

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU EXIST?

It may seem like a ridiculous question, but have you really thought about it?
Actually, what is existence? Does it actually matter?
And what is the "mind"? Is it separate from the brain? And is there a "soul"?

These, and many other questions, arise within the branches of philosophy called METAPHYSICS and EPISTEMOLOGY. Philosophy has long grappled with these deep questions of the metaphysical; and yet we contend that the answers and conclusions are unsatisfactory – if not even alarming.

Where do you arrive if you follow secular views all the way through to their rational conclusion? Contrariwise, we would say that whilst philosophy poses many questions, it is only the Bible that can give a firm foundation for any objective truth, and thus provide answers.



Well, here we all are...we all exist, I think...

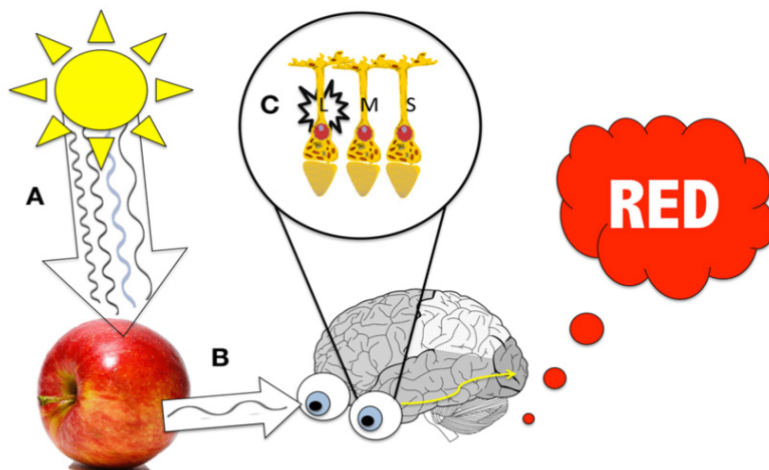
Actually, I don't only think, I see, and feel, and taste, hear, touch. So, I guess we all exist in space and time, don't we?

The question of what and how things exist is an area dealt with by a strange group of people called 'Philosophers', and this particular area of philosophy is called 'Metaphysics'.

METAPHYSICS

Philosophers like to ask the big questions, those weird questions that many people don't really consider, or have given up asking. But, generally speaking, the young person (maybe your age) will still ask those questions. They're still thinking, and haven't given up wondering about the big things yet. That's why I like speaking to the young.

However, metaphysical questions can be really odd. Like; "How do you know you can trust your memory, or your physical senses?" For example, colour only really exists as an experience inside your head!



Outside it's just light, photons bouncing off things. Same with sound, outside it's just waves in the air. It's only your ears and brain

that interpret them into sounds. With colour, your eyes take in the light waves, and your brain sees it as colour! Those eyes and ears and hands of yours; they're just tools to take in information. That information is processed inside your head:- so colour and sound and touch etc, are things that the brain interprets for you into sensations and perceptions. It may not actually be the way we sense it at all! Weird isn't it?! How can we trust the reliability of our senses?

It doesn't stop there. How do you really know if other people exist like you do? It seems like a silly question. I mean, they look like they do, if I pinch them they seem to feel pain like I do, but, because you can't actually feel what they do, how can you know?

How do you know if anything exists if you're not actually observing it? Is your house there when you're away from it? Is that thing that appears as you turn a corner actually there before you turned it, or does the act of observation produce a change?

What does it mean to be a 'Person'? Are you the same person you were as a baby? Your body is completely different. Come to think of it, am I just a body, or could I be just a mind? Am I free, or is every event caused by the previous one in a great chain of events, like a bunch of dominoes?

I've always been one of those weird philosophically minded people (I guess that's why I'm writing this article). Though, it's my contention, that we should all examine our lives like this. The famous Greek philosopher Socrates said;

"The unexamined life is not worth living."

His student, Plato said;

"Until philosophers are kings; or kings are philosophers, nothing will go right "

However, hundreds of years before this, it is in the Bible that we find the original 'philosopher king', king Solomon, explaining his attempt to understand the questions of life, on his own, saying;

"I will be wise; but it was far from me. That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?" Ecc 7.23-24

"The unexamined life is not worth living"
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"Until philosophers are kings, or kings are philosophers, nothing will go right."
Plato

"I will be wise; but it was far from me. That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?" Ecclesiastes 7.23-24

But it is in Isaiah that we find God Himself saying to humanity;
"Come, let us reason together." Isaiah 1.18.

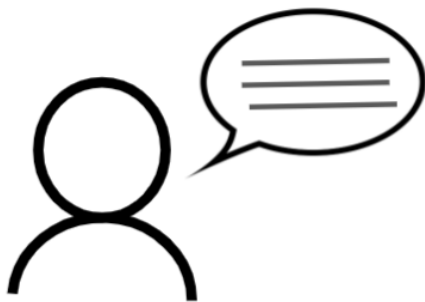
“Come let us reason together”

Isaiah 1.18

So, according to the Bible, it seems we must indeed think deeply about life, but we must do it together, with God revealing it to us, not on our own. If we 'go it alone', we'll end up where philosophy has found itself, after years of thinking; at a 'dead end', unable to know if there is one 'overall' TRUTH about everything, and if there is, it's impossible to know it!

