

6 REASON, LOGIC AND TRUTH

Opening Questions:

- How vital are reason and logic in determining what is true or false?
- What role do emotions or “feeling” play in the process of using reason or logic to determine what is true or false?
- How does faith fit with reason and logic?
- What is the difference between reason and logic?
- What role should reason and logic play in evaluating God claims?
- Does reason or logic create anything?
- Are reason and logic physical things?

“When reason is put aside and faith dies, our emotions will lead us into darkness.”

Emotionalism rules the day. Anyone who reads the news and is somewhat engaged in the things happening in the U.S. culture at this time, and who uses reason well to evaluate those things, will conclude that reason is out of fashion and emotionalism is in. There are very few voices that use reason well to articulate themselves. Most have a feeling or opinion that they have not thought about thoroughly, and then they voice those opinions as fact. Most can no longer reason well because they have left any objective standard against which to apply reason. The evidence of this is that the average guest on the news that tries to defend some political position or policy will usually commit several logical fallacies when trying to articulate their position. Most will contradict themselves and will often not even address the problem or questions asked because their opinion is wrong and thus they stay away from reason.

Perhaps the most asked question in the U.S. culture at this time is “how do you feel about that?” instead of “what are your reasons for taking that position or holding that belief?”—*the distinction is CRITICAL*. The former is entirely subjective and emotions driven while the latter is more objective and reason driven—the former has one’s personal view as absolute while the latter has common principles as the standard. The fact is that most people are regularly engaging in the former.

One of the significant adverse effects of emotionalism is the associated lack of discipline. Discipline requires clarity of knowing right versus wrong and

good from bad, as well as having strength of will. Without having a clear, reasoned purpose for some task or responsibility, most people will fail at accomplishing that task or responsibility well. Perhaps the best example of this is staying physically fit. Most Americans say, "I don't feel like exercising" or "I don't feel like eating healthy food." This emotional approach to physical health has obvious negative consequences as the obesity rates, associated diseases, and harmful physical effects are running rampant in the U.S. population. Without discipline, people will not excel at anything, for discipline is required to excel. Substituting an emotionally driven life for a belief, purpose, and discipline-driven life will lead to mediocrity at best and ruin at worst.

Those that do use reason well often lock themselves into an ideological box which does not enable them to see past their box. Yes, there are boxes inside of our cages!

Politics and Reason in the U.S.

In the political realm of the U.S., it is painfully obvious how little reason plays a role. Those who identify as conservatives or part of the "right" have their doctrines and liberals or "the left" have their doctrines, and in large measure, each sees the other side as "the enemy." Both sides talk right past each other most of the time, seldom intending to significantly examine the merits of the "other side." In this way, they act just like religious leaders whose predisposition to divide accounts for the thousands of religious sects that cover the earth. This is not to say that each political ideology camp (conservative or liberal) is not right about individual issues. It is to say, however, that the current animosity over merely a label (left or right, liberal or conservative, democrat or republican) is incredibly destructive.

In general, conservatives do better with reason than liberals—their beliefs are more consistent and stand the test of reason better than some liberal views. Conservatives are more likely to talk about principles or policies in a reasoned fashion whereas liberals are much more likely to resort to identity-politics to defend a position. They do this because conservatives have some standard against which to reason—in general, they are not relativists (we will learn about relativism in some upcoming chapters. In short, a relativist says there are no absolute truths). Most people who take the label "conservative" have a moral framework from their religion which they regularly reason from regarding ethical issues. Thus, their arguments regarding ethical problems are more consistent or defensible against some more objective standard.

What is "identity politics"? Here is a good definition, "Identity politics, also called identitarian politics, refers to political positions based on the interests and perspectives of social groups with which people identify." In other words, people choose some demographic aspect of themselves or others – skin color, nationality, immigration status, citizenship status, gender, sexuality preferences, etc. – to associate with and then advocate for that group with

political positions that benefit that group. So, what is most important to people who participate in identity politics is that *their* group gets benefits or relief, and they often believe it is good and right to demonize other groups that they perceive get their way or are “against them.” This belief often results in other groups being viewed as “the enemy” since they cannot see the righteousness of *our* cause. This error is incredibly destructive and will be the end of any social or political unity in the United States.

