

OpenTheo

The Object in Objectivity

August 15, 2021



For The King - Rocky Ramsey

Recently, Bryce and I walked through why the theory of relativity, not Einstein's theory ;), is a foolish and contradictory worldview to hold. This week Bryce and I press the issue further with a short talk objectivity and why it is precious for the Christian to cling to. One of Christianity's most prevalent form of relativism is emotionalism in the Church. Bryce and I use emotionalism as a case study for relativism in the church. Enjoy and thanks for listening!

Resources:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/objective-truth.html>

Texts:

Acts 17: 22-34; Mark 6:18

My guest joining me this week on the Sunday series is my brother Bryce. Bryce is getting his undergraduate degree in philosophy and hopes to get his MDiv. from a seminary after he completes his undergrad. He hopes to be a pastor shepherding Gods people one day.

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Transcript

(music) And Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." (clap) Welcome, everybody, to the For The King podcast, where Jesus is recognized and exalted as king. That's what we do here on this podcast. That's the name of the podcast.

That's what we hope to do every single episode. And what I just read from you is Pilate questioning Jesus. "Are you really the king of the Jews?" And Jesus said, "You said it." You know, "You said it."

It's out of your own mouth." I don't even have to tell you. Like, you already know it, basically. These people have offered me up as that, that I'm claiming to be this.

So the fact that you even have to ask is an indictment against you. And Jesus is the king of the Jews. He's also the king of the Gentiles.

And, oh wait, let's put those together. He's the king of the world. Right? Yeah.

Yeah. No, that's right. That's objectively true.

Yeah. Well, I don't believe that. It's objective.

It doesn't matter what you believe. So there's our little intro. This is what we're talking about this week is, you know, we talked about this a little bit loudly.

We talked about relativism. Speak English. We talked about relativism last week and we did hit on the objective nature of truth, that truth is not relative to human understanding, but is objective on something external to the human.

And for the Christian, the external truth of reality is found in God's Word. But is that only for the Christian? No, it's not. Great question.

And that's also kind of the big point. If it truly is objective and the Christian recognizes where it comes from externally and the non-believer, pagan, does not give honor to God. He so dishonors God because it's already written on the image of his being that he recognizes that they recognize they should be believing this.

They have no excuse before God. With all their faculties of mind and reason being darkened, they do not see God clearly and they have no rebuttal to God when he charges them that you should have known me. Even the Amazonian jungler.

Wait, the Amazonian... Is that how you would say that? The person that lives in the Amazon jungle. An Amazonian jungler. I don't think it would be that.

The Amazonian tribesmen. Even those people that are, we think, cut off from society that have no chance, they knew better. That is what the Bible teaches.

They understood there was a God. It was enough to condemn them, but not enough to lead them to God. And because of that, they suppress the truth in unrighteousness and do evil things because there are a law unto themselves.

Because they don't have the law of God that they know they're transgressing, but they

still are convicted because they're a law unto themselves. That's what Paul talks about in Romans 1 and 2. So basically the point is, this episode, truth is objective. We hit on this last episode.

Now we want to push the agenda further of the objectivity of truth based in the Christian worldview. That it's found in God's Word, but it is binding on all humans is the point. Good? Any other intro? That was like the whole podcast.

That is. It's called the thesis. I just laid out the thesis of the podcast.

If you already agree with everything I just said, turn it off. You already know all this. Don't waste your time.

Go read a better book than listen to this podcast. Go read Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion if you already know this. Don't listen to this podcast.

We're trying our best here to do good information and help you guys learn some stuff, but there's always better resources to be honest. But Bryce and I, we're trying hard. He's trying hard.

I don't know if Bryce is. He just kind of tags along and opens his mouth and sometimes it's good most of the time. Not.

Not sometimes. I'd put a higher probability on that. Just kidding.

We love Bryce. I have got some harsh comments though. People have sent some emails that are just really critiquing a lot of the stuff you say.

Is that right? No. That's all right. Forgive me.

Okay, so let's get into it. We got a few texts for you guys today from the Scriptures and Bryce and I will commentate on the scriptures. Do you want to read yours first for me? Sure, I can go first.