You see, I'll give you three ways you could try to know things:

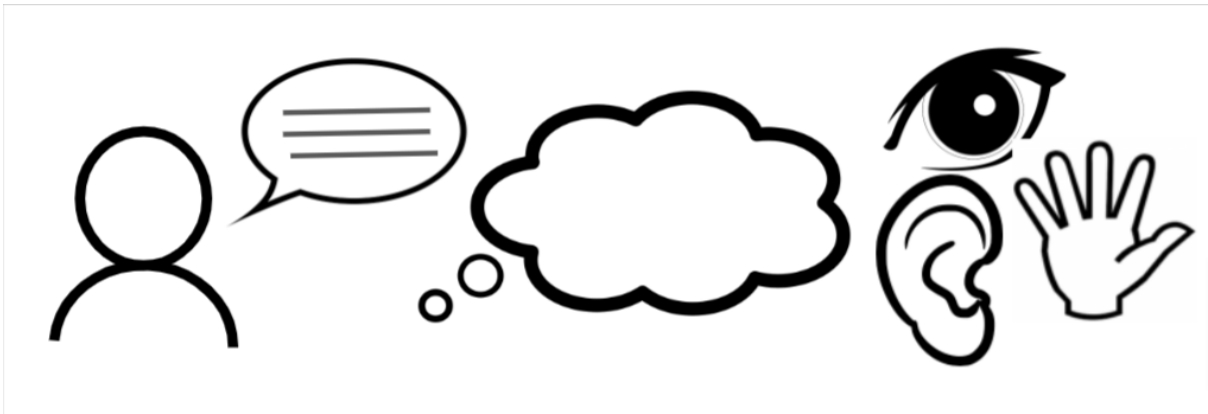
1. You could be told by someone who knows, and who you trust.



2. You could use your mind to think in a logical way to come to a conclusion.



3. You could use your senses, and experiences of the world, doing experiments and taking measurements, in order to know some facts, and then build up an idea of what 'is'.



You may think these are a good way to know what exists, no problem. However, it turns out that all of these have their problems:

1. From a person- How do you trust another person to know? Do you just have to take a chance? There could be a good reason to trust, but what would it be?
2. From our thoughts- Why should we trust our thoughts? If they're just chemical and electrical interactions in our heads? The logical laws we use; how do we know they're right? Why should they relate to the physical world? Where did they come from? Using them without reason is just arbitrary.
3. From our senses- Why should our senses tell us the truth about the outside world? Why should the universe behave tomorrow like it did today? Tomorrow it could do something different (the past is no guarantee of the future).
Furthermore, we could find out by some experiment, or observation, something that changes everything we thought we knew previously.

The Scottish philosopher David Hume proved that most of what we think of as science is merely convention. And that you can't actually even prove that the sun will come up tomorrow with science! (He thought that convention was good enough by the way...but is that really good enough?) He also thought that people aren't really people at all. They're just the sum of their experiences and thoughts, but we'll get to that.

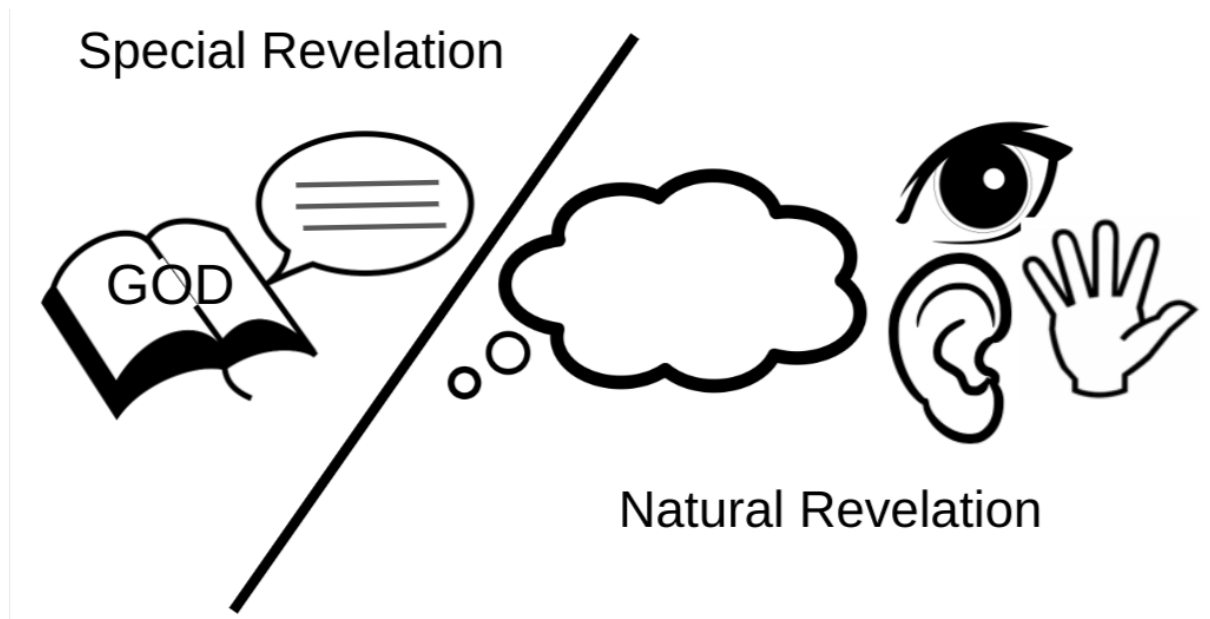
Let's look back at that first way to know, by having it revealed to you by a person. What if it was revealed by the ultimate Person - the all-knowing God Himself? Then you could know. If there was a way to actually 'see' it was truly from Him, then you could know. The Bible calls that 'sight' FAITH