Simply put, fighting for *objective principles* that they can defend as good or right have no place in identity politics—they have left the higher plane of principle, policy or law for tribal association or mere physical characteristic advocacy. In short, identitarians have taken a step down to a lower level of existence in their humanity due to relativism and human nature.

While many self-professed liberals often put reason aside and go with emotionalism or identity-politic positions, conservatives have positions and doctrine that also do not pass the test of reason, usually due to their commitment to other supporting beliefs. Another weakness of conservatism is that conservatives often fail to operate based on the concept of compassion—they put rules over mercy often for selfish purposes. This tendency is also due to their commitment to the ideology of capitalism or other self-serving or selfish beliefs or doctrines. So, while conservatives in general use reason better than liberals or can defend their views better, they do so assuming that their foundational ideologies – like capitalism - are correct or provide the best solution. Their assumptions and ideologies that they reason from may or may not be accurate or may not offer the best solutions to problems.

So, to sum up, and in general, conservatives do better with reason than liberals, but liberals have a few morally correct positions and views (according to Joshua of Nazareth) which are wrongly dismissed by conservatives. Unfortunately, most people who self-identify as liberal or progressive cannot defend well why they hold a particular belief, because most are existential relativists. We will learn what that is a bit later in the book.

Ironically, many conservatives generally believe themselves to be the “God” politicians, while many liberals do not. That is ironic and appropriate because of the truth that this book reveals. The conservatives “God” is the god of the bible particularly the god of the Hebrew Scriptures - the God of war and vengeance and wrath most of the time and the God of mercy a very little of the time—the God of rules and law over the God of compassion. While the true and living God and his representative, His Son, very much want peace and love, the very things many classical or previous generation liberals said liberalism “was all about.” Unfortunately, some contemporary self-professed liberals want nothing to do with “peace and love” and instead are violent, aggressive, rude or uncivil, and sadly they are not usually rebuked by their genuinely peaceful brethren. In this way, they are no different than the violent racists which generally gravitate to what is traditionally considered conservative ideologies.

The simple truth is this book is putting forth the narrow way. In other words, *the political ideologies of both camps (liberal and conservative) mostly miss the person and teachings of Joshua of Nazareth.* The One who called himself "the truth," walks right between them with both sides yelling at him that he is wrong! (Can you recall another event where people were yelling at Joshua as he walked between them?) They will only refer to "jesus" when one of his teachings can be made to fit their position, and often that teaching is taken out of context or is twisted to fit their political dogma. In other words, they will ignore his most important teaching – love – to argue and have animosity towards one another. In short, the vast majority of Christians and Biblians who are involved in politics are not followers of the real, historical Joshua of Nazareth, but rather create a "christ" to justify their politics.

Religion and Reason

Let's turn the corner and talk about religion and reason. When many people think about religion, they assume that reason does not play a prominent role in people's religious beliefs, and in general, they are correct. In fact, it is prevalent to say things like, "reason cannot account for faith" or "you must have faith, and put reason aside and just believe" or "it's not about reason, it's about faith" and other such misleading or erroneous statements.

Christians and Biblians often put reason aside when it demonstrates that their God beliefs contradict. An example of this is the Christian belief (or premises) that God is both all-powerful and all loving. By almighty, they mean that He is both omnipotent and can and does act and intervene in this realm (our life on the surface of this planet) in our daily human affairs. Thus, the oft-heard phrase, "God is in control." However, as we will see in more detail later on, if God is both all-powerful and all-loving, then this world would not be racked with all the human-caused unjust pain and suffering that occurs each day. Surely that almighty God would intervene to prevent the unjust pain and suffering. That is the only reasonable and logical conclusion to those two premises. Non-theists know this and they rightfully rebuke the religious people for this error.

