

Apologetics Lecture 1:

Reason's for this course explained: To defend the faith; to recognize various kinds of arguments; to evaluate the validity and soundness of the opponent's logic; learning how to expose flaws in opponent's reasoning; to potentially present a logically valid and sound case for the faith.

Question box:

a box made available to the assembly, and to students of apologetics to drop questions (anonymously or not), to challenge and strengthen our belief.

Syllabus explained:

Code of Conduct of Conduct for Effective Intellectual discussion--Principles covered:

Fallibility, Truth Seeking, Burden of Proof, Charity, Rebuttal, Relevance, Clarity, Acceptance, Sufficiency, Suspension of Judgment, Resolution... (although not in that order)

Case Study:

Corydon's attempt to debunk the bible:

Argument Example:

-The Story of Joseph says that Ishmaelite traders come, and they (joseph's brothers) talk amongst themselves and say "Let's sell him to the Ishmaelites..." And the next verse says, that they sold him to the Midianite traders...Hey look, a contradiction, and your bible is full of swiss cheese. (i.e., the bible is false)"

→Rephrasing the argument:

If the Bible contains a contradiction, then it (the bible at large) is wrong or not correct. So, if in verse 27 It says "Let's sell him to the Ishmaelites" and in verse 28 is it says they sold him to the Midianite traders", then this is an instance of a contradiction, and thus, the Bible is not flawless and correct.

→Argument structure:

This particular example above is an *attempt* at a Deductive argument (an argument involving an "if...then" structure, that progresses from a generalization of something, and by means of *logical necessity*, forces one to accept a particular instance of that 'something' as true and conclusive). It also has "couched" in it some Inductive reasoning. The inductive reasoning includes specific instances or *samples* or examples, and seeks to establish a general conclusion based on these examples. This

inductive reasoning is done by examining the specific sample verses, drawing a general conclusion that, (by nature of inductive reasoning), could only be *probable* , but not conclusive. Here's a little background on the theory first:

A Deductive argument's structure will usually take on the form:

Modus Ponens (meaning, 'in the mode of affirming'—a reliable method of reasoning), where A is the hypothesis (that which is 'tested' so to speak) and "B" is the consequent, meaning we can make a conclusion based on the 'test/condition's outcome.

Premise (1) If A, then B (*denoted* $A \rightarrow B$)

Premise (2) A _____

Conclusion: Therefore, B must be true

Example 1.

Premise(1) If it is raining outside, then the grass will be wet

Premise(2), It is, indeed, raining outside

Conclusion: Therefore, the grass will be wet

(the above deductive argument works since it is referred to as 'sound', and it is sound because of 2 reasons: 1.) its premises are true, **and** 2.) its *valid* logic structure/form is in accordance with a reliable method for making conclusions, i.e. 'modus ponens').

Example 2.

Premise (1) If the moon is made of green cheese, then Nike will go bankrupt.

Premise (2) the moon is made of green cheese

Conclusion: Therefore, Nike will go bankrupt

(Is the above example valid? Is it sound? The above example is valid, because the structure is in

Accordance with modus ponens; however it is not sound, because the premises are false, despite it being logically sound. So we see here that an argument can be valid, even if all the premises are false. Our next example shows how an argument can be invalid, even if all the premises are true.)

Example 3.

Premise (1) If it rains outside, then the grass will be wet.

Premise (2) the grass is, indeed, wet.

Therefore, it rained outside.

(Using intuition, why is this argument sound or unsound? Are the premises true? How's the Logic?). The premises are indeed correct, however, the conclusion is false.

The logical structure here is an example of a fallacy called "*Affirming the Consequent*", and is as follows:

Premise(1) If A, then B (denoted $A \rightarrow B$)

Premise (2) B

Conclusion: Therefore, A

(Contrast this structure with Modus Ponens, and try to figure out, from intuition, why the reasoning is invalid? Hint, the reason lies in the actual name of the fallacy. **We will discover a more general reason (that can be applied to more than just rain and driveways) as to why Modus Ponens and 'Affirming the Consequent' are logically not the same, i.e., why $A \rightarrow B$ is not equivalent to $B \rightarrow A$.**

(Enter Truth Tables...)

So Corydon's attempt at Deductive argumentation is summed up as follows:

Premise (1) If the Bible has a contradiction, then the Bible (at large) is wrong/not correct.

(as indicated by the Scripture being "...full of swiss cheese)

Premise (2) The Bible (in Genesis 37:27 & 28a) includes an example of a contradiction.

Conclusion: Therefore, the Bible (at large) is wrong/not correct.

Now, the deductive attempt here is the structure of Modus Ponens:

If A, then B

A

Therefore B

It should be noted that the 'couched' examples of inductive reasoning, are, in fact the very methods of concluding that "A" exists (i.e., by examining particular data), and the *inference* that is drawn should 'A' exist—namely that B exists as well. Now, although this deductive argument is indeed valid, it is not sound, given that both premises are incorrect.

Inductive elements of the argument:

Examining only verses 27, and 28a, of Gen. chapter 37.

Fallacies (or faulty attempts at inductive reasoning) committed:

Insufficient Sample/Omission of Key Evidence: *The proponent seeks to draw on data from only a verse and a half (verses 27 and 28 part a) of Scripture, when there's quite a bit more that the Scripture says on the issue. See, for instance see verse 28b and verse 36, stating that Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites. And plus, it is highly unlikely that the author would contradict himself within the same verse, and especially dealing with matters of simple facts, like people groups.*

Misunderstanding of the law of contradiction (difference between distinction and contradistinction).

Note: the law of contradiction says that something cannot be both $A \wedge \sim A$ (that is said, "A and not A") during the same instance of time. The proponent here is defining a contradiction as "something cannot be both $A \wedge B$ (that is A and that which is syntactically distinct, "B"); however A and B overlap here, and the text does not say in the same instance "Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites, &(followed by), Joseph was not sold to the Ishmaelites." ..or "Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites & Joseph was sold to non-Ishmaelites"; In essence, the proponent mistakes distinct terms to mean that the terms are in contradistinction (i.e., not just different in syntax, but also different in meaning).

See Gen 25:2, for Ishmael, Midian, and Medan were three sons of Abraham, and intermarriage was not uncommon amongst related tribes. For Joseph was 3 generations removed from Abraham. This mere amount of inductive reasoning should cause one to reconsider his or her position—for it's not like Midianites are to Ishmaelites as Aztecs are to Norwegians.

Also, in Judges 8:22-24, note the relationship between the Midianites and the Ishmaelites—for the two kings of Midian are referred to in the chapter, and Israel is said to have obtained the spoils from the Ishmaelites.

Straw Man: *the proponent attempts to restate the Scriptural account by saying verse 28 says that Joseph was sold to the Midianites, when in fact, it does not say that. The proponent produces a misrepresentation of what the scripture is really saying (at least in that particular verse), in an attempt to make the Scripture account sound weaker.*

Hasty Generalization:

The proponent attempts to insert the inference ('possible/probable conclusion from inductive reasoning') back into the "if" clause of the deductive argument. This false premise (namely that the bible is contradictory here) is used to make the case that the entire bible is certainly incorrect or wrong. In other words, A doesn't imply B. It's also understood as jumping to a conclusion.

(I'll send out a prep sheet for next lecture in time).