FAITH

However, philosophy rejects faith because it defines faith as:-
Believing in something without evidence, without being sufficiently justified. But that is *not* what Biblical faith is! Biblical faith is a recognition of something by a *direct insight*. Just like knowing

the face of your parents, or recognizing their voice. Others may not see it, but you know it! If you could see the truth of the Bible like that, then you could trust it. And the Bible says that faith like that can be given to us by God in order to see and know (Eph 2.8). The truth would then be 'self-evident'. It wouldn't be believing without evidence! It turns out that having the truth revealed to us by God is the only firm foundation to know anything for sure.

So, because the Bible says ultimately all knowledge comes from God, you could divide up those three ways I gave you (to know things), like in the diagram below:



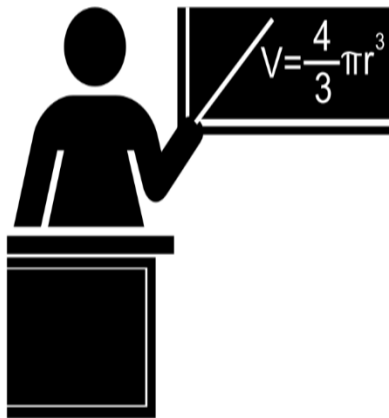
If you just rely on the second two, then that wouldn't be enough to know anything for sure! You need the first, and that would be by having God reveal it to us by words, i.e The Bible.

However, as I've said, philosophy tried to just use the last two, which was a 'sandy' foundation of mere Reason and Experience (Natural Revelation). If you reject Biblical faith, then what have you got left? Just your thoughts and senses, and who's to say you can trust them?

At first Greek philosophers tried to work out what everything was made of. Early Greek philosophers from the colony of Miletus variously thought it must be one substance, or fundamental 'stuff' from which everything is made. One (Anaximander) said it must all eventually return to this (As the Bible talks of to dust we return). Another (Anaximenes) said it must be 'Air'. Yet another (Thales of Miletus) said the one substance must be water! He thought the realisation of this made the idea of God an outdated idea.



Pythagoras didn't make the same rash assumption of discounting God. He realised the truths of Maths and Geometry were everywhere in the natural world, and in some



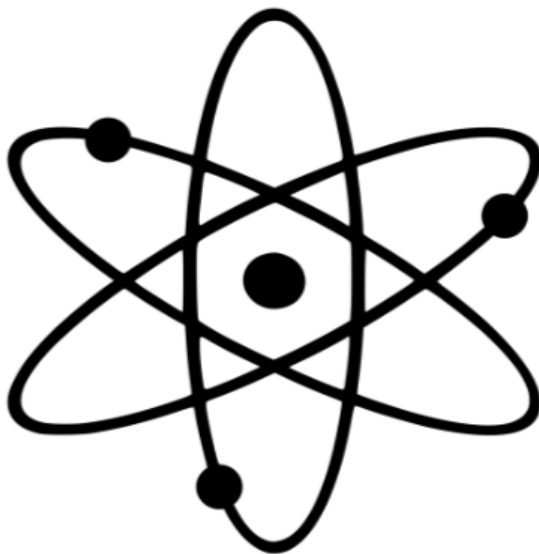
cases innately in our thoughts. These, he said, must have come from God.

Another philosopher (Heraclitus), noticing that everything changes, thought the 'substance' can't always be the same. After all, you can't actually stand in the same river twice, because it's always flowing, he said. His idea was of unity and consistency, but in constant flux. It's not surprising then to know that his contribution to the big question of the fundamental substance was that it was fire (He also, interestingly, thought that all knowledge was relative and could only be known subjectively- a position that modern philosophy has taken centuries to arrive

at. Although, this thinking cheats by being dogmatic about their one central doctrine *relativism*).

A challenge to his idea of unity in flux came from someone else (Parmenides), who said that permanent existence can't change into something else without ceasing to be permanent. Therefore, fundamental change is impossible. It was all very confusing!

What if everything was made up of tiny little pieces of stuff, and the smallest bit, you could no longer cut up. This is what the 'Atomists' said (That's what the word 'atom' means originally - 'uncuttable'). They were onto something, but made the same



mistake as before, by thinking that if one understands the substance of things, and some natural laws, then you don't need God. But it doesn't explain why those laws are there in the first place, or where the substance came from! The Bible says it is God who is behind all these things, and upholds them. People still make the same mistake today. Why? Because they are prejudiced against the idea of God, and don't *want* Him to be true. The Bible explains that about us also.