The simple truth is that faith, as we have defined, is a core or deep level trust or confidence in someone or something (in a God context, an additional element to faith exists in that we place our faith or confidence in someone we cannot see or directly validate with our senses). When a person puts their faith in something, that act is not an act of reason, but instead, it is an act of faith/trust/confidence.

However, reason DOES play an important role in faith, and it is this—a person can and *should* use reason to guide them in deciding *in whom or what to place their faith.* Again, reason – and its primary tool of logic – should play an essential role determining in who or what people choose to put their faith. For example, most people place their faith in themselves, money, material things, or a god of their own making. If you view your life and existence in a primarily

selfish and materialistic way, then it is reasonable to place your faith in yourself and money and in the businesses that generate that money, and as you can see, most do. If you view your life and existence in a primarily selfish and materialistic way, then it is also reasonable to make up a god who "blesses" people with money and material things. (For the readers' information, Joshua of Nazareth *never* teaches that God does some special "blessing" for an individual, but instead showed that God provided the organic things naturally on the earth for all human beings sustenance.)

But from a pure existential view, placing our faith in ourselves is foolish, as we shall see, for we do not cause our existence and our efforts to preserve our physical lives are often feeble. Ourselves, money, businesses, careers or other such things have no power or ability to preserve our existence after our lives run their courses. Nor do they have the power to set us free or give us peace and contentment. Nor do they empower us to truly love.

This book is not going to teach reason and logic extensively; instead, it will provide an introduction and some basics. More importantly, this book will use reason and logic to present things that are reasonable and which pass the test of logic. In other words, this author endeavors to use reason and logic well to support my premises in this book. However, *unless the reader is willing also to use reason and logic well, it is unlikely that the reader will arrive at the same conclusions that I put forth.* If you believe I err in my use of reason or logic, please contact me with precise, reasoned statements, and if I err, I will correct it.

I have observed that we all very much tend to put reason and logic aside when they will not support where we want to go. In other words, if we sense reason and logic pointing us or leading us somewhere that makes us afraid, offends our self-pride or argues for a selfless life (which typically means we must change something we do not want to), we will usually abandon reason and logic. *We often only use reason and logic well when it supports what we already believe, or when it justifies us in some way.* This tendency is a terrible and blinding handicap. The three primary faults of our nature - fear, self-pride, and selfishness - work hard against reason and logic.

The reason Joshua said we need to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, is because he knew that reason would be a slave to our heart and soul. In other words, he put "mind" third after heart and soul, instead of first because if we do not want (will) to find truth (God), or we insist on allowing our emotions (particularly fear) to over-rule reason, then our mind cannot help us. In other words, our mind is key to finding God, but if we do not want to find God and we choose to allow fear to guide us, our mind cannot help us.

To love the Lord our God with our entire mind means *to be committed to using reason and logic well to find what is true in the spiritual or metaphysical domain.* Therefore, let's take a look at gaining a better understanding of reason and logic at least at an introductory level. We will start by defining a few important concepts.

Here are the dictionaries definitions of “reason”:

Oxford Dictionary: ²⁶

“Noun: The power of the mind to think, understand, and form judgments logically.”

“Verb: Think, understand, and form judgments logically; Find an answer to a problem by considering possible options; Persuade (someone) with rational argument.”

Merriam-Webster Dictionary: ²⁷

“The power of comprehending, inferring, or thinking especially in orderly rational ways : intelligence (2):proper exercise of the mind (3):sanity.

“Noun: The power of the mind to think and understand in a logical way.”

Cambridge Dictionary: ²⁸

“Noun: the ability to think and make judgments, esp. good judgments.”

“Verb: to argue with and try to persuade someone.”

Here are the dictionaries definitions of “logic”:

Oxford Dictionary: ²⁶

“Noun: Reasoning conducted or assessed according to strict principles of validity.”