This comes from Acts chapter 17 and the reason this is significant is because Paul is addressing philosophers at the Aragogagus and essentially he is indicting them for a false worship because they're not basing their standard on the objective truth of God, who he is, and him being close to them is what Paul's eventually going to say. So I'm gonna read a couple different sections in this passage and let's start at verse 23. So Paul says this, "For as I pass along and observe the objects of your worship, the worship of these philosophers, I found also an altar with this inscription to the unknown God.

Therefore you worship as unknown this I proclaim to you." So Paul is showing that there is this mutuality in them understanding this objectivity, yet Paul has a greater revelation, a greater light from the gospel that's been handed to him by Jesus Christ. Go see Galatians 1 and 2 for that. Real quick note, that mutuality, John Calvin talks about all

people know God as creator, not all people, only the elect know God as creator and redeemer.

So this mutual understanding that all humans have is that there is a creator. That's the big point. Yeah, exactly and that's what Paul's gonna end up getting into.

So he indicts him for a false worship and he says that God, the one who made the world and everything in it being Lord of heaven and earth, again this is him coming to their level. Their level of understanding in terms of the mutual understanding of a creator as God supreme over all things, yet they don't know him, right? Because they had as an inscription the unknown God. Paul says this God, "He does not live in temples made by hands nor is he served by human hands." So what's Paul doing here? So they have some level of subjective understanding that there is a creator of the universe but it is entirely robbed of pure objectivity of having the complete intimate knowledge of who that creator is.

And what Paul is doing here is he's saying, no he's not served by human hands as though he needed anything. Since he himself gives to all mankind life breath and everything. So Paul saying, "I know something that you don't know and I'm gonna pass that on to you." Here's some objective knowledge that I am now giving to the pagan.

So again, this is not something that's just laid out for the Christians. Christians are to take the objective truth just like Jesus says, "I am the light of the not Israel. I'm the light of the world, right? Of the whole cosmos." Jesus is that revelation of who the Father is to the whole world, to the Gentile nations as well.

So Paul's doing that exact same thing to these philosophers. He's saying, "Not only do you not know Him but now I'm going to reveal to you who this God actually is." And he ends up saying, a little bit later down on verse 27, so he's talking about how God made every nation from one mankind, which would be so easily deducible. You don't need the scriptures to understand that we come from one mankind.

Evolutionary theory just it's firmly planted in midair. There's no basis for it at all. You would be able to deduce that there is a start, a male and a female that would have begat it essentially.

So there would have been this already common understanding based upon deduction. So he's saying, again, the mutual understanding. And he says in verse 27, "That they should seek God and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him, yet He is actually not far from each one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being." Right? So again, this is a mutual understanding based upon the common grace that God has given all mankind that they have some level of a God but it doesn't get them to Yahweh.

And this is what Paul is doing here is that he is essentially telling them who Yahweh is

and he's going to help them to understand that their idea of worship is false and that's why he says in verse 30, "That God commands all men everywhere to repent and to believe in the gospel." So this is the whole Acts 14, right? This is Acts 17. Oh 17. Okay, that's right.

This is Acts 17. Yeah, so this is again a really big piece that Paul, of the puzzle that Paul's fitting in for them right here because not only is their worship false but even though they have their own subjective experience of what is true, Paul says, "Yeah, that's wrong. You need to metanoia that.

You need to repent of that. You need to turn to Christ." So this is already just completely destroying the idea that subjectivity, having a passion for religion, is really all you need, right? Like Kierkegaard would say, right? You just need this existential, passionate experience that is indescribable. Yeah, Paul is indicting that very exact idea.

Exactly. That your worship can be false. Yeah, and that the subjectivity comes in for the person that has no objective understanding of truth as they fashion idols in their own image.

