

HAVE YOU  
HEARD OF  
ETERNITY?

Marius le Roux

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# FOREWORD

- What am I doing with my life?
- Why am I here?
- Is there any purpose to my life beyond my work, my family, my needs and ambitions?
- Is there more to life than comfort, pleasure and entertainment?
- What will eventually happen to the record of my life?
- Is there such a record?
- If there is a world beyond this world, do I need to know about it or prepare for it? Should I care?

Dear reader, if any of the above questions, or similar ones, have crossed your mind, let us investigate them. I will endeavour to present this study to some extent as a debate. I will put forward propositions that will help us to grapple with some of the great issues of life.

Why should we bother with such a debate?

Well, in short, the issues that we will be discussing are more important than anything else in your life or mine.

They are life-defining and life-changing issues.

They are about eternity.

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# INTRODUCTION

This study concerns the future, but it is not about the economic or political future, the diminishing resources of the world, the plight of the poor and the displaced, or climate change. This study is concerned, dear reader, with a different future, the future of every individual as a unique human being.

What is your greatest achievement?

*I guess my role in Hamlet at Covent Garden*

Who is your favourite author?

*Many - Steinbeck, Bunyan, Burns, Hancock*

Who are your favourite composers?

*Beethoven, Dvorjak, Smetana*

What happens when you die?

*Nothing.*

This is just made up. It follows the line of a magazine column in which well-known personalities respond to various lifestyle and preference questions. As indicated, some of the personalities end with the last statement: “Nothing”.

Such a statement implies that this life is all that there is. Depending on your outlook, this could be a naturalistic worldview or a humanistic worldview. The naturalistic holds that there is nothing more than the natural order, and the humanistic that people can live their lives without reference to religious beliefs. In other words, for them there is no higher authority and no ultimate standard against which we are measured. Everyone would have their own values and their own notion of what is right and wrong.

There are difficulties here. What is the offer of such a worldview? Is it the stark face of a universe that is merely there, that is mute, inanimate, and that has no intrinsic sense of value? If there are no values in the universe, no moral cause, if the universe is merely an accident, what would be the basis on which right and wrong, justice, compassion, care, love and honour are established?

Some would say that a naturalistic or humanistic worldview could nonetheless promote values based on human experience. But has human experience proved to be a good teacher? What have thousands of years of human experience achieved in terms of values?

The treasure house of human values seems close to empty.

The national well-known personality above says that nothing happens at the end of life. Does this mean that your life and mine will ultimately count for nothing? Will

there be nothing to account for and no-one to whom to give an account? Will our lives end, be extinguished and forgotten?

How does this, dear reader, make you feel about the future? How does it affect your optimism for life? How does it enthuse you, should it be true that whatever you do, good or bad, is ultimately irrelevant?

Now, dear reader, there is one worldview that I would like to introduce to you. It is based on the reality of a living, personal God who created all that there is, including the human race. This is the God of spotless purity and holiness. Righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne. This is the covenantal God who entered the human domain to reconcile himself with a fallen humanity.

But why should we bother with this God? You may not acknowledge his existence. Or, if he exists, you may not be interested in him. Why should we bother?

Well, amongst other things, this is the God who promises us a future, stretching into eternity.

Why this study? The aim with this study is to present the Christian worldview to you, dear reader, on a rational and logical basis. The God of the Bible is at the centre of this worldview. What you do with him is of course your choice.

If you are interested, come on a journey of exploration.

So, is there a case for God?

# IS THERE A CASE FOR GOD?

*Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity.*

*Psalm 93:2*

Some people say that God exists only in the minds of men and women who choose to believe in him, or that God is nothing more than a delusion.<sup>1</sup> His existence is imaginary and purely a matter of subjective choice.

But what if God is real?

When the British playwright and author Noel Coward was asked "What do you think about God?" he reportedly replied "We have never been properly introduced".

It sounds like a clever answer, but is it?

We have started by referring to "God", so before going any further, we should ask, "Who is God?"

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<sup>1</sup> For discussion on this topic see *Touchy Topics* by Melvin Tinker, EP Books, UK, 2016, from page 13. This is also a topic of the atheist author Richard Dawkins' book, *The God Delusion*, Transworld Publishers, London, 2006.



