

What Is Wrong With the World?
Sept. 7, 2025

New Sunday School series:

We are beginning a special topics series. The planned topics are as follows:

Special topics: Hot Button issues

- 1) What is wrong with the world?
- 2) What does it mean to have a Biblical worldview?
- 3) What is the Biblical Worldview of In Vitro Fertilization, and why does it matter?
- 4) What is the Biblical Worldview regarding immigration, and why does it matter?
- 5) What does it mean to be pro-life? Does this include physical assisted suicide?
- 6) Should Christians be pacifists?
- 7) Should Christians support gun control?
- 8) What is a Biblical worldview of education: Public School, Christian school, or home-school? At its root, who is responsible to educate a child?
- 9) Is the United States a Christian Nation, should we be a Christian nation?
- 10) Should we support the Separation of Church and State? Is it wrong for a church to endorse candidates?
- 11) What happens when we die? Where do I go? Do I enter a state of soul sleep? Will I have a body right away?

Today, we address the subject of what is wrong with the world. I addressed this subject in 2018, so for those of you with good memories, some of the content may be familiar.

Today-

What is wrong with the world?

This is about “The Western World.”

In happiness studies, people in third-world countries are happier than we are.

What I am writing about is the west.

David Jeremiah shares:

Shon Hopwood grew up in a Christian home in rural Nebraska with parents who had started a local church. He was the oldest of five children. He was bright, excelling on standardized tests. He played basketball in high school and won a scholarship to Nebraska’s Midland University. But in his teens Hopwood grew disillusioned with his basketball skills, stopped going to classes, and dropped out of school.

He soon joined the United States Navy and ended up in the Persian Gulf guarding warships with shoulder-mounted Stinger missiles. But Hopwood developed acute pancreatitis, almost died in a Bahrain hospital, and left the Navy with an honorable discharge.

That's when lostness overtook the young man. His alcohol and drug use grew into raging addictions, and he became depressed.

One day while drinking with a friend, they decided to rob a bank together. Why not? They could use the money. They ended up robbing five banks while armed. Afterward, Hopwood squandered the money on parties.

Eventually Hopwood's life came crashing down in the lobby of the DoubleTree Hotel in Omaha, Nebraska, when FBI agents tackled and arrested him. A year later, terrified, he stood before a federal judge who sentenced him to more than twelve years in prison. Shortly thereafter, he was on a prison plane, handcuffed, shackled, and heading to a federal penitentiary. He was only twenty-three, and his life was growing worse and worse by the day.¹

Later David Jeremiah finished what happened to him:

As time went by, Shon got a job in the prison library where he began reading books about the law. As he learned about the law, he began taking on cases for fellow prisoners, writing petitions they could use in federal courts. They called him the "jailhouse lawyer." Shon also began corresponding with a friend named Annie, his secret crush through high school. Furthermore, his parents let him know they continued to pray for him, and his mom kept sending him Christian books.

One day Shon's prison friend Robert had a life-changing experience with Jesus Christ. Shon took all that in, and he found it increasingly difficult to rationalize his darkened life. After Shon was released from prison in 2009, he and Annie got engaged. They asked pastor Marty Barnhart to officiate the wedding, but Barnhart wanted to talk with them first. He asked them what they believed about Jesus, and he said they could be forgiven by the shed blood of Christ. The pastor's exact words were: "Yeah, even you, Shon." Shon described what happened next:

¹ Jeremiah, David. *Where Do We Go from Here?: How Tomorrow's Prophecies Foreshadow Today's Problems* (pp. 117-118). (Function). Kindle Edition.

The next day I couldn't escape the feeling that God had been pursuing me for a long time and that if I'd just abandon my stubbornness and selfishness, and hand everything over to him, I would find redemption.

What does it mean to be redeemed? And how do you redeem yourself after robbing five banks? The answer is, you don't. The answer is that you need some help.

In Ephesians 1:7–8, Paul writes that in Christ “we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us.” To put it differently, because of our sins, none of us—and surely no former prisoner like me—can be redeemed on our own. We need the gospel of grace, which says that each of us matters and has worth because we’re made in the image of God. Grace says we are not defined by our failures and our faults, but by a love without merit or condition. God’s grace was enough to redeem me.