And that's why Paul says, "You guys have made this, you know, that you guys have this God, this God." And then he ends up saying, you know, "This unknown one, I'm gonna tell you this unknown one that trumps all these other ones and actually destroys all these other ones." But he says God is not served by humans' hands because they fashion idols in their own image to serve them in ways that they think the God ought to be served when God's revealed Himself to us and the what He requires of us. So yeah, Calvin talks about that too, that because of our darkened minds, this mutual understanding of Creator, it becomes so darkened that there actually is not this... there's the common understanding of Creator, but there's not the common understanding of what's required and what, you know, the actual revelation of the Scriptures revealed to us about God. And in their darkened mind, they're always going to fashion these idols into their own image and then it's gonna be... they're gonna suppress a lot of truth and in unrighteous things.

And Paul comes and ultimately Jesus comes to save the day with objective truth. Jesus says, "I'm the way, the truth, and the life." And even God was saying this all throughout the Pentateuch, like, "You shall have no other gods before me." God comes with the objective truth and saves the day. Jesus is the objective truth that saves the day.

From this objective tendency of humans to fashion idols in their own image, which is subjective, I have an idol for what I think I ought to reflect as an image bearer of God. And that's why in Romans 1, Paul says, they exchanged the glory of God for images of creeping things and things on earth, created things in their own image. So, right.

Yeah. Anything bounce off that? That was good. You agreed with every word I said?

Yeah.

I know that's usually... Hopefully we don't go back and listen to that. Here's something heretical. It's usually the other way around.

It really is. Surprises me. My jaw's on the ground.

Alright, so we're good there. This is the objective truth that Paul the Apostle, who wrote most of the New Testament's attesting to, John the Baptist... I mean, God himself, like we laid out last episode, brings the objective truth and kind of like what I just walked through. But just to continue pushing the point further, that to make any liberal Christian that's listening to this podcast that thinks that you can pick and choose scripture or you can come up with a God in your own image and not the God of the Bible as he's revealed himself to us.

If you think you can do that, like, hopefully we just nip this in the butt altogether. John the Baptist in Matthew 14 says this to Herod. "At the time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus and he said to his servants, 'This is John the Baptist.

He has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him. For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

Because John had been saying to him..." As in, this is a recurring thing he's rebuking Herod for. "...it is not lawful for you to have her." So Herod has his brother Philip's wife as in sexual relations, like has her. And John the Baptist, a follower of Yahweh, adhering to the scriptures as revealed the morality that God has given to us and a Jew, is coming before this Gentile pagan and basically just rebuking him in, like, publicly, probably in his teaching that Herod ought not to do this.

And Herod, you should not be doing this. He may have actually literally said it to Herod. I think Herod brought John the Baptist before him.

I imagine John the Baptist said it to his face. And this even happens in Daniel with Nebuchadnezzar and some of the the pagans in that story. And there's another place that's pretty big.

I forget where. It might be Jeremiah before or maybe Ezekiel, one of those two. But it happens a lot with Babylon that they are held to the same standard that God's people are because this is objective truth-binding on all human reality.

This isn't just true for Christians or just true for the Jews or just true for God's people. This is true for everybody. So one big change in my evangelism recently has been you don't go to people in evangelism and try to persuade them to follow Jesus or to tell them Jesus is a better option than your other options.

You come before them and say Jesus is the only option. He's always been the only option and he's already the king. You just need to recognize him as king.

It's not like make him king of your life. Put him on the throne. It's like actually when you evangelize you just tell people, "Hey this is already true.

This has already happened like a while when God created the earth. He already was reigning." And you just alert people to the reality, the objective reality that, "Hey Jesus is already the king. You ought to give him homage and bend the knee." You know that's what you do in evangelism.

It's not a "Jesus is a better option than others." You know what I mean? Do you guys kind of see that difference hopefully? Do you at least see that Bryce? No. Let me run through it again. Yeah and that would come like straight out of I mean Jesus's own mouth in Matthew 28 when he says, "All authority and heaven and earth has been given to me therefore go." Yeah.

Right but that doesn't mean that it was just at that point when we started when God held pagan nations to the righteous standard of his own law. I mean because John the Baptist clearly, like Rocky said, clearly did it. The prophets clearly did it as they would in Diabala, Assyria, and all these other things.

Exactly. Right so so this is the way that Christians have really acted throughout history with Israel as well how they would act right. They didn't just say, "Oh this is true for us." Yeah.

