaranteed to be valid.
- C. A specific type of inductive reasoning is *reasoning by analogy*. We reason by analogy when we conclude that things that are alike in some respects will be alike in other respects as well.
1. Jesus reasoned by analogy in **MAT 21:33-46**.
 - a. The husbandmen killed the householder's son.
 - b. Hence, the vineyard was taken from them and let out to other husbandmen.
 - c. In like manner, the Jewish leaders would kill the Son of God.
 - d. Therefore, in like manner, God would take the kingdom from them and give it to another nation.
 2. We use this kind of reasoning when we conclude that as our natural generation was not by our own will, our spiritual generation is likewise not by our own will. **JOH 1:12-13; 6:63.**
 3. We use this kind of reasoning when we conclude that as one naturally dead is powerless to acquire natural life, so one that is spiritually dead is powerless to acquire spiritual life. **EPH 2:1.**
 4. We use this kind of reasoning when we conclude that we will not escape judgment if we duplicate the errors of God's people recorded for our admonition. **1CO 10:6-12.**
- D. Another specific type of inductive reasoning is *reasoning by cause and effect*. This type of reasoning concludes that like causes produce like effects and like effects indicate like causes.
1. We reason from *cause to effect* when we conclude that certain behaviors are going to have certain results.

- a. It is *cause to effect* reasoning that concludes that the effectual call of Christ certainly results in the dead (natural or spiritual) coming to life.
JOH 5:25, 28-29.
 - b. **JAM 1:15** is another example of *cause to effect* reasoning: where there is sin (the cause) there will be death (the effect).
 2. We reason from *effect to cause* when we conclude something based on the available evidence.
 - a. A doctor reasons from *effect to cause* when he infers a certain sickness (the cause) from certain symptoms (the effects).
 - b. Christ used *effect to cause* reasoning in **MAT 7:20** when He taught that we can know false prophets (the cause) by their fruits (the effect).
 - c. We use *effect to cause* reasoning when we conclude that one who manifests genuine faith (the effect) is one that was made spiritually alive (the cause).
1CO 1:18; 2:14; 1JO 5:1; GAL 5:22.
- E. In **ACT 2:25-32**, Peter used inductive reasoning regarding the proper application of **PSA 16:8-11**.
1. David is the author of **PSA 16:8-11**.
 2. David is dead. His flesh saw corruption.
 3. Hence, David could not have been speaking about himself.
 4. David was a prophet. He spoke of things to come.
 5. God promised to raise up one of David's descendants to sit on his throne.
 6. Peter concludes that **PSA 16:8-11** correctly applies to Jesus Christ, the descendant of David.
 7. The sum of what occurred in **ACT 2** can be expressed by a syllogism of *deductive* reasoning:
- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| <u>Major premise:</u> | The prophets declared specific facts about the Messiah and His ascension to David's throne. |
| <u>Minor premise:</u> | Jesus of Nazareth's conception, birth, life, death and resurrection perfectly and uniquely answer to those facts. |
| <u>Conclusion:</u> | Jesus of Nazareth is Israel's Messiah on David's throne. |
- F. Inductive reasoning is used to arrive at the conclusion that water baptism results in addition to the local church.
1. Those baptized were added the same day to the church. **ACT 2:41.**
 2. The Lord adds to the church such as should be saved (**ACT 2:47**) and baptized believers should be saved. **MAR 16:16.**
 3. The church is the kingdom of God preached from the days of John the Baptist.
 - a. Persons have entered that kingdom from time to time.
LUK 16:16; MAT 21:31-32.
 - b. Those who entered were repenting and being baptized. **LUK 7:29-30.**
 4. In **MAT 28:19-20**, Jesus said that those who are baptized are to be taught to observe all things that He commanded.
 - a. These things include instructions regarding behavior in the church.
 - b. Baptized persons out of the church could not observe all things Jesus commanded.
 5. Those baptized receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (**ACT 2:38**). This ministry of the Holy Ghost is within the body of Christ. **1CO 12:13.**
 6. No other criteria are given whereby persons are initially received as members of the

church.