Plato, who we heard from earlier, was convinced that there must be another realm where all our ideas about things come from. Therefore, a person must at least be made of a mind and a body. He also thought there must be a

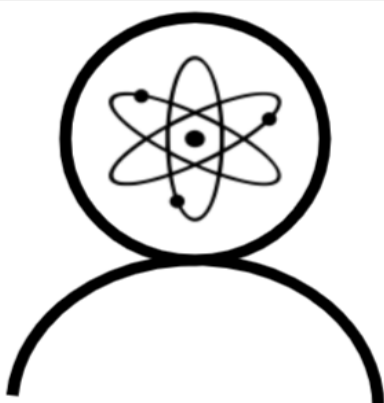
soul, that is the 'real you'. He was a rationalist and thought of big ideas, trying to prove them with smaller ideas in order to come to a conclusion (Deduction). It was actually Aristotle who really invented a strict logical version of this 'deductive' reasoning. But he wasn't so sure about this other realm of ideas, and preferred to use experience and senses to go from small facts and work to bigger realisations (Induction). In order to provide oneself with the correct premises to deduce from, one needs to use induction (being able to generalize from specifics). He also believed in



a 'Prime Mover' that causes everything teleologically (designed for a purpose).

What of the soul then? An Arab philosopher (Avicenna) thought that if you were floating in the air, and couldn't sense anything, you'd still have the sense of yourself existing. So, he thought, there must be a soul, or at least a mind. However, there's a problem if you're just thinking in terms of the immaterial mind and a physical body.

On the one hand, if we're two things (mind and body), how does the immaterial interact with the physical?



On the other hand, if we're just material, physical stuff, then why should you trust the stuff you're made of to tell you things? It's just atoms after all. Ontop of all that, why are we conscious of ourselves at all?!

Without God, science can usefully tell us *what* some physical things do and are (not conclusively, as we have seen), but crucially, it cannot tell us *why* they exist at all! It is only by realizing that we have a soul that is spiritual, that anything about us really makes sense. Everywhere, in the Bible, it distinguishes between body and soul. For example, the apostle Paul talks as if our body is like a tent for our souls to live in.

Philosophy, however, was still squabbling about Mind and Body. A philosopher called René (Descartes) decided to start with himself, and to doubt everything else.



He thought that even if everything he sensed or thought was a lie, he could still know that he was thinking. Therefore, he concluded, he exists! Not so fast René! I like your thinking, but you're jumping to a conclusion. You think you exist because your thoughts exist, and then, by some circular reasoning (the ontological argument) you try to prove God exists. But all you can really prove, from all this, is that *only thinking* exists. Not you, and not God. There are much better arguments for God's existence (the teleological argument, or even better, the transcendental argument), but, ultimately, the proof is by *believing* what God says, not by finding some reason separate from the Bible.

Some philosophers recognised faith, but made a great mistake about it. Mr Pascal tried to force himself to believe by an act of sheer will, based upon betting on God's existence.



He thought that if he believes, and it's not true, then he loses nothing. But if he doesn't believe, and it's true, then he loses everything! However, the Biblical truth is that, even if he won his bet, he would find himself the loser. Why? Because he badly underestimates what it takes to free the human will from unbelief, prejudice and bondage to sin. Telling yourself to believe based upon a wager won't cut it at all. The Bible talks of people having hard hearts,

and being unable to believe. It's just like being blind, if God doesn't open your spiritual eyes, then you're still blind, even if you try to convince yourself that you can see.



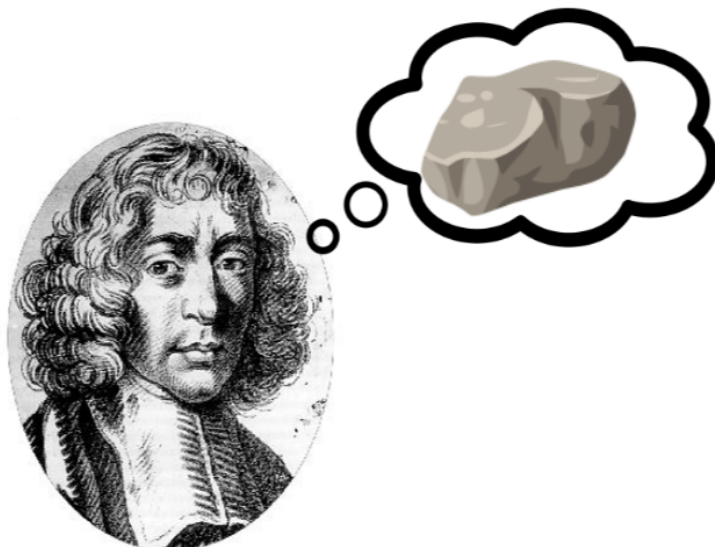
The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard tried a similar thing, and thought that you could just take a 'leap of faith', like jumping off a cliff in the dark! He was another trembling blind man, who thought he could try to see, and was free to do so. But we're not free. We can't naturally see, and when we hear something of God, our natural tendency is to stick our fingers in our ears!