Right and this is kind of the directory that we see our own evangelical culture heading to where everything's it's a heart religion. It's a heart religion. You'll hear that from in songs.

Pied to the right. Sure. Oh I don't I mean I don't like that.

I don't like that word. I think piety is a good word. Yeah, pietism used to be good but yeah when its newest conception like what you're saying it's a heart religion it's all about.

Sure. Yeah sure. Yeah it's a false sense of piety.

I would call that prigism. Not, not pietism. As a prig, someone's being a prig.

Yeah which just means a self-righteous person. Prigism? Yeah prigism. Nice.

I just I like piety. I don't want to give up that word. Well I know yeah exactly yeah they've co-opted the word.

Sure but continue. Sure. So we have these prigists who will think that it is just a heart

religion that is something that only occurs within the heart but never in the mind.

Right? It's never something that's rational. Your faith is a faith is the the confident assurance crap I'm trying to I'm trying to be kind of satirical with it. It is a lack of confidence and essentially a leap into the dark.

And that's the way that they view faith nowadays. But faith like Paul says in Hebrews is the confident assurance and things that have not yet been seen. Yeah.

Right so it's a confidence. Right and then he says in verse 3 and by faith we know that the the world has been created. Right so we have access to knowledge previously of the creation of the world by faith.

Yeah. Right we gain that through faith. Right so it's not an irrational leap into the dark.

Exactly. But faith nowadays is perceived as something that is just subjective. It's just heart religion and all the songs that you hear nowadays it all talks about your heart, your faith in God and it never talks about objective truth and that is a big problem.

Yeah. When our society has done this way when Christians stop doing that that's when they become saltless and they aren't salt and preserving morality and they aren't white and revealing that morality to the society. Yeah.

Right so if we can continue to complain and when it when it comes to Christians not really being the salt and light the real complaint needs to be begun with ourselves and actually telling the culture to repent. Telling the culture to believe in the gospel. Right.

Yeah. Like do what John Knox did in writing to the Queen of England and saying you know it's actually like not lawful at all for you to be in the position this is not a judgment of God that you're a queen a monarch. Right.

Yeah. So we need to be people like that. We need to be the stepping stone for society as we say this is wrong so let's go to the abortion talk.

Abortion is a murderous wicked act and we need to be constantly vocal about that. Yeah. Same thing with homosexuality it's the bane of society as we've already gone over.

Yep. And some people have already had their feathers rustled by that but. Yeah.

But these are just I mean that's what's gonna happen that's the only way you are salt and light. Exactly. Is that you just proclaim what God says to be true.

Yeah. It's not. Well imagine if our evangelism was all hey man this will make you feel really good.

Yeah. You should follow this religion because it just makes you feel awesome but they

say but is it true? And you say I don't know it makes me feel great though. Yeah.

You know what kind of evangelism is that and yeah you've lost all salt and light because you're just saying do it if you feel like you want to instead of you should Jesus is the king now follow him or die. Yeah. That's the claim.

It's and that's the radical difference between a heart religion versus a an object a religion based an objective truth that trickles down and affects the heart and spurs the fart. As spurs the heart to proclaim the objective truth. Feelings are useless if they don't arouse one to go out and fight for what the objective truth.

Right. If if you if your feelings are arousing you to go fight for what the spread of more feelings that's a that's blind leading the blind. Yeah.

It's not helpful. That doesn't lead anywhere. Yeah.

It's it's directly akin to the religion of methamphetamine. Right. You just take meth you feel really good for a moment but it's never grounded.

It's never it doesn't have any place in reality. Yeah. And that's the problem is that that's the way we see the direct the directory of our culture heading and that's really what we need to put the brakes on because we've gone off the rail.

Yep. Just like that. Peel out.

We really need to be peeling out doing donuts. That's what we need to be doing. Yeah parking lots.

Yeah. All across America. For the gospel.

Which would be akin to saying abortions murderous. Exactly. Gays are taking over the society.

Yep. And they destroy it. Yeah.

That's what we really need to start doing is not saying hey this is another option that would be really good for your heart. But hey like just like Paul said the king of the universe is coming back. Yeah.

