LOGIC & THE BIBLE · LESSON 2 · TEACHER'S NOTES

The Problem: Set Out and Explained

Romans 4:1–12 · About 41 minutes · 13 slides

TEACHING SPINE

KEY VERSE

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Rom. 4:3)

BIG IDEA

The Bible is written to be understood by reasoning. Those who claim the Bible upholds irrationality, or that inferred truth cannot bind, have misunderstood how God communicates.

MAIN POINTS

1 · Logic Is a Discipline 2 · Irrationality Breeds Error 3 · Paul Reasons From Explicit Statements 4 · Men Resist Reason When It Turns on Them

ANCHOR

If God had simply said "Do it because I said so," what would we lose? Why do you think He reasons with us instead?

Run Sheet

SLIDE	TITLE	CLICKS	STOP	MIN	RUNNING
L02-S01	Title			1	1
L02-S02	Key Verse: Rom. 4:3			2	3
L02-S03	Logic Is a Discipline			3	6
L02-S04	The Importance of the Problem			2	8
L02-S05	Two Irrational Claims			4	12
L02-S06	Deducing What Is Implied			3	15
L02-S07	Board Work: Romans 4:9–11	4		5	20
L02-S08	Explicit Statements, Correct Conclusion			3	23
L02-S09	When Reason Turns Against a Man			3	26
L02-S10	Minds That Seek the Lowest Level			3	29
L02-S11	Valid, Sound, and Neither			2	31

Run Sheet (continued)

SLIDE	TITLE	CLICKS	STOP	MIN	RUNNING
L02-S12	Discuss: Anchor Question		▮▮ 8	8	39
L02-S13	Summary			2	**41**

Leaves about 4 minutes of a 45-minute class for prayer, announcements or a question that runs long. If time is short, trim S09–S10 to two minutes each.

▶ **SLIDE** advance to this slide ↳ **CLICK** next reveal on the same slide ▮ **DISCUSS** stop and ask

▶ **L02-S01**
Title

Welcome back. Last week we saw that biblical faith rests on evidence. Tonight we set out the problem the whole course answers: some say the Bible stands above logic, or that a conclusion we *infer* from Scripture can never bind anyone. Ask the class to keep Romans 4 open.

▶ **L02-S02**
Key Verse

> *"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."* (Rom. 4:3) Point out Paul's method in one line: he asks **what the Scripture says**, then reasons from it.

A. The Problem Stated: The Bible and Its Relationship to Logic

▶ **L02-S03**
Logic Is a Discipline

1. Logic is a discipline.

- A field of study that deals with whether a sentence, or a group of sentences, permits us to correctly come to a conclusion.
- The **Law of Rationality** (covered in detail later): draw only such conclusions as are warranted by the evidence.
- It involves **inference** and **implication** (also covered later). "Imply" is often misused for "infer." **The statement implies. The person infers.**
- Implication: "If A and B are true, then C must be true." The truth of A and B *carries* the truth of C.
- We can infer incorrectly. Our inference is correct only if it matches what was actually implied.

► L02-S04
The Importance of the Problem

2. The importance of the problem. Some who claim to follow the Bible, and to teach what it teaches, have held that the Bible upholds irrationality.

- You cannot study the Bible and come to a correct conclusion that isn't warranted by the evidence.
- This is where false doctrines come in.
- The very way the Bible is written demands the recognition and honoring of logic and the law of rationality.

► L02-S05
Two Irrational Claims

3. Examples of irrational thought in theology regarding inference and implication.

a. "*If it isn't stated explicitly in scripture, that gives man the license to come to his own conclusions when it comes to his worship to God.*"

- **The issue:** men will end up adding to His Word (Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18–19).
- Nadab and Abihu could have said, "God didn't explicitly say NOT to use this kind of fire." Yet they "offered strange fire before the LORD, *which he commanded them not*" (Lev. 10:1–2). God had specified where the fire was to come from (Lev. 16:12). **Specifying one thing excluded the others without a list of prohibitions.**

L02-S05
continued

b. "*Any time a process of human reasoning or deduction has to intervene between the Word and a conclusion, the conclusion is human and not divine, and therefore cannot be a part of the New Testament pattern.*"

- **The issue:** it removes our responsibility to reason from the Scriptures.
- **It also refutes itself.** That statement is itself a conclusion reached by human reasoning. If it were true, it could not bind anyone.
- Jesus and His apostles use logic and reason to instruct and explain throughout the Scriptures. They had the authority. Why not just say, "DO IT BECAUSE I SAID SO!!"? Because they were teaching us how to use logic together with the Bible.

► **L02-S06**
Deducing What Is Implied

4. We must correctly deduce what the explicit statements of the Bible imply.

a. Paul shows how inferences are made from explicit statements in Romans 4:1–12.

- Abraham was perhaps the greatest example from the patriarchal period of the Old Testament.
- The Jews upheld Abraham as their father and looked to him as a standard of sorts.
- Paul uses the *point in time* at which Abraham was counted righteous to infer that circumcision wasn't the basis of his being counted righteous at all.

► **L02-S07**
Board Work

BOARD WORK · ROMANS 4:9–11

P1 Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3).

↳ **CLICK 1**
reveal P2

P2 That happened ***before*** Ishmael was born, and Abraham was 86 when Ishmael was born (Gen. 16:16).