Merriam-Webster Dictionary: ²⁷

“A science that deals with the principles and criteria of validity of inference and demonstration: the science of the formal principles of reasoning.”

Cambridge Dictionary: ²⁹

“Noun: a formal, scientific method of examining or thinking about ideas; a formal scientific method of examining or thinking about ideas.”

The Encyclopedia Britannica ³⁰ does a much better job at filling in the understanding of the concept of “reason”:

“Reason, in philosophy, the faculty or process of drawing logical inferences. The term "reason" is also used in several other, narrower senses. Reason is in opposition to sensation, perception, feeling, desire, as the faculty (the existence of which is denied by empiricists) by which fundamental truths are intuitively apprehended. These fundamental

²⁶ Oxford Living Dictionary, www.en.oxforddictionaries.com, April 2018

²⁷ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, www.merriam-webster.com, April 2018

²⁸ Cambridge Dictionary, www.dictionary.cambridge.org, April 2018

²⁹ Cambridge Dictionary, www.dictionary.cambridge.org, April 2018

³⁰ Encyclopedia Britannica, www.britannica.com, May 2018

truths are the causes or "reasons" of all derivative facts. According to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, reason is the power of synthesizing into unity, by means of comprehensive principles, the concepts that are provided by the intellect. That reason which gives a priori principles Kant calls "pure reason," as distinguished from the "practical reason," which is especially concerned with the performance of actions. In formal logic, the drawing of inferences (frequently called "ratiocination," from Latin *ratiocinari*, "to use the reasoning faculty") is classified from Aristotle on as deductive (from generals to particulars) and inductive (from particulars to generals).

Here is Encyclopedia Britannica's ³⁰ definition of "logic":

"Logic, the study of correct reasoning, especially as it involves the drawing of inferences.

"An inference is a rule-governed step from one or more propositions, called premises, to a new proposition, usually called the conclusion. A rule of inference is said to be truth-preserving if the conclusion derived from the application of the rule is true whenever the premises are true. Inferences based on truth-preserving rules are called deductive, and the study of such inferences is known as deductive logic. An inference rule is said to be valid, or deductively valid, if it is necessarily truth-preserving. That is, in any conceivable case in which the premises are true, the conclusion yielded by the inference rule will also be true. Inferences based on valid inference rules are also said to be valid.

"Logic in a narrow sense is equivalent to deductive logic. By definition, such reasoning cannot produce any information (in the form of a conclusion) that is not already contained in the premises. In a wider sense, which is close to ordinary usage, logic also includes the study of inferences that may produce conclusions that contain genuinely new information. Such inferences are called ampliative or inductive, and their formal study is known as inductive logic. They are illustrated by the inferences drawn by clever detectives, such as the fictional Sherlock Holmes.

"Applied logic is the study of the practical art of right reasoning."

A good, short definition of logic would be *the art and science of reasoning*.

If you compare the definitions for reason and logic, you will see that they are not distinct, meaning they are tied to each other and dependent upon each other. "Reasoning" is broader than logic and can use methods that extend past logic's rules like observing things in the world. Proper reasoning depends on logic to some extent. For example, if I drive a car, I know brakes are necessary to slow or stop the vehicle. If a car crashes into a pole or tree, for example, it

would be reasonable to consider if the brakes failed. One could reason through drawing pictures or diagrams to conclude something. If trying to figure out what caused a plane to crash, one could figure out the sequence of events before and after the accident and work backward through that sequence to try and find the correct answer as to why the plane crashed.

So, to summarize Encyclopedia Britannica and the Dictionary's content – as well as fill it out a bit - "reason" is human beings metaphysical ability, tool and process to order, sort, distinguish and clarify things – to find truth - in their realms of thought, observation, and experience. Logic is the precise metaphysical rules that our mind's use to process concepts, ideas or beliefs. *Logic is like our operating system, while reason is like exploratory applications that need our operating system's rules to function.* Our mind is the metaphysical element of our nature that can use reason and logic.

