

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 which was just 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.
 - 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.
- 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 medical 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.