7. There is no commandment for men to be joined to the Lord in a local church other than “Repent, and be baptized...”
8. Therefore, in view of these facts, the generalization may be made that persons are added to the church when they are baptized.
9. The conclusion of this inductive logic provides us with a major premise for the *deductive* logic we use to determine if a person’s baptism is valid:

Major Premise: A valid baptism results in church membership.
Minor Premise: Adam’s baptism did not result in church membership.
Conclusion: Adam’s baptism is not valid.

G. In **LUK 20:1-8**, the chief priests, scribes and elders reached an answer by inductive reasoning.

1. If they said John's baptism was from heaven, Jesus would pin them for not believing John.
2. The people regarded John as a prophet. If they said that John's baptism was of men, the people would stone them.
3. By connecting these facts together, they concluded that they could not tell from whence John's baptism came.
4. This is an example of *cause to effect* reasoning: “if this, then that.”
5. For them, confessed ignorance was the conclusion that would cover all the facts, and also cover their tail (their overriding fact). They then reasoned deductively:

Major premise: We must always cover our tail.
Minor premise: A truthful answer to Jesus will not cover our tail.
Conclusion: We must not truthfully answer Jesus’ question.

H. Consider the trilemma faced by the N.S. Presbyterian General Assembly in May, 1854.

1. What position should Protestants take on the Romish church: is she a true church of Jesus Christ or not?
2. To acknowledge that Rome was a true church of Christ would be a monstrous impropriety and would convict all Protestant sects of sin for they confess themselves schismatics.
3. To decide that Rome was not a true church would invalidate all her ordinances and consequently also nullify the baptisms and ordinations of all Protestant bodies, making them not true churches at all.
4. To say that such a question cannot be decided would raise the attention of the people and arouse suspicion as to the validity of Protestant churches everywhere.
5. Thus, they moved for an indefinite postponement of the question.
6. For them, their postponement was the best solution that would not expose their fundamental illegitimacy. They then reasoned deductively:

Major premise: We must consider ourselves legitimate churches.
Minor premise: Our descent from Roman Catholicism condemns us regardless of our opinion about it, positive or negative.
Conclusion: It is better to suppress this issue than expose our illegitimacy.

XI. Consider further thoughts about *deductive reasoning* which utilizes the syllogism of major

premise, minor premise, conclusion.

A. Things in the world exist in three ways.

1. They exist in the universal nature or type of the thing, such as *rock, water, cloud*, etc.
2. They exist in the particular embodiment of the thing: *that rock, that water, that cloud*, etc.
3. They exist in relationship to other things such as *that black rock, that polluted water, that dark cloud*.

B. The syllogism expresses the reality of things as they exist.

1. The *major premise* is the universal nature or type of a thing.
2. The *minor premise* is the particular embodiment of the thing.
3. The *conclusion* comes from the major premise through the minor premise and relates both premises to the thing under discussion.
4. Suppose we are discussing whether the NIV is scripture or not:

Major premise: Scripture is without error and internally consistent.

Minor premise: The NIV has obvious errors and inconsistencies.

Conclusion: The NIV is not scripture.

C. Scripture gives us universal propositions whereby we may use deductive reasoning to arrive at valid conclusions. Examples:

Major premise: Whosoever believes Jesus is the Christ is born of God (**1JO 5:1**).

Minor premise: Maria believes that Jesus is the Christ.

Conclusion: Maria is born of God.

Major premise: Whosoever believes on Jesus will not be ashamed (**ROM 10:11**).

Minor premise: Sarah believes on Jesus.

Conclusion: Sarah shall not be ashamed.

XII. An error to be avoided in argumentation is *equivocation*.

A. equivocation: The using (a word) in more than one sense; ambiguity or uncertainty of meaning in words; also [cf. Sp. *equivocacion*], misapprehension arising from the ambiguity of terms.

B. The unintentional aspect of equivocation can be avoided by clearly defining terms so that both parties are “on the same page.” Examples:

1. Somebody might say that they believe in the resurrection of the body but the body he is referring to is an immaterial body (e.g. the political body of the nation of Israel or that of a spirit [Jehovah’s Witness’s doctrine]) whereas you believe in the resurrection of flesh and blood.
2. Somebody might say that he has been baptized, thinking that baptism means a sprinkling or pouring when he was a baby whereas you understand that baptism is the immersing of a respondent to the call to repent, believe and follow Christ.
3. When you talk to someone about “the church,” does he understand that you are talking about a local congregation, not a denominational system or “all believers?”
4. Someone might tell you that he believes in the Trinity, which to him means Life, Truth, Love (Christian Scientist position) whereas you understand it to mean Three Persons yet One God, per **1JO 5:7**.
5. To the Mormon, Jesus Christ is the son of Adam who pre-existed as the spirit-

brother of Lucifer. Do not think that the Mormon and you are on the same page when you say you believe in Jesus Christ.