And he will judge the living and the dead. Exactly. And that's what we proclaim.

Right. All living and all the dead. It's all of it.

Yeah. It's everybody. It's every person.

Every knee shall bow and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Exactly. So yeah.

Yeah. So I guess as we wrap up let's not believe the myth of relativism and let's not fall into it ourselves in our religious experience. Let's find the anchor the root of our faith in objective reality which is Jesus Christ.

Him crucified. His perfect obedience in life. Him crucified.

His death. Burial. Freeing the captives.

Coming back to life and victory over death. And then seated at the right hand of the father ever making intercessory prayer and being with us to the end of the age praying for us and sustaining us in sending the spirit into the world to convict the world of unrighteousness that the world might be reconciled to him the nation's not every individual person that's not what I mean by world. Yeah.

And then yeah exactly. And then the whole world is saved through Christ. Exactly.

So that is when you're a Christian and you live the Christian faith out you that's always the understanding. It's you know biblical theology. Look at the whole story.

See what see what the Bible is telling us about the story of mankind in relation to God's purposes. So let's not believe that myth. We're pushing this point even further because it's very important.

Objective truth must be the foundation of your faith or you're given into emotionalism and subjectivity. It's basically the point and that's why we see the existentialism coming out of the 18th and 19th centuries. It's all these religious teachers like yeah Kierkegaard.

Who are the other guys? I mean you have like more contemporary like Carl Barth but during that period. Yeah Carl Barth. Butler.

Guy named Butler. Something Butler. I thought he was kind of starting that too.

I know Con is kind of the anchor of all this liberal theology. Yeah but not really existentialism. Yeah but then you have Nietzsche of all these guys like that.

I've had go really pushed this if this idea. Yeah so they're all gonna talk very orthodox. They'll sound extremely orthodox.

They'll sound exactly like how you would want them to sound but what they mean is a subjective emotionalistic Christian experience which is not true. So I don't even think they would sound orthodox. Like if you read your Bible you should just hear some of the stuff they say and just work out already.

Yeah I guess maybe all the steps before are gonna sound very orthodox. Like when you read Kant he uses all the words you'd want him to use. When you read Kierkegaard he's gonna use some words that you're gonna be like man yeah that's exactly what I think.

But then his fine again he co-ops the word redefines it and it has a different conclusion to sound the part and play the part. That's why if you go on to a like Stephen Furtick's church if you go on Elevations website and you look at their statements of belief they got a rock-solid statement of belief. It's perfectly orthodox.

Is that a good church? No he said heretical things. That's not a good church. So yeah they're gonna sound very nice.

All these emotionalistic not based Christianity churches they're gonna sound real nice and we just need to be aware of we need that we need to be aware of. We need to be aware of what is true. And so there's a lot of things that you can do to be aware of what is true.

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And so there's a lot of things that you can do to be aware of what is true. Appreciate you guys tuning into the For the King podcast. Give it a rating or review in Apple Podcast.

If that, if you're inclined to do that, that would help out a lot. The search engine optimization. As always, if you feel compelled, you can support the podcast financially.

Also would ask for prayers that the gospel would go forth. There's people that listen to the podcasts that are not Christians that do not share this worldview that Bryce and I

have and a lot of you guys have. So pray for this podcast that it would continue to grow if the Lord would will it.

If it glorifies God, we pray that it would grow. If it does not glorify God and it's not good information, it's not helpful for the building and application of the church and calling the centers to repentance, then I would hope that it would fail. So that's the goal.

The goal is for Christian education, Christian truth, the scriptures and God's word and who God is to be exalted, glorified Jesus to be set and recognized as King in this podcast. So just pray for those things. Check out the website at forthekeepingpodcast.com. You can always send me an email if you have any questions about the content or anything you would like to interact with at forthekeepingpodcast@gmail.com. I think that's everything.

And now I need to read my doxology real quick from 1 Timothy. If you guys remember, I started doing that. Almost there.

I'll just cut this out. 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 17. "To the King of the ages, immortal and visible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.

Amen. Solely, dayo, glory. For the King, for the King, for the King Jesus.