

THE WORLD'S CONVERSION

1. WHAT did Christ say would be the condition of the world at His second coming?

“As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.” **Luke 17:26**. See also **verse 27–30**.

2. How was it in the days of Noah?

“And God saw that *the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . And the earth was filled with violence.*” **Genesis 6:5–11**.

NOTE — In a sermon delivered at Savannah, Ga., Dec. 2, 1912 Bishop A. W. Wilson (Methodist) said: “Old Rome in her worst days never harbored such conditions of vice as are prevalent in our highest social circles. Never at any period of the world’s history has the moral stratum been so thin or so low.”

3. How did Paul characterize the last days?

“This know also, that in the last days *perilous times shall come.*” **2Timothy 3:1**.

4. What did he say would make those times perilous?

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” **Verses 2–5**.

5. Are things to grow better or worse before the Lord comes?

“*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*” **Verse 13**.

NOTE — “Even to the end of time there will still be occasion for the same complaint; the world will grow no better, no, not when it is drawing toward its period. Bad it is, and bad it will be, and worst of all just before Christ’s coming.” *Matthew Henry, on Luke 18:8*.

6. According to the parable of the wheat and the tares, how long are the good and bad to remain together?

“The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil.” *“Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them.”* **Matthew 13:38, 39, 30.**

7. When does the harvest come?

“The harvest is *the end of the world.*” **Verse 39.**

NOTES — Thus it is plain that the wicked (the tares) live with the righteous (the wheat) till the end of the world. There is, then, no time before Christ’s coming for a sinless state, in which all men will be converted and turn to God.

Harper’s “Book of Facts,” edition 1906, article “Religion,” classifies the population of the globe religiously as follows:—

Non-Christian		Christian	
Buddhists	400,000,000	Roman Catholics	175,000,000
Brahmans	250,000,000	Protestants	110,000,000
Mohammedans	180,000,000	Greek Church	90,000,000
Fetish-worshipers	50,000,000	Various	<u>25,000,000</u>
Jews	8,000,000		
Various	<u>62,000,000</u>		
	1,050,000,000		400,000,000

From this it will be seen that only about one fourth of the world’s population are even nominal Christians.

8. For what purpose did Christ say the gospel was to be preached in all the world?

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” **Matthew 24:14.**

NOTES — He did not say that all would *receive* the gospel, but that the gospel was to be *preached* in all the world *for a witness* unto all nations, and that *then* the end would come.

Commenting on **Revelation 20:2**, Dr. Adam Clarke says: “Probably no such time shall ever appear, in which evil shall be wholly banished from the earth, till after the day of judgment,

when, the earth having been burned up, a new heaven and a new earth shall be produced out of the ruins of the old, by the mighty power of God; righteousness alone shall dwell in them.”
Clarke’s Commentary, edition 1860.

9. When is the “man of sin,” or “mystery of iniquity,” called also “that Wicked,” to come to an end?

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.” **2Thessalonians 2:8.**

10. How long was the little horn of Daniel 7:25 to make war with the saints?

“I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; *until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.*” **Daniel 7:21, 22.**

11. How will the day of the Lord come upon the world?

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, . . . and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” **1Thessalonians 5:2–4.**

NOTE — There will be but two classes in the world then: those in darkness, who are looking for a time of peace and safety, and those not in darkness, who are looking for the day of the Lord,—a day of waste and destruction,—the coming of Christ and the end of the world. See **Jeremiah 7:1–19; Daniel 12:1; Joel 2:1–11; Zephaniah 1.**

12. What will some who are in darkness say when they hear about the Lord’s coming?

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” **2Peter 3:3, 4.**

13. What will be popularly taught in the last days?

“But in the last days . . . many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; . . . and He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Micah 4:1-3. See also **Isaiah 2:2-5.**

NOTE — Notice, this is not what the Lord says, but what the Lord says many nations shall say in the last days. And this is the very message now heard in every land,—a great world’s peace movement; a call for all nations to disarm, to go to war no more, and to profess religion.

14. What message indicates the true condition of things?

“Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.” **Joel 3:9, 10.**

NOTE — On this question of preparing for war, note the following:—

Armies of the World		
REGULAR STANDING ARMY (1909)		NATIONAL ARMY INCLUDING RESERVES
Austria-Hungary	409,000	5,840,000
Belgium	45,000	125,000
British Empire	250,000	1,050,000
China	60,000	1,000,000
Denmark	14,000	68,000
France	630,000	4,350,000
Germany	617,000	3,000,000
Greece	28,000	178,000

Thus in only ten years these eight great powers spent over seven and one-half billion dollars on their navies. “The immense armies maintained by European countries have come to be a terrific drain upon their respective nations.” *Nelson’s Encyclopedia, article “Army.”*

15. While making these war preparations, what are men saying?

“They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.” **Jeremiah 6:14.**

NOTE — Every one conversant with existing conditions in the world today knows this is true. While the message of peace is being proclaimed, the nations are arming as never before; wars are in progress almost continually; international complications are constantly arising; and a world war is feared as imminent, and constantly looming in sight. The world today is a vast armed camp.

16. But does not the Bible say that the heathen are to be given to the Lord for an inheritance?

“Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.” **Psalms 2:8.**

17. What will the Lord do with them?

“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” **Verse 9.** *“And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”* **Revelation 19:15.**

NOTE — How suddenly surprised those who have been preaching peace and safety will be when the end comes is indicated in the text already quoted: “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.” **1Thessalonians 5:2, 3.** All heedless of the signs of the times, and indifferent to the future, the world will come up to the day of the Lord unprepared. As a thief in the night, coming with stealthy, muffled tread, this day will take all unawares who are not looking, watching, and waiting for their Lord’s return. Instead of looking for the world’s conversion, we should be looking for Christ’s coming.

THE coming King is at the door,
Who once the cross for sinners bore,
But now the righteous ones alone

He comes to gather home.
The signs that show His coming near
Are fast fulfilling year by year,
And soon we'll hail the glorious dawn
Of heaven's eternal morn.
Look not on earth for strife to cease,
Look not below for joy and peace,
Until the Saviour comes again
To banish death and sin.
Then in the glorious earth made new
We'll dwell the countless ages through;
This mortal shall immortal be,
And time, eternity.

F. E. BELDEN.