- C. Deceivers intentionally equivocate by evading clear definition of terms: “Corruption in doctrine works best when it is unfettered by any explicit statement of that doctrine. Error loves ambiguities. It does not desire to state its position clearly, either because it has no distinct position to state, or if stated, it would stand convicted of iniquities in the eyes of all honest and God fearing men.” (Martin L. Wagner, *Freemasonry, An Interpretation*, p. 539)
- D. A related problem is the deterioration of language where terms no longer mean what they once were established to mean.
 - 1. *Gay* used to mean, “...full of joy and mirth...Bright or lively-looking...”
 - 2. *Replenish* used to mean, “to make full of, to fill...” but now means “refill.” This is an important distinction if you are dealing with a Gap Theorist on **GEN 1:28**.
 - 3. Fluidity in language tends to run parallel with fluidity in morals: definitions change as a reflection of shifting morals.

XIII. The following is a list of fallacies in reasoning.

- A. Inadequate sampling is a fallacy in *inductive reasoning*.
 - 1. It is a generalization made on the basis of too few particulars or to the exclusion of particulars that would militate against it.
 - 2. An example of this fallacy was the charge of blasphemy leveled against Christ in **MAR 2:5-7**. The one particular the scribes excluded was the possibility of the Immanuel (“God with us”) prophecy being fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. **ISA 7:14**.
 - 3. Another example of this fallacy is the conclusion that God loves all men that ever lived based on the word “world” in **JOH 3:16**.
 - a. This generalization ignores the primary definition of world: The inhabitants of the earth, or a section of them.
 - b. This generalization ignores the many usages of the word “world” that demand limitations, such as **LUK 2:1; JOH 12:19; ROM 11:12, 15**.
 - c. This generalization also ignores the fact that Scripture declares that there are those whom God hates. **ROM 9:13**.
 - d. This generalization also ignores its own implication that if God’s love is eternal (and if it is not so, heaven is an insecure place), and if His love is universal, and if some men end up in hell, those in hell must be experiencing the eternal love of God for them.
 - 4. Another example of this fallacy is the conclusion that since no mention is made in **ACT 8:36-39** of the Ethiopian eunuch being joined to a church when he was baptized, he was therefore not joined to a church when he was baptized.
 - a. This generalization ignores all the particulars from other passages that establish that baptized persons are joined to a local church.
 - b. This ignores the fact that often a single passage does not give all the particulars pertaining to a subject mentioned in the passage.
 - c. This ignores the prophecy of **ISA 56:3-5** that teaches that God would give unto eunuchs a place in His house.
 - d. This ignores the fact that the principle of *reductio ad absurdum* (if an error proves anything, it proves too much) would show that such reasoning must also conclude from **ACT 5:14** that repentance and baptism aren’t even necessary for church membership since they are not mentioned there.
- B. Faulty analogy is another fallacy in *inductive reasoning*.
 - 1. It takes place when a general similarity between things is incorrectly assumed from