Through the ages, there has been a largely universal call on the human psyche of a greater Being or Intelligence that transcends the world. That there is another world beyond this one. That there is the next world, the invisible world. But let it immediately be said that this inner sense in humanity of a supernatural God is not accepted by many people, though it may linger in their conscience.

In this study, we will throughout look at the question of God from a Christian point of view, and not through the lens of any of the other religions of the world.

If this, dear reader, inclines you immediately to set aside this study, I urge you not to do so. It is perhaps not by accident that you are reading this account, and surely, can any harm come of enquiring into some of the fundamental questions of life?

So who is God?

One of the greatest theological statements of all time is contained in the first ten words of the Bible:

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

*Genesis 1:1*

Observe in this statement:

The author of creation is *God*. The text simply asserts the existence of God. It does not introduce him to the reader or try to explain him or qualify him. He is God, who created the heavens and the earth. To have done so, must speak of an infinite power and wisdom that we cannot begin to comprehend. It is not only the creation of a vast universe, but a creation characterised by design, order and harmony.

The work of creation occurred *in the beginning*. There was a beginning. God, who transcends time, set time in motion in the beginning.

The manner in which the work was undertaken was that *God created*. The heavens and the earth were created by an all-powerful God. In that they were created, they were made *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. Bear in mind here that in creating matter out of nothing, the God who created nature is not subject to the laws of nature, which preclude anything from coming out of nothing. Bear in mind further that in creating nature, he who created it is also the author of the laws of nature.

Now the playwright mentioned at the start of this chapter that he had not properly been introduced to God. But had he been attentive? How does the Infinite reveal himself to the finite?

Of course, if he is God, in any way that he chooses.

In the ensuing pages, we will enquire whether God has revealed himself to humankind in any of the following ways:

- Has God revealed himself in the natural order?
- Has God revealed himself in the hearts and minds of human beings?
- Has God revealed himself in a written record?
- Has God revealed himself in person?

And if he has, what does that mean for us?

# HAS GOD REVEALED HIMSELF IN THE NATURAL ORDER?

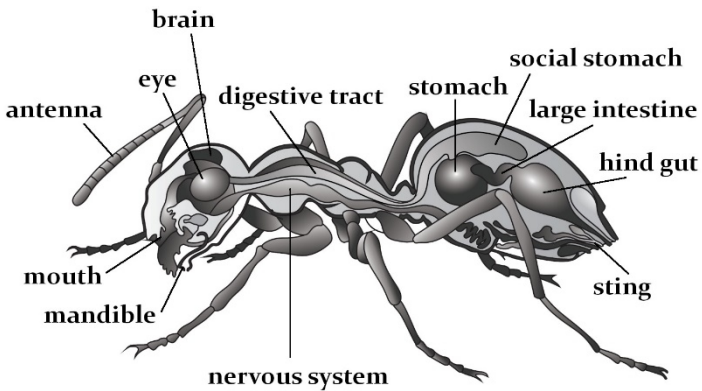
When something is designed, it may be possible to find some sign or evidence of the designer in the work itself. An example is a painting, where people can sometimes recognize the artist by the style or subject of what is painted.

Let us enquire in the ensuing pages if we can find any sign of the fingerprints of God in the natural world.

## The Common Ant

Consider a common ant found in many parts of the world and greatly enlarged below. Its actual size is about this big: -

Observe in regard to this tiny creature, which can lift something like fifty times its own body weight, amongst other things:



It has a brain in its head, which enables it to process the faintest data coming from its antennae, eyes, joints and body hairs.

It has a throat (oesophagus) that takes liquid food to a stomach in the abdomen. Most ants do not eat solid food, although their larvae do. They live on a liquid diet from their prey.

It has a heart, not like ours, but more like one of our veins, starting in the head and running through the thorax into the abdomen. Fluid, which does not carry gases, is pumped throughout the body in one direction to bathe the internal organs.

It has muscles which almost fill the head to control the powerful jaws and the mandibles, as well as the pharynx to aid the movement of food into the oesophagus. Elsewhere, it

has muscles that operate the legs and the wings in the queen.

2

Do you think the ant is designed?