I also recommend reading Wiki's descriptions of "reason" and "logic," as the descriptions on Wiki are both solid and less complex than the encyclopedia definitions.

(As an aside, confusion exists due to physicalist beliefs regarding distinguishing the brain from the mind. The two things are as confused as "faith" and "religion"! The confusion is unwarranted because they are distinct. For example, let us say you had a team of the world's foremost brain surgeons and experts with all their technology opening up a person's skull to peer into that person's brain. Let us say that person was conscious and thinking about a strawberry. The fact is that team of surgeons and brain experts will never know what that person thinks because human thoughts are metaphysical and inaccessible to others. When a person is thinking about a strawberry, there is no physical manifestation in the brain of a strawberry—no little strawberry forms! Indeed the brain (hardware) produces physical signs of the mind (software) working that can be measured, like bioelectrical impulses or heat energy. However, heat (physical manifestation) or electrical impulses (physical manifestation) produced by the CPU (hardware/brain) does not amount to knowing what the software is processing. Nor is heat or electrical impulses the output of the computer's logic processing - it is merely an energy manifestation of the CPU/hardware (brain) as it runs the software (mind).

Formal and Informal Logic: ³¹

The practice of the study of logic has two main components, formal logic, and informal logic. Formal logic is about pure reasoning in the abstract. The

³¹ Some of the information from this section was taken from the book, *The Art of Argument: An Introduction to the Informal Fallacies* by Aaron Larsen and Joelle Hodge.

definition of "abstract," exists in thought or as an idea but not having physical or concrete existence."³² So, formal logic does not deal with physical entities, but rather concepts (metaphysical things), much like pure mathematics.

Formal logic usually focuses on deductive reasoning, which means types of arguments in which the premises imply a necessary conclusion.

Here is an example of a deductive argument:

Premise 1: Christians meet in a building they call a "church."
Premise 2: Pentecostals are Christians.
Conclusion: Therefore, Pentecostals meet in buildings they call a "church."

This type of argument is called a syllogism and has the characteristics that *the conclusion must be true* (Pentecostals meet in buildings they call a "church") *if the premises are true*. However, if one or both premises are false, then the conclusion will be false even though the form of the argument is valid.

For example:

Premise 1: All Christians practice love.
Premise 2: A Baptist is a Christian.
Conclusion: Therefore, Baptists practice love.

This argument or syllogism is valid, meaning its *form or structure is correct*. If it were true that all Christians practice love and a Baptist is a Christian, then it must follow that Baptists practice love. However, in this syllogism, *premise one is false* even though the form of the argument is correct or valid. Since premise one is false, the conclusion is false. In conclusion, the argument is in a valid form, but one of the premises contains false information. If the premises were true, then the conclusion would also be true, just like in the first example above.

The form of premises that lead to a conclusion is vital in "formal" logic. Please consider this argument:

Premise 1: Forgiveness is real.
Premise 2: Forgiveness is not physical.
Conclusion: Non-physical things like forgiveness are real.

Please think about that argument, for it is a crucial one, for it demonstrates that what most people call *the "scientific worldview" or at least the strict physicalist view is false*. More precisely, many people assume that science proves the physicalist worldview that the only things that are real and exist are physical, meaning things made up of matter or energy.

³² Oxford Living Dictionary, www.en.oxforddictionaries.com, April 2018

In contrast to formal logic, those who practice informal logic are not so concerned with form or structure; instead, they are concerned with arguments made using every day, ordinary language. Informal logic also tends to emphasize inductive reasoning instead of deductive reasoning.

The Latin word "*deducere*," which is where the English term "*derived*" comes from, means "to lead down or away." Therefore, deductive reasoning starts with premises that "lead down" to a necessary conclusion. Deductive reasoning is "whole-to-part" reasoning. The arguments above regarding Christians, church, and love, are deductive arguments.