- particular similarities.
2. An example of this fallacy is the Catholic error that the eating of Christ's flesh and the drinking of Christ's blood in **JOH 6:53-56** is the same as partaking of the Lord's supper in **MAT 26:26-29**.
 - a. **JOH 6:53-56** and **MAT 26:26-29** are similar in that both speak of eating and drinking and both speak of Christ's body and blood.
 - b. However, this generalization ignores the fact that **JOH 6:53-56** is spoken in the *present* tense *before* the Lord's supper was instituted.
 - c. This generalization also ignores that Scripture makes clear that in the Lord's supper bread is eaten and the fruit of the vine is drunk.
 3. A common example of this fallacy is the assumption that because two people are members of the same church, they are sure to be compatible in everything.
- C. Faulty causal relationships are a fallacy in *inductive reasoning*.
1. It occurs when a cause and effect relationship is assumed that does not actually exist. Bad “science” and superstitions often arise from this errant form of reasoning.
 - a. It was once thought that tomatos were deadly to humans. *Inadequate sampling* failed to consider that not everyone suffered ill effects from tomatos, nor did it consider that the acid from the tomatos leached out lead from the pewter plates that they were often served on.
 - b. Astrologers and fortune-tellers prey on the superstitious with false claims of cause and effect.
 2. The barbarians of **ACT 28:1-4** committed this fallacy when they concluded that Paul was a murderer because he was bitten by a viper. Their *inadequate sampling* (not considering that truly good people are also bitten by snakes and truly evil people are not always bitten by snakes) led them to form a faulty generalization which became the basis of a faulty major premise for deductive reasoning:

<u>Major premise:</u>	Serial trouble proves one to be a murderer.
<u>Minor premise:</u>	Paul suffered serial trouble.
<u>Conclusion:</u>	Paul is a murderer.
 3. Israel committed this fallacy when they assumed that their former prosperity was due to their having burned incense to the *queen of heaven*. **JER 44:17-18**.
 4. Job's friends were guilty of this fallacy when they assumed that Job was suffering because of some evil that he had done.
 5. This fallacy occurs when a church assumes that its doctrine is correct simply because it is growing in number, or contrarily, when someone assumes that a church cannot be doctrinally correct because their number is small.
 6. There are steps that can be taken to avoid this fallacy.
 - a. Be sure that the cause is adequate to produce the effect.
 - b. Determine whether all the same causes and only the same causes are operating when an effect is produced.
 - c. Ask whether an effect might have been produced by a cause other than the one assigned.
- D. Faulty premises is a fallacy in *deductive reasoning*.
1. It occurs when something is wrong with either or both of the premises in a syllogism.
 2. The process of reasoning may be flawless, but the conclusion will be incorrect if

- either or both of the premises are wrong.
3. The barbarians of **ACT 28:1-4** incorrectly concluded that Paul was a murderer because their major premise was false.
 4. Here is another example of a faulty major premise.

Major premise: Every born again man is a Christian.
Minor premise: Ralph is not baptized, but he is born again.
Conclusion: Ralph is a Christian.

- a. The term “Christian” in this syllogism has been expanded beyond the Biblical definition. Ergo, the conclusion does not follow.
 - b. A Christian is a submitted disciple of Christ, which is a baptized believer in a local church. **ACT 11:26**.
 - c. If not every born again man is baptized (and some are not), then not every born again man is a Christian.
5. In the following example the minor premise is faulty because of the ambiguity of the definition of dark skin (*equivocation*), and the major premise is faulty because of the assumptions that Africans can have no other skin color and that only Africans can have dark skin (*inadequate sampling*).

Major premise: All African people have dark skin.
Minor premise: Jane has dark skin.
Conclusion: Jane is African.

E. Non sequitur is another fallacy in *deductive reasoning*.

1. This is a fallacy in the process of the reasoning itself: the conclusion does not necessarily follow from the premises given. Example:

Major premise: People like to walk on the beach.
Minor premise: Beaches are made of sand.
Conclusion: Homes should have sand floors.

- a. The major premise does not fully explain why people like to walk on the beach.
 - b. The conclusion is based upon the false assumption that the beach experience is what one should want in his home.
2. In the following example the major premise is *not* a universal declaration. Hence, the conclusion does not necessarily follow.

Major premise: Jesus Christ died for sinners.
Minor premise: Esau was a sinner.
Conclusion: Jesus Christ died for Esau.

- a. The major premise is weak because it is not fully distributed and it is ambiguous. It could only refer to two people.
- b. The conclusion could only be valid if the major premise read, “Jesus Christ died for all sinners without exception” but such a major premise is errant since Scripture nowhere teaches that.

F. Ignoring the question is another fallacy in *deductive reasoning*.

1. This fallacy takes place when the reasoner ignores the real question and deals with another issue in hopes of producing the same effect as if he were dealing with the real question.
2. One form of ignoring the question is the side-stepping ploy of *argumentum ad hominem* (arguing against the person rather than the position) and it is often tied to another error: *guilt by association*. Here is an example as a syllogism:

Major premise: Roman Catholicism says that baptism adds one to the church.
Minor premise: Tim Boffey says that baptism adds one to the church.
Conclusion: Tim Boffey is a closet Roman Catholic who can't be trusted.