Shon and Annie asked Christ to come into their lives, they were married, they were baptized, and they moved to Seattle so Shon could attend the University of Washington Law School. Today Shon is a professor of law at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, where he is spreading light every day.

We’re living in a messed-up world filled with self-centered, self-absorbed, self-indulgent people. The Bible warns that in the last days perilous times will come. Society will go from bad to worse. But remember, the city of Ephesus was also a place of darkness in Paul’s day, yet he viewed the Christians there as children of light. Their presence lit up the city streets with the glow of Jesus.

Even in dark days, you can experience God’s grace, exude His radiance, and exhibit His holiness. So, brighten up! God wants His people to be light on their feet, so to speak.

In a world increasingly dominated by end times people, He has empowered you to shine.²

1. We are self-absorbed.
2. We have lost our Christian values.
3. We have forsaken natural law.
4. We have lost responsibility.

² Jeremiah, David. *Where Do We Go from Here?: How Tomorrow's Prophecies Foreshadow Today's Problems* (p. 134). (Function). Kindle Edition.

5. The failed experiment of the American teenager.

These all fall under being self-absorbed. They all fall under narcissism. They fall under not knowing Jesus.

This is important- **it is not just an individual not knowing Jesus. It is a society without the Biblical worldview and natural law. Before, non-Christians were still blessed by Christian values.**

1. What is wrong with the world?

- a. They need Jesus.
- b. *The story is told that The Times of London at one point early in the 1900s posed this question to several prominent authors: “What’s wrong with the world today?” The well-known author G.K. Chesterton is said to have responded with a one-sentence essay:*
- c. *Dear Sir,*
- d. *I am.*
- e. *Yours, G.K. Chesterton.*³

2. **We are self-absorbed, amusing ourselves to death, narcissistic.**

- a. I was going to share these passages later, but I chose to move them up to the top.
- b. I was even considering an expository Bible study on these passages. Instead, notice the words in bold.
- c. We must guard that, though we know Christ, we do not fall into these same things.
- d. I am mainly talking about the non-Christian world, but we must not get prideful and think that we are not guilty of the same things.

Romans 1:18–32 (ESV)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For **what can be known about God is plain to them**, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, **his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world**, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God **or give thanks** to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they

³ This is a well-known story, but I pulled the quote from: Joe Holland; “Dear Sir, I Am.” April 2, 2016; accessed on 08.25.2025
<https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/dear-sir-i-am>

became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

²⁴ Therefore **God gave them up** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ because they **exchanged** the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

²⁶ For this reason **God gave them up** to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷ and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, **God gave them up** to a **debased mind** to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³² Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

- e. Notice people were self-absorbed. Verse 21 shows they did not “give thanks to God.”
- f. Therefore, they did not recognize that all of our being and provisions come from God.
- g. We will see the ideas of this passage come up again when we talk about natural law and common grace.
- h. People can “always learn, but never be able to arrive at the truth” (2 Tim. 3:7).
- i. People can be lovers of self... (2 Tim. 3:2). I think the below passage can be lumped under “Lovers of self.” Again, it is the idea of being self-absorbed.
- j. Notice the words in bold.

2 Timothy 3:1–9 (ESV)

3 But understand this, that in **the last days** there will come times of difficulty. ² For people will be **lovers of self, lovers of money,** proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, **ungrateful,** unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, **without self-control,** brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. ⁶ For among

them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷ always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. ⁸ Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. ⁹ But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

k. This is “misplaced love.”

l. *The early Latin writer, Tertullian of Carthage, declared that the one thing that converted him to Christianity was not the arguments they gave him, because he could find a counterpoint for every argument they would present. “But they demonstrated something I didn’t have. The thing that converted me to Christianity was the way they loved each other.”⁴*

m. I am going to talk about Christian values and other things, but we must not get prideful.

n. David Jeremiah quoted Kevin DeYoung:

o. Pastor Kevin DeYoung wrote:

p. *Sin is in every human heart. It is the villain with a thousand faces. It’s the man who gets a woman pregnant and leaves town. It’s also the reputable family man who cuts down his wife and ignores his kids. It’s the mean-spirited woman who talks bad about everyone, but it’s also the sweet lady who never says an unkind word but harbors all kind of resentment and grudges. It’s the kid who swears at his parents and blows off everyone who tries to help. It’s also the kid who gets straight A’s, keeps curfew, and smiles at church, but is one enormous bundle of pride and self-righteousness.⁵*

q. Again, verse 2 tells us people will be “lovers of self.”