Where had philosophy got to by doing this? Spinoza thought that he could solve the Mind/Body problem by believing that all objects have a mind, even a rock! Then the mind and body don't really have to interact, because it's all really part of the same substance. It may seem a bizarre idea, but, without God, how can you know about such things? Best guesses are all you have. Even today you hear similar ideas

like this; that the universe is somehow 'conscious' or god is part of everything (although Spinoza wasn't strictly a pantheist). However, the Bible reveals that God is separate from His creation, and not only upholds it, but orders everything in it, including all the events of life. You may ask "But where does that leave luck, and chance?" The answer is nowhere, no such thing!

When considering any ideas like this, the question of *warrant*, or *authority* is paramount. What was Spinoza's authority for his teaching? Merely his own guesswork, based upon his limited, and

imperfect, reason (although he tried to merge this with theology). The Bible provides true authority (when recognised as such), explaining much to us about human nature, especially in the area of morality (what philosophy calls Ethics). It is not our present subject, but this is crucial to understanding our separation from our Creator.



Of course, it follows that if you reject the Bible, you're at the mercy of guesswork. Thomas Hobbes guessed that all we are, are complex machines (Materialism is a philosophy that can't pass its own standard:- in order to prove it you need *immaterial* laws of logic!). Though he did recognise a problem with human nature anyone should notice, and daily history bears out, saying "Human beings are instinctively selfish and ruthless". He also cynically concluded "Any attempt to make them moral beings is a waste of time." Morality, to him, was just a cynical agreement between villains! How he gauges what a 'villain' is, when morality must necessarily be as relative as our senses, is unexplained. He noticed something important about us though, and it wasn't 'good'.

Morally and metaphysically, without God, we're all adrift in a sea of inner; feelings, memories, thoughts, senses and experiences. And outer; events and circumstances, pulled and pushed by the 'currents' of what happens to us in our lives, without knowing why. Who we really are will be very difficult to say. In this, and many other ways, people can be said to be truly lost.

The way God orders all things together, to bring about His will, is called the doctrine of providence, and even philosophers like Gotfried Leibnitz thought there must be a way that everything is connected. The Bible reveals that God orders all events in our 'lower' realm. His mind easily grasps the unimaginably complex interacting connections (like a tapestry), and works them together for the purposes of His will.

Now, you may still think that, without God, understanding ultimate, objective truth is still possible. But the philosophers can't even decide what a person is! What is a person? This seems like a simple enough question, but, without God, you're going to find that a very hard question to answer. The revealed truth from the Bible states that our

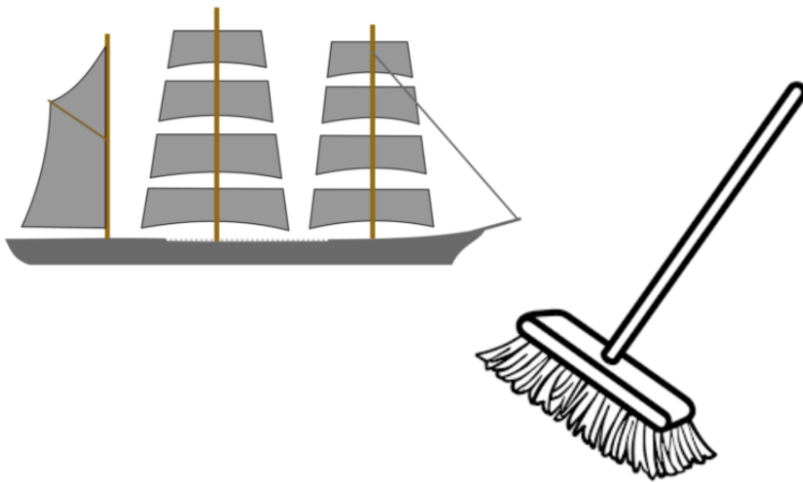
PERSON?

'personhood' comes from 'The Person' - God, and is distinct from the animals. Quite opposite to the view of the ancient Greek Xenophanes, (who said "If horses had hands and could draw, they would draw pictures of gods like horses") it is only a Christian worldview that can explain personhood at all. We don't make God in our image, He made us in His.

Without this fundamental truth what you really are becomes a mystery. Think about this; It is said that approximately every 7-10 years virtually all our body cells regenerate into new ones. If we decide to resist the Bible's view of what a person is, then what do we make of that fact? Are we still the same person we were 7-10 years ago? We're not the same substance? Are we still guilty of the things we did back then?

Philosophy asks the question by imagining a ship that takes a long journey, and along the way gradually replaces all its planks and masts and sails etc, until there's none of the original left. The question is, is it the same ship, and if not, when did it change? There's an old joke about a road sweeper. He says "I've had the same

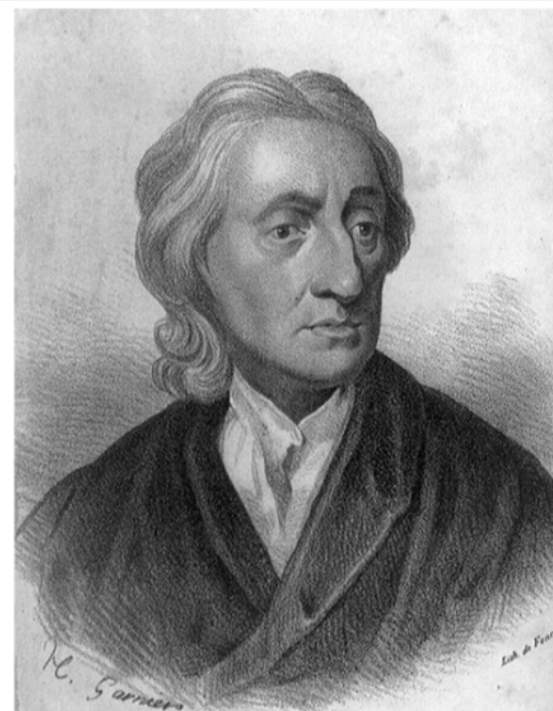
broom for twenty years, it's had seventeen new heads and fourteen new handles!" Well, how can it be the same broom then?! Are we like the broom? Philosophy hasn't