- a. The major premise was faulty since it assumes all Roman Catholic doctrine is heretical. What about Rome's positions on abortion or the virgin birth?
 - b. The guilt by association based upon the false assumption smears Tim Boffey to steer attention away from the issue.
3. This fallacy of *ignoring the question* is also exemplified in the argument that Christmas cannot be wrong because someone's godly father celebrated it.

Major premise: Godly people do not do wrong.
Minor premise: My godly father celebrated Christmas.
Conclusion: Christmas cannot be wrong.

- a. This reasoning ignores the question by shifting emphasis from Scripture to the person's father.
 - b. A person's godliness has nothing to do with deciding correct doctrine since the best of men can be mistaken. **GAL 2:11.**
 - c. This is also an example of an error called *faulty appeal to authority*.
4. The Jews in **JOH 7:40-49** *ignored the question* by a *faulty appeal to authority*.
 - a. In **v. 48**, they said, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?"
 - b. The assumption was that the rulers and Pharisees were infallible.
 - c. This ignored the real issue which was whether or not Jesus was the Christ. They completely side-stepped the evidence.
5. Another example of this fallacy of *ignoring the question* is when someone objects to a position held by only a few by saying, "You mean you are right and everyone else is wrong?"
 - a. This is an *ad hominem* attack to make you look arrogant and claiming to be God. c/w **ROM 3:4.**
 - b. This is a *faulty appeal to authority* in that it assumes that the masses' opinion determines right and wrong.
 - c. Multitudes can be wrong. **EXO 23:2.**
6. Another form of *ignoring the question* is the fallacy of the *Straw Man*.
 - a. This fallacy occurs when an opponent's position is misrepresented and then the misrepresentation is attacked.
 - b. An example of this fallacy would be the assertion by evolutionists that Christians are opposed to science.
 - (1) The underlying assumption is that the doctrine of evolution is true science.
 - (2) Christians are not opposed to true science, only "...science falsely so

called” (1TI 6:20).

- (3) The evolutionist’s assertion is a misrepresentation of Christians which is at fault for *argumentum ad hominem*, *guilt by association*, and *inadequate sampling* (since it ignores the countless Christians who have been and are champions of true science).
7. Similar to the *Straw Man* is the fallacy of *invoking the non-existent*.
 - a. This occurs when one appeals to something that does not exist to justify a position. It is a form of *faulty appeal to authority*.
 - b. This error may be intentional or unintentional.
 - (1) One may know that a “fact” is non-existent but use it anyway, or one may ignorantly be convinced that a non-existent thing is real. Either way, a *faulty premise* forms the basis of argumentation.
 - (2) There is a difference between “lie” and “error,” between presumptuous sin and ignorant sin. **NUM 15:27-30.**
 - c. Foolish parents *invoke the non-existent* when they tell their children that if they are not good, Santa Claus will not bring them anything.
 - d. One *invokes the non-existent* when he appeals to a non-existent law or principle to control a situation. Example: “You can’t read the Bible in public school because the Constitution forbids it.”
 - e. One *invokes the non-existent* when he fabricates or sensationalizes details to generate an emotional response that steers thought.
 - (1) The spies did this when they played up the dangers of Canaan and so slandered the good land. **NUM 14:36.**
 - (2) Absalom did this when he campaigned on superior justice. **2SAM 15:2-6.**
 - (3) The “yellow journalism” of the Hearst newspapers that agitated for the 1898 Spanish-American war, or the propaganda of the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident are examples of this type of *invoking the non-existent*.
 - f. One *invokes the non-existent* when he relies upon *perception* rather than *reality*.
 - (1) **(PRO 22:13)** The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.
 - (2) The wicked, slothful servant in **MAT 25:24-26** used a warped perception of his lord to justify doing nothing.
 - (3) The power to orchestrate perceptions in men’s minds is a formidable one, and too much of life is governed more by perception than by reality.
 - g. Idolatry is by nature an *invoking of the non-existent* to steer thought. Consider the Ephesian silversmiths in **ACT 19:26-28.**
 - h. Christians need to be cautious to not *invoke the non-existent* by declaring, “The Bible says...” when the position being vied for comes not from Scripture but from an assumption or from a commentator’s footnotes.
- G. Reasoning in a circle is another fallacy in *deductive reasoning*.
 1. This fallacy occurs when one assumes the truth of what he is trying to prove: his proof ends up being his assumption of the truth he is trying to prove. This is also called *begging the question*.
 2. An example of this fallacy occurs when advocates of the eternal sonship of Christ argue that Christ must be an eternal Son or there would be no eternal Father.