r. David Jeremiah:

s. *Do you remember Narcissus from Greek mythology? According to the legend, Narcissus was a hunter who was extremely handsome. Women constantly fell in love with him, but he spurned their advances and disdained all who tried to approach him. One day Narcissus came to a clear pool in the middle of the woods. He saw his reflection and immediately fell in love with his own face. When he realized what was*

⁴ Jones, G. C. (1986). *1000 illustrations for preaching and teaching* (220). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

⁵ Jeremiah, David. *Where Do We Go from Here?: How Tomorrow's Prophecies Foreshadow Today's Problems* (p. 119). (Function). Kindle Edition.

- going on—that he had not encountered another person, but only himself—he took his own life in a burst of despair.*
- t. **That's the origin of our modern word narcissism, the excessive love of self.** *According to Paul, the days before the tribulation will be perilous because people will love only themselves. They will accordingly be “boasters, proud, blasphemers” (v. 2).⁶*
 - u. Again, from David Jeremiah:
 - v. *There are five descriptive terms in 2 Timothy 3 that highlight the damage broken people will perpetrate on their own families in the last days. People will be:*
 - w. *Disobedient to parents*
 - x. *Unthankful*
 - y. *Unholy*
 - z. *Unloving*
 - aa. *Unforgiving*
 - bb. *When ancient Greek writers wanted to say something negative, they took a positive word and put a letter in front of it called the alpha privative. That letter negated the positive word. You see the same principle in English when we say something is “distasteful.” We take the word tasteful and put a prefix in front of it, and that prefix negates the word.*
 - cc. *All five of Paul's terms listed above included the alpha privative. All five describe a positive attribute that has vanished from most families during the last days.⁷*

3. We have lost our Christian values-

- a. Again, this is important: **It is not just an individual not knowing Jesus. It is a society without the Biblical worldview and natural law. Before, non-Christians were still blessed by Christian values.**
- b. The Western world, Europe, and America have lost their moral core.
- c. I am a student of history, and I absolutely love the subject. I love Revolutionary War era history, especially. Many times, we say that America was founded as a Christian country. I do not believe that. I believe we were founded on Judeo-Christian values, and that is a good thing. Many of our founders claimed to be Christian, but not all.

⁶ Jeremiah, David. *Where Do We Go from Here?: How Tomorrow's Prophecies Foreshadow Today's Problems* (pp. 121-122). (Function). Kindle Edition.

⁷ Jeremiah, David. *Where Do We Go from Here?: How Tomorrow's Prophecies Foreshadow Today's Problems* (p. 123). (Function). Kindle Edition.

- However, even among those who claimed Christ, just about everyone claimed Christ at that time, so only God knows who was truly saved.
- d. Having the Christian values to guide us as a culture gives us the values of right and wrong.
 - e. We have lost those values.
 - f. We no longer know right from wrong.
 - g. We have what is called “Moral Relativism.”
 - h. Jeremiah 6:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ *Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown,*” says the LORD.
 - i. We have lost the Christian values of right and wrong and have not replaced them with any others.
 - j. However, the world has been pagan before, and I doubt they had the current problems.
 - k. So, what is it?

4. We have forsaken natural law-

- a. *Natural law is the ethical or moral structure that God has revealed to humans in creation (both within their consciences and in the providential unfolding of history) and which is discerned through reason and experience.*⁸
- b. There is another term, “common grace.” This is God’s general care for all humans. There is a small difference from natural law. Though, I think “common grace” is part of “natural law.”
- c. I am using this term in a very general sense:
- d. Matthew 5:45 (ESV) ⁴⁵ *so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*
- e. I believe that even in Viking days, people knew more about what was right and wrong and what it meant to be a man or a woman.
- f. We need a standard of truth.
- g. Tim Keller shares:
- h. *Imagine an Anglo-Saxon warrior in Britain in AD 800. He has two very strong inner impulses and feelings. One is aggression. He loves to smash and kill people when they show him disrespect. Living in a shame-and-honor culture with its warrior ethic, he will identify with that feeling. He will say to himself, That’s me! That’s who I am! I will express that. The*

⁸ Brian Collins, “Natural Law,” in *Lexham Survey of Theology*, ed. Mark Ward et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018).

other feeling he senses is same-sex attraction. To that he will say, That's not me. I will control and suppress that impulse. Now imagine a young man walking around Manhattan today. He has the same two inward impulses, both equally strong, both difficult to control. What will he say? He will look at the aggression and think, This is not who I want to be, and will seek deliverance in therapy and anger-management programs. He will look at his sexual desire, however, and conclude, That is who I am.