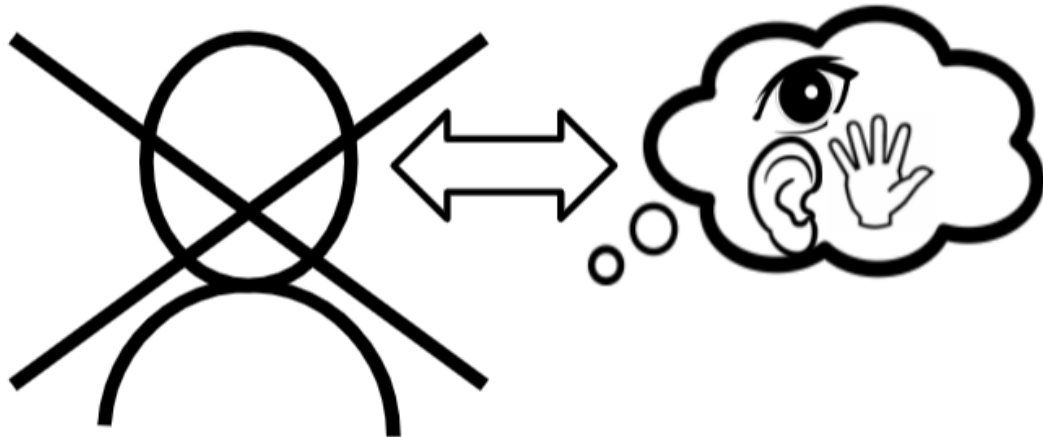
got an answer. Theology has though; we're not ships or brooms, we're people with souls! But materialism reduces people to mere machines, mere objects, and that means we've got a real identity crisis on our hands!

John Locke thought that it must be our memories that make us the same

person. If you can't remember what you were like, years ago, or what you did, then you're literally a different person! I've already mentioned David Hume, who thought it's mental experiences that make up a person. To him, you're just a collection of thoughts and experiences, not really a person at all! You see, no God, no soul, then no you in any real sense.

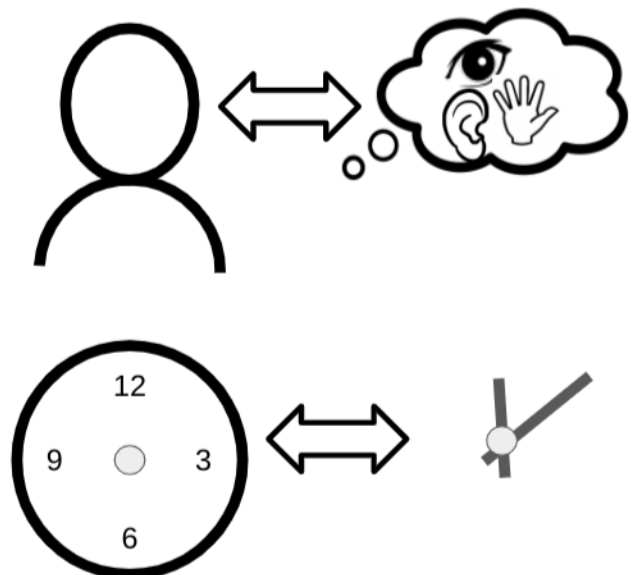


Earlier I mentioned about how colour and sound only really exist in our heads, and some went so far as to say that those experiences in our minds are all you can really know exists. There *may* be something 'out there', but it may not look like you think it does, or sound, or feel, or taste etc! Your mind is filtering reality all the time, like a pair of coloured sunglasses, you hope it's giving you a correct representation of everything...but how can you be sure? Everything could just be a virtual reality.



After all, our senses can play tricks on us, think of optical illusions. Conversely, once again, if you believe in the Bible it can tell you there is a real world 'out there' and that our senses are fairly reliable. We are told, for example, in Proverbs 20.12 that God (who is reliable) gave us our reliable senses, and in Genesis 8.22 that God will uphold the uniformity of natural laws. But if you don't believe this, you can't possibly prove the uniformity of nature, or the reliability of your senses.

Although Mr Kant (Emmanuel) thought that if our thoughts are like the hands of a clock, then you can't make sense of time (something innate within humans) without the existence of a clock face with numbers. Therefore, the 'outer world' must exist. The outer world must be like the clock face. But even though he proved this to be true, he said you still couldn't know what this 'outside' world is actually like.