The Latin word "*inducere*," which is where the English term "*induce*" comes from, means "to lead or bring in." Inductive reasoning is "part-to-whole" reasoning. Meaning, we begin with particular facts and try to prove a general conclusion. Inductive reasoning involves "bringing in specific facts to an argument in an attempt to prove a more general point.

Let's use a relevant example to explain these concepts.

I may "bring in" the fact that all Christians I have ever known "go to church," and I might say that that observation proves that *all* Christians "go to church." In other words, inductive reasoning often works toward generalizations that are reasonably accurate but not necessary absolutely true. Inductive arguments are only *more or less probable, not absolutely certain*. So, in this case, it would be erroneous to state that all Christian's "go to church" since I do not have perfect and comprehensive knowledge to prove that.

In fact, almost all superlatives – like always or never, etc. – will falsify statements that include them, at least in everyday usage regarding human behavior. For example, the report "he is always late," will be a false statement, even if the man is late 98% of the time. Thus, when speaking about human behavior, it would be wise to eliminate all superlatives if we are concerned with accurate or truthful statements. (Generally speaking and frequently, when we use superlatives, the purpose of the usage of those superlatives will be to "hammer" another person to try and get them to see something we are trying to communicate. This can often lead to the perception that we are using "fighting words," which is not productive.)

Deductive arguments are either valid or invalid since they deal with pure metaphysical concepts like mathematics, while inductive arguments are said to be either strong or weak since they are based on physical entities or events that occur in the physical world. Deductive logic addresses things/concepts/beliefs/metaphysical things that are either "black" or "white" – 100% or 0% - while inductive arguments deal in shades of grey or probabilities less than 100% or 0% certainty.

Here is a summary of the two forms of logic to contrast and make clear the differences:

Formal Logic:

1. Uses deductive reasoning
2. Produces either valid or invalid conclusions

3. Provides certain answers if the premises are valid

Informal Logic:

1. Used inductive reasoning
2. Produces either strong or weak conclusions
3. Provides probability answers, not certain ones

What is interesting when dealing with God-claims is that formal logic plays a critical role because God-claims are mainly conceptual/metaphysical, *the strong suit of formal logic!* Thus, many of my arguments in this book are deductive. For example:

- Premise 1: God is All-Powerful (meaning he can do anything he wants in any realm—nothing or nobody can stop his will and work)
- Premise 2: God is All-Loving (meaning he cares deeply about the welfare of people and would not want them to come to – at a minimum – unjust harm or suffering)
- Conclusion: God prevents unjust harm or suffering in this world.

As one considers the conclusion, one will of necessity identify it as false, meaning the conclusion is not supported by the facts as observed in the world. Therefore, while the arguments form is correct, there is something incorrect in one or both of the premises since the conclusion is wrong. That argument is valid and is deductive. We take a closer look at the claim of God's "all-powerfulness" in a later chapter.

Next, we will identify the most common logical fallacies that are committed an untold number of times each day on this planet in human communication. And we should learn to appreciate how logical fallacies or false concepts play an essential role in the successful failure.

Chapter Summary:

- It is necessary to use reason and its tool logic well to find and know what is true and what is false, especially concerning claims or concepts that cannot be verified by observation;
- Emotionalism nullifies, disparages or ignores reason and logic and our emotions should not be the basis of our understanding things or our important life decisions;
- Faith is not opposed to, or contradicted by, reason and logic—rather one should use reason and logic well to understand what is best to place one's faith in;
- Formal logic applies deductive reasoning and results in true or false conclusions and should be the most important tool to test religious or spiritual claims—claims that cannot be verified by observation;

- Informal logic uses inductive reasoning which results in probability answers instead of certain true or false conclusions;
- Informal logic is the foundation of probability analysis and was used previously in the book to support the contention that it is not reasonable to think complex machines with inter-dependent sub-systems can exist without a designer;
- Reason and logic do not create anything new; rather, they are essential tools to sort out what already exists, both physical (reasoning from observation) and metaphysical (deductive reasoning).