- i. *What does this thought experiment show us? Primarily it reveals that we do not get our identity simply from within. Rather, we receive some interpretive moral grid, lay it down over our various feelings and impulses, and sift them through it. This grid helps us decide which feelings are "me" and should be expressed—and which are not and should not be. So this grid of interpretive beliefs—not an innate, unadulterated expression of our feelings—is what shapes our identity. Despite protests to the contrary, we instinctively know our inner depths are insufficient to guide us. We need some standard or rule from outside of us to help us sort out the warring impulses of our interior life.*
- j. *And where do our Anglo-Saxon warrior and our modern Manhattan man get their grids? From their cultures, their communities, their heroic stories. They are actually not simply "choosing to be themselves"—they are filtering their feelings, jettisoning some and embracing others. They are choosing to be the selves their cultures tell them they may be. In the end, an identity based independently on your own inner feelings is impossible.⁹*
- k. We need a moral foundation.

5. We have lost responsibility-

- a. We have lost the drive to work, and we have lost purpose.
- b. I am increasingly convinced that part of the biblical worldview of what it means to be human includes work. Work gives us purpose.
- c. We have children growing up without work, without responsibility, and without purpose.
- d. As I have stated, I like history. A few years ago, I read a quote by Jefferson in a book on Alexander Hamilton, encouraging farming. I was looking for the quote. In the New York Times, it says: *Jefferson saw that America's experiment in liberty and democracy could not succeed unless*

⁹ Keller, Timothy. *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (pp. 135-136). (Function). Kindle Edition.

most of its citizens were economically independent. Thus, he enthusiastically promoted independent farm ownership, and sought to discourage the importation of the European factory system, in which workers owned no stake in their enterprise.

His prescription of a widespread distribution of ownership of private property, opportunity for the energetic and talented to succeed in competitive free enterprise, and curbs on all forms of monopolistic conduct continue to command the allegiance of most Americans. Today, his policy would call for strong encouragement not only of family-owned farms but also of independent owner-operated businesses and increased employee ownership of larger corporations.¹⁰

- e. Though Jefferson and I may lament the loss of farming for different reasons. Family-owned farms taught America to work.
- f. Today, we talk about the stay-at-home mom, but historically, the whole family worked together. The father worked from home, too. I recently read an article about that very thing. Until the industrial age, most families worked and lived on farms. The family all worked together. They did not just have breakfast together, but lunch and dinner.¹¹ The writer shares: *In 1820, the earliest date for which I can find reliable statistics, some 2.1 million men in the United States worked in “farm occupations”—a full 72 percent of the work force.*¹²
- g. If you read the book “Farmer Boy,” you will learn about Almonza Wilder working at a very young age, even at 9 years old. He was getting up and working hard.
- h. Billy Graham’s autobiography writes about him getting up very early in the morning, before 5 am, or even 4 am, to milk cows.
- i. Work gives purpose. God created us to work. We were told to work before the fall. In Gen 2:15: *Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.*
- j. Without work, people do not have purpose. Without purpose, we have depression and all kinds of issues.
- k. I believe in mental illness, I am just saying that some people could have depression because they cannot or do not work.

¹⁰ McClaughry, John. *Jefferson’s Vision*; accessed 08.24.2025; Originally published- April 13, 1982, Section A, Page 27 <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/04/13/opinion/jefferson-s-vision.html>

¹¹ Wax, Trevin. *A Man’s Place Is in the Home*. February 26, 2018; accessed on 08.24.2025.