So, we've gone from everything being just matter, to everything being just thoughts and sense experiences. Philosophy had just confused itself and everyone else! You see, without faith from God, human reason ties itself up in knots it can't undo. Faith, however, is the Holy Spirit of God witnessing to our spirit, the truth of the Bible. God is actively involved in this possibility of knowing the truth. How can our own feeble thoughts compete with God Himself opening our eyes to the truth in answer to prayer. This is why true faith is superior to both intellect and science (or, more strictly, rationalism and empiricism). They are both useful, but don't go far enough.

Take free will for example. You may think you're free, but if we're all just physical stuff moving about, then every action has a reaction, every cause has an effect, just like one domino hitting another. This must be true even of all the atoms in our brains!



So it's actually really hard to prove that everything isn't a giant chain of caused events determined to happen. This is called 'hard determinism', and is a problem for a purely materialistic philosophy. It results from not understanding how God orders all things providentially, and how our souls interact with our bodies. I'm not going to pretend that we

understand how this happens, but crucially, with faith, we can understand that it does.



Of course, if you convince yourself that you don't have a soul, then you can reason that death isn't something to fear. After all, you can only suffer in the body if that is true. But it isn't true! Socrates was wiser than to dismiss the obvious existence of the soul, but still thought death was nothing to fear. He thought it was just a journey to another destination. But, of course, journeys can be bad, and destinations can be worse!

As we have seen, thinking and experience isn't enough to really prove anything 'truly' without God. So why don't people accept the Bible? Because the problem with people isn't an intellectual one, first and foremost, it's a moral one. It's not a problem of the head, but of the heart, which then affects the head. We're guilty before God, but don't want to accept it.



It is said that a man seeks God like a thief searches for a policeman, of course, a thief doesn't search for a policeman! This shows that man doesn't start thinking about God from a neutral position, but is biased against God. People often try to come across as if they are completely neutral, carefully weighing the arguments, but they aren't being completely honest with themselves or everyone else. The truth is, we naturally only want one outcome, and will much more easily accept any argument against God because we mistakenly think we're better off without Him. True faith isn't against careful use of our mind and experience, but it is above it, it goes further than those limited things. God seems to have placed Himself just 'out of reach' of human reason in order that human pride and intellect may not be crowned with the credit for reaching Him. However, philosophy still thinks it can place itself above God in order to proudly pronounce its verdict upon Him. But the Bible shows us this isn't a vantage point given to us by God.

God doesn't expect us to believe independent of reason though. After all, He gave us our reason and expects us to use it. He is the only non-arbitrary reason we have to explain why we have reason at all! The Bible explains that He gave us our minds and logical laws. The Bible uses reasoned arguments and many 'proofs'. But reason on its own is insufficient for the stubborn skeptic (which is what we all are naturally). Faith must go beyond it.

FAITH

This begs the question, why has God chosen this simple, unimpressive thing - *faith*, to be the way by which we can gain access back to Him?

I can think of at least four reasons, I'll give you two:

- 1) Because it's easily accessible to all. If it were by difficult study, many would be excluded. Children for example.
- 2) Because it's a humble thing. It stops people from being proud and thinking that they saved themselves. God gets the glory.

From all this, we can see the problem of trying to 'go it alone', without God, when



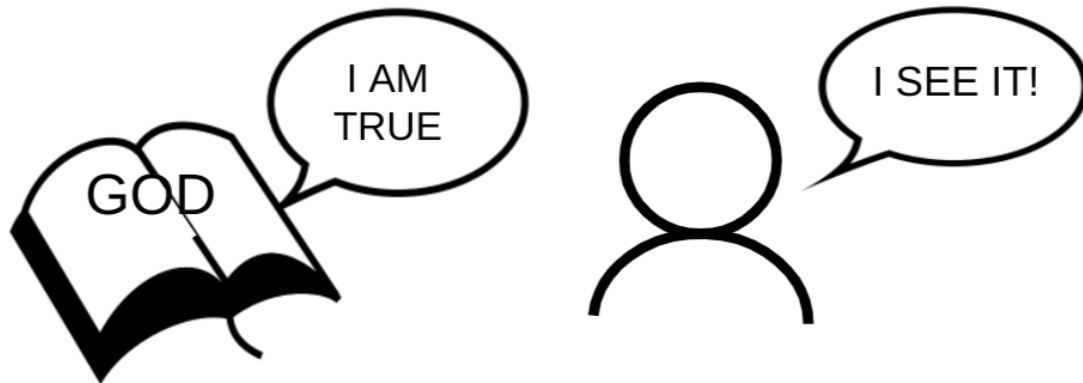
searching for ultimate knowledge of existence. People mistakenly think they're free without God, but it's the exact opposite. It's the 'freedom' of jumping out of an aeroplane without a parachute! You may think you're a person with free will, and your life has meaning. However, if you start really thinking, a thought may burst into your mind and rudely shout at you saying, "Who do you think you are?! You could be just a lump of talking, moving, physical stuff! What gives you the reason to think you're the same person you were 10 years ago? How do you know we're not all just staring at a shadow of reality upon a cave wall? How do you know you're not just

living in a dreamworld, or you're not just a bunch of memories? Infact, how do you know all your memories weren't just planted into your brain 5 minutes ago, or your brain isn't in a pickle jar somewhere being fed experiences and manipulated? Does anyone else really exist? Where does that leave any meaning or choice in your life? No soul, no you!