## The Human Knee

The knee joint is formed where the thigh bone (femur) meets the shin bone (tibia). A smooth cushion of articular cartilage covers the ends of both these bones. Healthy cartilage absorbs stress and allows the bones to glide across each other smoothly. This cartilage is kept slippery by the joint fluid (synovial fluid) made by the joint lining (synovial membrane).

Note the configuration of the knee:

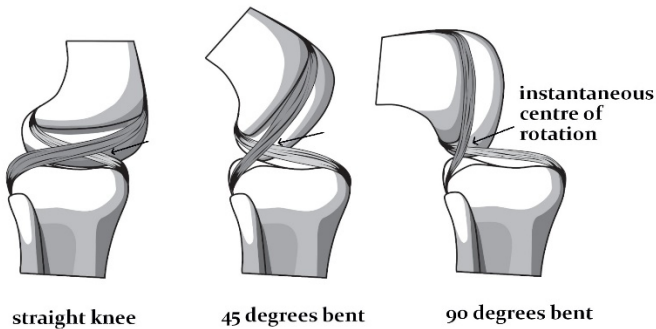
- The knuckle of the femur has a pair of spaced downwardly directed convex protrusions (condyles) which seat smoothly in a pair of concave grooves in the knuckle of the tibia.
- Ligaments give the knee stability, one on each side (collateral) and two through the middle (cruciate). Tendons connect muscles to the knee to power the knee and leg for movement.

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<sup>2</sup> Information in this section was obtained from <http://www.antnest.co.uk>

- The kneecap (patella) is the moveable bone on the front of the knee. It is situated within a tendon (not shown in the diagram) that connects the muscle on the front of the thigh (quadriceps) to the lower leg. It glides within a groove on the front of the femur.
- Apart from the tendon holding the kneecap, there is a medial collateral ligament on the inside of the knee, and a lateral collateral ligament on the outside.

Note the internal ligaments of the knee structure pictured schematically below.



Running between the femur and the tibia in a space formed between the downwardly directed condyles on the knuckle of the femur, are two ligaments that cross over one another, the anterior cruciate ligament, and the posterior cruciate ligament.

When the knee bends, there is both a pivoting and sliding action between the two main leg bones. This rolling action is guided by the cruciate ligaments which remain taut and shift their centre of rotation as the knee bends.<sup>3</sup>

If it is healthy, the knee is a joint that bends easily. It absorbs stress and allows pain-free movement. It enables us to walk, run and perform a host of activities over a lifetime.

Considering the human knee, does it look as though it has been designed?

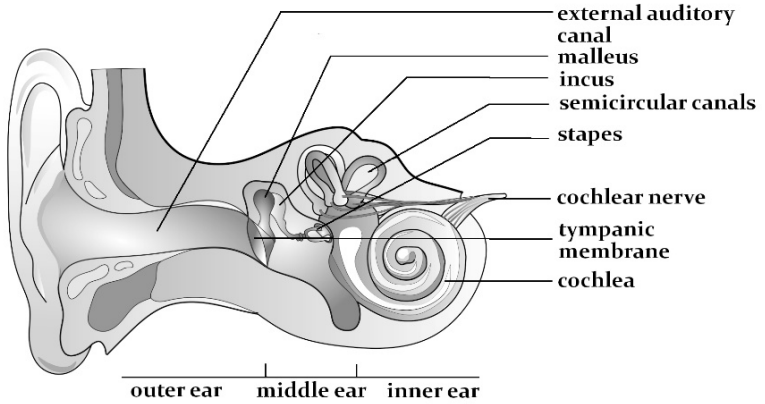
What about the human hand, which can wield a sledgehammer in one instance, and perform eye surgery in another?

## The Human Ear

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<sup>3</sup> Information in this section was obtained from the book *Hallmarks of Design* by Stuart Burgess, Day One Publications, UK, 2004.





To enable us to hear, sound waves at given frequencies pass along the ear passage, causing the eardrum at the other end of the passage to vibrate at the same frequencies. Three tiny bones known as the hammer (malleus), the anvil (incus) and the stirrup (staples) pass the vibration of the eardrum on to a device called the oval window which leads into the inner ear, where these tiny bones, or ossicles, serve to amplify the vibrations of the eardrum some twenty-fold and also to modify them.

So, we have three tiny somehow positioned to amplify and transfer vibrations at certain frequencies into the inner ear.

Here it becomes more complicated.

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