# Smoky Mountain Bible Institute
# Philosophy 107 Logic

Logic is the study of the principles of correct reasoning. Without getting too deep into a bunch of logic jargon and defining every kind and category of logic, we will address two main methods of drawing conclusions, each with an example. This the rhetorical tool we use to logically explain and present the basis for our conclusions, along with a list of logical fallacies that most people use to their own logical demise.

Arguments use reasoning that is either *deductive* or *inductive*. First let's look at deductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning consists of a list of premises that lead to a deduction based on those premises; for example: 1. all people have hands. 2. You are a person. 3. Therefore, you have hands. Notice that while this is a logical statement made using deductive reasoning, it is not necessarily true in all cases. The first statement is not absolutely true; some people do not have hands for any number of reasons, so, while logic is served, truth may not be. The other type of reasoning is *inductive reasoning*. This one deals more in the realm of probability, making predictive statements based on what is known. For example: 1. every life form we know of requires water to live, 2. therefore every future life form we discover will probably need water to live, that would be a logical induction.

I will spend the rest of our lessons addressing logical fallacies, because we run into them every day, and depending on whose list you use, and how you categorize them, there are probably about 20 or so main logical fallacies, while some list over a hundred different types. I would like to address a few oddballs in this lesson.

First, there is a debate among philosophical scholars regarding whether this particular example is a method of reasoning, or a logical fallacy. As a reasoning method, it is called abductive reasoning, and as a logical fallacy, it is called "pros hoc ergo propter hoc". An example of this is comparing the lives of Lincoln and Kennedy. The two men's lives, while separated by 100 years, had many similarities. But we know that even though they were very similar, they were two real men who lived different lives. But this (reasoning method / logical fallacy) could be used to argue that Lincoln was either the cause of Kennedy, or Kennedy is a fabrication based on Lincoln. This of course seems ridiculous to assert, but liberal biblical scholars use this method regularly in higher criticism to dismiss biblical truths they disagree with. For example Noah's flood they claim is a compilation of other ancient flood accounts.

"A priori" is reasoning or knowledge that proceeds from theoretical deduction rather than from observation or experience. This is falsely cited as evidence for preconceived notions like: the Resurrection cannot happen, or the evolutionists who explain how simple things over time can become more complex, like genetic information appearing out of a bubbling primordial ooze, (Which has never been observed), to assert that miracles cannot happen. These are all a priori assertions, not scientific conclusions.

The other little thing I wanted to address in this lesson is the self-defeating statement. This is a thought or an idea that by its very expression defeats or cancels itself. For example "this statement is false". The only way for that statement to be false is for it to be true. This basically is a logical collapse, but in a postmodern world where everybody gets to "choose for themselves" what is true, self-defeating and contradictory statements abound. One of my favorites is "There is no such thing as absolute truth". (Except of course that absolutely true statement??) That makes about as much logical sense as asserting "I make no absolute statements" (…except of course that one). ☺

In coming lessons, we will discuss logical fallacies, hopefully giving you a nice bag of rhetorical defense tactics to protect you from *ad hominem attacks*, *strawman* or *red herrings*.