Or you can have God's solid foundation, His revealed word. You can trust logic and reason, the reliability of your senses and the uniformity of nature, because He is a trustworthy God, who we are told has given them to us to make sense of things (in a limited way). So the choice is really between the God of the Bible, and therefore the ability to know objective truth; or, an attempt at human autonomy, and therefore, not being able to know anything for sure. I wonder, after what I've said about our natural tendency, if you can guess which one Man, in his natural rebellion to God, has chosen?! Welcome to the 'postmodern' age! Is life just a question of choosing the 'truth' that you think suits you the best? Can that ever be adequately meaningful, or satisfactory? What if, what we think is skewed away from what is best for us, and towards what is positively disastrous for us?

What philosophy can't grasp, is that faith isn't belief without justification. True faith is seeing, recognizing and believing in a personal testimony from a trustworthy Person. Even in philosophy this first hand testimony is seen as an important way to gain justifiable knowledge. God isn't just an idea, He's an active Person, who opens the eyes of the blind, finds lost sheep and prodigal sons. The Holy Spirit speaks to us

through the pages of the Bible and says, "I'm true", and our spirit replies and says, "I see it!"



The words of a man given sight in the Bible illustrates this;

"One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." And Jesus said, *"I am come into this world that they which see not, might see."*

Ask Him for that sight, that faith. Say *"Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."*

The Bible's 'special revelation' doesn't just explain existence, but explains how we might be united to the One who gives that existence. The existence of evil in the world must necessarily tell us that there's something terribly wrong with the relationship between us and our Creator. The Gospel message isn't just an intelligent argument, it's a personal salvation. We're people, and we need to be saved by the ultimate Person by an ultimate act. That's what the cross of Calvary was all about. The point of life isn't happiness, first and foremost. It is *redemption* back to God by a great act of atoning love. Come to a church that truly teaches the Bible and believes it, to understand more.



In the Bible, the man who built his house upon a rock, we are told, first had to dig deep. This is how to seek God. Go beyond the 'shallow' things of this world, and dig deep into the things of the soul. The secular world would have you believe that you

don't really exist as a living soul. That you're just a meaningless bunch of matter! But you do exist, and life isn't meaningless. Everything inside is telling us that. I leave the last word on Metaphysics to the Psalmist David, and the last word on truth to Christ the redeeming Saviour. Note the humility of David, and the authority of Christ.

David said, *"Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo O LORD, thou knowest it all together. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it."* Psalm 139.3-6

Christ said, *"To this end was I born and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice."* John 18.37

Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Psalm 139.3-6

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

John 18.37

Appendix

Is modern science the way to truth?

- Logical Positivism

What must be understood is that we live in a postmodern age. The 18th century enlightenment was an optimistic age where humanity was hopeful that science and reason could be the way to find ultimate truth. But since those times it has been shown to be sadly lacking philosophically. In the 1920's there arose a philosophical movement out of Vienna and Berlin called Logical Positivism (later neo-positivism or logical empiricism). It was a movement that said that science (verified by direct observation) and logical proof, were the only way to find truth, and all metaphysical ideas were meaningless. It found popularity amongst the nazis. But it was heavily criticized by philosophers such as Thomas Khun and Karl Popper. The former saying that the so-called scientific method had never been the way science has really progressed, instead by 'paradigm shifts' after long periods of going down

the wrong road. The latter said true science must be falsifiable, but much of what passes as science isn't, therefore it's merely pseudoscience.

Today it has been said that Logical Positivism is as dead as any philosophical movement can be. The problem of science finding ultimate, objective truth, has long been known. David Hume first realized the problem of induction. Science can only ever be provisional, and one can't really prove causality. Further compounding things are such discoveries as Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum mechanics, which put Man's observations as central to His experiments, rather than being an impartial observer. In quantum mechanics this gives significant uncertainty and a 'measurement problem'.

Logical empiricism became viewed as self-contradictory: the verifiability criterion of meaning was itself unverified. You can't prove it by its own standards. Notable critics included Popper, Quine, Hanson, Kuhn, Putnam, Austin, Strawson, Goodman, and Rorty.

Deductive reasoning (as used in rationalism) has an important role to play in the sciences, but on its own, it cannot say anything about the world. It can only say "If this is the case, then that is the case". And if we want to use such arguments in the sciences, we still have to rely on induction for our premises - (the 'if this is the case' bit)

Theories that are untestable (like spiritual things, or whether there is a God?) are not part of the natural sciences. This does not mean that they are worthless, only that they are not the kinds of theories that the sciences deal with. This is why people who attempt to disprove God's existence with science, are sorely mistaken.

The scary epistemological position that we've come to is that you can't actually prove anything with reason or empiricism. Deductive reason relies on induction for its premises. Induction has a problem of only being provisional truth and unable to prove cause and effect, as Hume's fork showed. 'Logical positivism/empiricism' is said to be more dead than any philosophical movement!

*The better rational proofs (the Teleological argument, and the Transcendental argument) are convincing, and compelling for a neutral seeker (of which there are none naturally), but ultimately inconclusive logically for a stubborn skeptic. The reason for this is they do **not want** to be convinced. This is why true, God given, faith is essential.*