- a. The following is a syllogism representing this fallacy.

Major premise: There is no Fatherhood without Sonship.
Minor premise: God is an eternal Father.
Conclusion: Therefore, God must have an eternal Son.

- b. The point of an eternal Father/Son relationship is assumed as true when that is the point to be proved.
3. Another example of this fallacy occurs when people who condemn any drinking of alcoholic beverages try to justify their position in light of verses which speak favorably of wine.

- a. The following is a syllogism representing this fallacy.

Major premise: Drinking wine is sinful.
Minor premise: Scriptures sometimes speak favorably of drinking wine.
Conclusion: Scriptures which speak favorably of wine refer to an unfermented beverage.

- b. The point that drinking wine is sinful is assumed as true and becomes the basis for interpreting contrary passages.
4. The Jews argued in a circle with Pilate when they said of Jesus: "...If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee" (**JOH 18:29-30**).
- a. Pilate was seeking to determine what Jesus was guilty of.
- b. The Jews argued that the very fact that he was brought to judgment proved his guilt. Their argument is represented by this syllogism:

Major premise: Anyone we deliver up is a malefactor.
Minor premise: We delivered up Jesus.
Conclusion: Jesus is a malefactor.

- c. That a man is on trial for a crime does not prove he committed the crime; the commission of the crime is the issue to be decided.
- d. They were also guilty of the fallacy of *faulty appeal to authority*.

XIV. Application of the rules of Bible study will result in sound reason. **PSA 119:80.**

XV. Truth is in agreement with reality. Reality reveals itself to the mind as it is and cannot be false.

- A. Data is one thing. Processing of data is another.
- B. Error does not originate with the data but in the mind that processes the data.
- C. The primary sources of error are as follows:
1. The complexity of reality. There is more to know than time and limitations will permit.
 2. Limitations and imperfections in the organs that furnish the intellect with knowledge. Examples:
 - a. A blind man cannot know color because of the imperfection of the organ of sight through which this knowledge is gained.
 - b. A genuine defect of the brain itself may forbid the rational processing of information gained from functioning senses of sight, sound, touch, smell or

- taste. This could include impairment of the brain by substance.
3. The need for immediate action. One is compelled to make a decision without adequate knowledge.
 4. Partisanship and prejudice. Decisions are based on preferences which can run contrary to facts.
 5. Emotional instability. This can interfere with the concentration processes necessary to research an issue.
 6. Intellectual laziness. This is the desire to avoid the labor involved in researching an issue.
- D. In the natural realm, error does not arise from any inadequacy either in nature or in the means of knowing nature (if the means are intact). It arises from the inadequate use of the means available.
- E. In the spiritual realm, error does arise from the imperfection of the spiritual organs needed to receive spiritual knowledge.
1. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned thus requiring spiritual capacity. **1CO 2:9-16; 1TH 1:5.**
 2. To see naturally, we must have both the *faculty of sight* and *light*. To see spiritually, we must have *spiritual sight* and the *light of the Spirit*.
 3. Man's spiritual capacity is dead: he cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. **ROM 8:5-7; JOH 8:43.**
 - a. The natural man has not the faculty of spiritual sight and, therefore, cannot understand the things of God. **EPH 4:17-18; JOH 3:3.**
 - b. This underscores the fallacy of *decisional regeneration*: If a sinner needs to be regenerated in order to understand his need to be regenerated, which comes first?
 4. A natural man may understand facts that are related in Scripture.
 - a. Example: He can understand that the Bible teaches that God created the universe in six twenty-four hour days or that a man named Jesus rose from the dead.
 - b. But the natural man does not grasp the significance of those facts in how they relate to the rest of the divine revelation and how they relate to him and to the world in which he lives.
 - (1) He does not see those facts in their true light.
 - (2) Therefore, he does not connect those facts to arrive at the conclusions to be rightly derived from those facts.
 5. The natural man's ability to *reason* in the spiritual realm is impaired so that when it comes to spiritual things, he is *unreasonable*. **2TH 3:2.**
 6. Therefore, natural man is irrational, mad. **ECC 9:3.**
 7. A classic example of the unreasonableness of the natural mind is seen in his idolatry. **ISA 44:15-20.**
 - a. His heart is deceived and being deceived, it is blind and cannot understand.
 - b. A deceived heart does not realize the lie in his right hand.
 - (1) He does not connect the facts and, therefore, does not come to the right conclusion.
 - (2) He is irrational.
 - (3) Deceived, he cannot ask the questions that would expose the lie he believes and practices. **v. 20.**
 - c. This state of deception is a judicial blindness. **v. 18 c/w ROM 1:21-23.**
 - d. God gives men over to this deception because what they may know of God