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/mans-place-home/>

¹² *ibid.*

- l. Two hundred years ago, a fourteen-year-old could be bullied at school, but he would never think about shooting people; instead, he would come home and work on the farm.
 - m. Now bullying can last all night because teenagers have no responsibility. They need to work. They need purpose.
 - n. Social media (Check out the book, *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt) and technology can be destructive without purpose. With a purpose, it can be helpful.
 - o. I did not know where to put this, so I am sharing this here:
 - p. People are lazy learners and do not think.**
 - q. Affluenza-**
 - r. Our “affluenza” has led to “Amusing Ourselves to Death.” This applies to sports, video games, the news, and everything else.
 - s. This falls under being self-absorbed.
- 6. The age and failed experiment of the teenager as a social class-**
- a. There have been studies on teenagers.
 - b. There are articles about this, you can read one at:
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-call-to-teenagers-to-be-free>
 - c. The word teenager did not exist until after World War II.

I end this lesson with some excerpts from that article:

John Piper writes and quotes:

The Creation of “Teenagers”

As teenagers, you should know that the idea of “teenagers” was created only seventy years ago. The word “teenager” did not exist before World War II. Between children and adults, there was no such category of human being. You were a child. Then you were a young adult.

Just a hundred years ago, you would bear crucial responsibility at age thirteen on the farm or in dad’s business — or mom’s kitchen and weaving room. You would be trained for gainful employment, or domestic enterprise, by age seventeen, and would marry before you were twenty, and be a responsible husband and father — or wife and mother — by your early twenties.

This scenario is perhaps hard for you to imagine. And I am not saying we can go back to that era or should want to. My aim is that you be liberated by the truth. The truth will set you free. The truth that you do not have to fit into the contemporary lockstep expectations put on you by your culture or your peers.

Very few teenagers have an awareness of history. That ignorance leads to a kind of slavery. Most teenagers are slaves of the expectations of their peers and of the big industries that market their fashion and music and technology and entertainment. This slavery is so pleasant — and so consistently rewarded — that the possibility of being free from conformity to teen-culture rarely enters your mind. Being aware from history that other possibilities exist can set you free for radical “wartime living” in the name of Jesus.

What “Teenager” Meant Seventy Years Ago

In 1944, when “teen-age” was still hyphenated, Life magazine covered the new teen phenomenon. The article¹³ said,

There is a time in the life of every American girl when the most important thing in the world is to be one of a crowd of other girls and to act and speak and dress exactly as they do. This is the teen age.

Piper continues:

What is cool for a fourteen-year-old young man? I think what follows is a hundred times more cool than phones and clothes and movies and games. The year is 1945. World War II was still raging. Thousands of teenagers wanted to fight. The Battle of Iwo Jima was one of the deadliest — 6,800 American soldiers are buried on that tiny island, many of them teenagers.

Jack Lucas had fast-talked his way into the Marines at fourteen [in 1942], fooling the recruits with his muscled physique. . . . He stowed away on a transport out of Honolulu, surviving on food passed along to him by sympathetic leathernecks on board.

[At 17] he landed on D-Day [at Iwo Jima] without a rifle. He grabbed one lying on the beach and fought his way inland. Now, on D+1, Jack and three comrades were crawling through a trench when eight Japanese sprang in front of them. Jack shot one of them through the head.

Then his rifle jammed. As he struggled with it, a grenade landed at his feet. He yelled a warning to the others and rammed the grenade into the soft ash.

Immediately, another rolled in. Jack Lucas, seventeen, fell on both grenades.

“Luke, you’re gonna die,” he remembered thinking. . . .

Aboard the hospital ship Samaritan, the doctors could scarcely believe it. “Maybe he was too damned young and too damned tough to die,” one said. He endured twenty-one reconstructive operations and became the nation’s youngest Medal of

¹³ **Cosgrove, Ben.** The Invention of Teenagers: LIFE and the Triumph of Youth Culture. Sept. 28, 2023. Accessed on 08.24.2025; <https://time.com/3639041/the-invention-of-teenagers-life-and-the-triumph-of-youth-culture/>

What Is Wrong With the World?
Sept. 7, 2025

*Honor winner — and the only high school freshman to receive it. (James Bradley, *Flags of Our Fathers*, 174–175)¹⁴*

¹⁴ Piper, John; *A Call to Teenagers to Be Free*; July 28, 2015; accessed on 08.24.2025

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-call-to-teenagers-to-be-free>