↳ **CLICK 2**
reveal P3

P3 Abraham was circumcised at 99 (Gen. 17:24).

↳ **CLICK 3**
reveal ∴

∴ Abraham was counted righteous ***before*** he was circumcised, about 13 years or more before.

↳ **CLICK 4**
reveal ∴

∴ Circumcision was not the ground of his righteousness (Rom. 4:10–11).

TEACHER'S NOTE

Genesis 15 never states Abraham's age. We know the event came before Ishmael's birth (Gen. 16:16) from the order of the narrative and Genesis 16:3 ("after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan," which he entered at 75, Gen. 12:4). So the very argument we use to show Paul's inference is *itself* built on an inference from sequence. Put that to the class: we cannot even read Romans 4 without drawing inferences.

▶ L02-S08
Explicit Statements

Deducing what is implied (continued).

- Abraham's faith was an obedient faith (Heb. 11:8ff; James 2:21ff).
- God credited him with the status of "right-standing" (Rom. 4:3; Wayne Jackson's wording).
- Therefore, the Jews' inference that circumcision was necessary for righteousness was incorrect.
- Paul is pointing out that they misunderstood righteousness under the New Covenant because they hadn't understood it under the Old in the first place.
- **Paul used explicit statements from the Old Testament to infer a correct conclusion.** Romans 3:28 even uses the language of logic: "Therefore we *conclude* (*logizomai*) that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

> **TEACHER'S NOTE**
>
> *Logizomai* is the same verb Paul uses for "counted" in Romans 4:3 (and "reckoned" in 4:9–10). Paul *reckons* his conclusion the way God *reckoned* Abraham's faith: by weighing what is there. A short word study, worth thirty seconds.

L02-S08
continued

b. To use necessary inference, we must use logic, so this will be a topic throughout the course.

- When do explicit statements require an inference from us?
- When are inferences false?
- Biblical doctrine is not a free-for-all. If it were, there would be no such thing as false teachers, and 2 Peter 2:1 explicitly says there are.

c. The Bible itself at times guides its reader through a logical thought process.

- The Author knows how to appeal to man, because He created man.
- Since the Holy Spirit appeals to man's intellect in Scripture, we are expected to use our intellect.
- God could have said "Do this because I said so!" instead of guiding us through reason as He repeatedly does (Isa. 1:18: "Come now, and let us *reason* together, saith the LORD").

B. The Habits of Men Do Not Always Align With Logic, Just as They Do Not Always Align With the Bible

▶ **L02-S09**
Hobbes

1. Thomas Hobbes: "*As oft as reason is against a man, so oft will a man be against reason.*" (*The Elements of Law*, Epistle Dedicatory, 1640; often misattributed to David Hume.)

- God created us to be reasonable and to recognize and honor the law of rationality. Neither Aristotle nor any other man *wrote* the law of rationality, just as Isaac Newton did not *write* the law of gravity. They described what God built into the world.
- We are expected to draw only conclusions warranted by the evidence.
- Sometimes men latch onto conclusions for which there is no evidence, or that the evidence contradicts. They turn not only against the truth but against those who speak it, especially with the Bible and with anything related to the existence of God (cf. 2 Pet. 3:2–8).

▶ **L02-S10**
The Lowest Level

2. Warren: "*Like water, many human minds seem to seek the lowest level.*"

- It takes mental effort to examine ideas and doctrines and test them against logic and Scriptural authority.
- Men are sometimes slothful: it's easier to take the preacher's word, or to go along with what our parents taught us. It's uncomfortable to challenge those things, especially ideas we hold.
- There was a difference between those in Thessalonica and those in Berea (Acts 17:11).

Keep this humble: say "we," not "they." Every one of us has taken someone's word for something.

C. Valid and Invalid, Sound and Unsound

▶ **L02-S11**
Valid, Sound, Neither

To distinguish false doctrine from truth, we must also learn to distinguish **valid** from **invalid** arguments, and **sound** from **unsound** ones. *That is where we go next.* The slide previews the terms; Lesson 3 defines them carefully, so don't linger.

▶ **L02-S12**
Anchor Question

If God had simply said "Do it because I said so," what would we lose? Why do you think He reasons with us instead?

Let several people answer before you comment. Lead toward: we would lose **understanding**, **conviction** and the ability to **answer others** (1 Pet. 3:15, from Lesson 1). He reasons with us because He made us able to reason (Isa. 1:18).

▪ **DISCUSS**
about 8 min

Handout, page 2: students write their answer in the Discuss box.

▶ **L02-S13**
Summary

Restate the big idea: the Bible is written to be understood by reasoning. Walk the four points: **Logic Is a Discipline · Irrationality Breeds Error · Paul Reasons From Explicit Statements · Men Resist Reason When It Turns on Them.** Before next week, ask them to read Job 4:7–9 and 42:7.

BEFORE CLASS · FOR THE TEACHER

1. Can I walk through Abraham's timeline (Gen. 12:4; 15:6; 16:3, 16; 17:24) from memory, without the slide?
2. Where have I accepted a conclusion because I wanted it, rather than because the evidence warranted it?
3. How will I answer claim b gently, so a visitor who holds it hears an argument and not a put-down?