- they reject. **2TH 2:10-11.**
- (1) These idolaters are delusional.
 - (2) That is why they *cannot see* and *cannot understand*. **JOH 12:37-40.**
- d. Saints are warned against falling prey to this. **1CO 10:7, 14; 1JO 5:21.**
- (1) We should not underestimate the extent of deception to which we might subject ourselves through rejection of the love of the truth.
 - (2) We should therefore be wary of *covetousness* and *love of pleasure*. **COL 3:5; 2TI 3:4.**
 - (3) Once turned over to this blindness, the data remains the same but the ability to process it rationally is thwarted.
- F. Lacking spiritual capacity, a natural man will speak evil of things he does not understand and will corrupt himself in what he knows naturally. **JUDE 1:10.**
1. This describes the scientists who misinterpret the data of creation and ridicule Bible-believers.
 2. This describes the fool who rejects what Scripture says about sodomy and rejects the obvious message of nature itself in order to justify sodomy.
- G. Some receive the word of God, but not from the heart. **EZE 33:30-31; MAT 15:7-8.**
1. They receive the facts but they do not receive the love of the truth for the truth's sake. **2TH 2:10; 2JO 1:1-2.**
 2. Their interest in the truth goes only so far as it serves their self-interest. **MAT 23:2-7.**
 3. The Jews trusted in Moses but did not really believe his writings as evidenced in their rejection of Jesus Christ. **JOH 5:39-47.**
 4. Such people will reject any truth that interferes with their self-interest. This explains the partiality of the scribes and Pharisees in the law. **MAT 23:23.**
- H. Truth in the natural realm can be attained by proper faculties and proper means. One must have functional senses, a functioning mind and a rational use of that mind to arrive at a valid conclusion.
- I. Truth in the spiritual realm likewise requires proper faculties (regenerate heart, submissive will, functioning mind) and proper means (faith in the revealed words of God and a rational processing of spiritual knowledge) to arrive at a valid conclusion.
- J. **PRO 2:1-5** describes the process (the means) that one must follow to arrive at the knowledge of the truth of God.
1. *My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee...*
 - a. You must be willing to receive and retain God's words.
 - b. The process begins with desire to know. **JOH 7:17.**
 2. *So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding...*
 - a. You have to be willing to listen, to consider what someone else, in this case wisdom, has to say besides yourself. **JAM 1:19.**
 - b. You must not only hear what is said, you must apply your heart to it.
 - (1) You have to focus your attention on what you are hearing so that it enters your heart, not just your ears.
 - (2) You will know that it has entered your heart when it produces a proper result in your life. **JAM 1:21-22.**
 3. *Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding...*
 - a. You must pray for knowledge and understanding of truth. **JAM 4:2.**
 - b. Ask God *out loud* for truth. To cry after something shows passion in the request.

4. *If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures...*
 - a. Seeking and searching is the substance of studying. **JOH 5:39; 2TI 2:15.**
 - b. Be willing to seek and search for truth as for treasure; this shows the value you place upon truth.
5. *Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.*
 - a. This is the promised outcome.
 - b. Finding the knowledge of God is finding the truth.