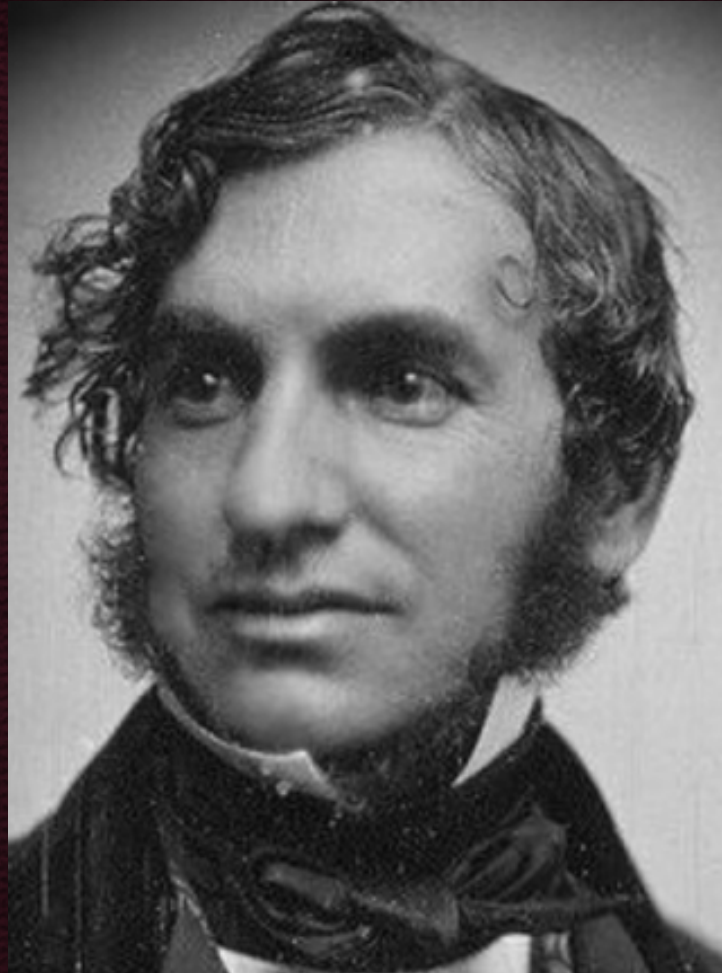


The background is a dark brown color with a repeating pattern of golden musical notation. The pattern includes stylized treble clefs, musical staves with notes, and decorative flourishes. Small golden stars are scattered throughout the design.

MELODY

“I Heard the Bells
on Christmas Day”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



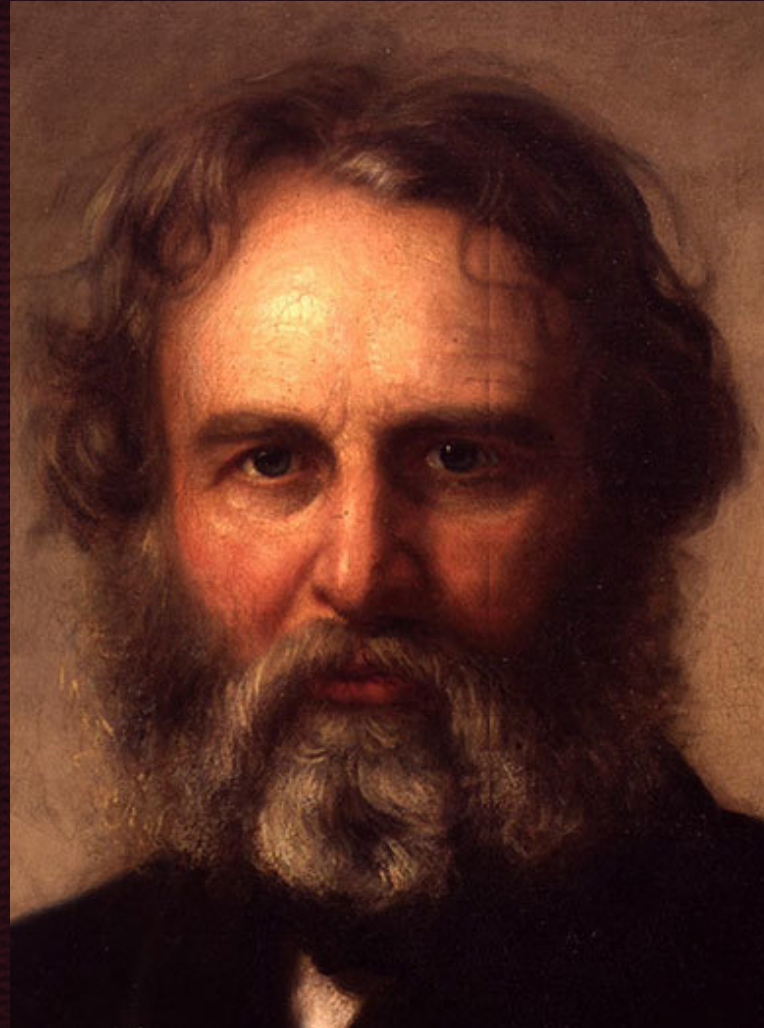
Mary Storer (Potter) Longfellow



Henry, and Fanny (Appleton) Longfellow



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



The Bells of Harvard U. in Cambridge, Mass.





I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet, the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along, the unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!





Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound, the carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!





It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn, the households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
“There is no peace on earth,” I said:
“For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!”



Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
“God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The Wrong shall fail, the Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!”





Matthew 10:34

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

Top 10 overall fears

		Fear score	Percent "afraid" or "very afraid"
1	Loved ones dying	94	65%
2	Loved ones becoming seriously ill	93	64%
3	Mass shootings	89	60%
4	Not having enough money for retirement	80	54%
5	Terrorism	78	50%
6	Government corruption	78	52%
7	Becoming terminally ill	77	50%
8	Hate crimes	76	51%
9	High medical bills	76	51%
10	Widespread civil unrest	75	49%

Trend in the number of natural disasters, 1900 to 2019



Source: EM-DAT

Note: Includes Drought, Earthquakes, Volcanic activity, Mass movement (dry), Storms, Floods, Landslides, Wildfire and Extreme temperature.



The World at War in 2021

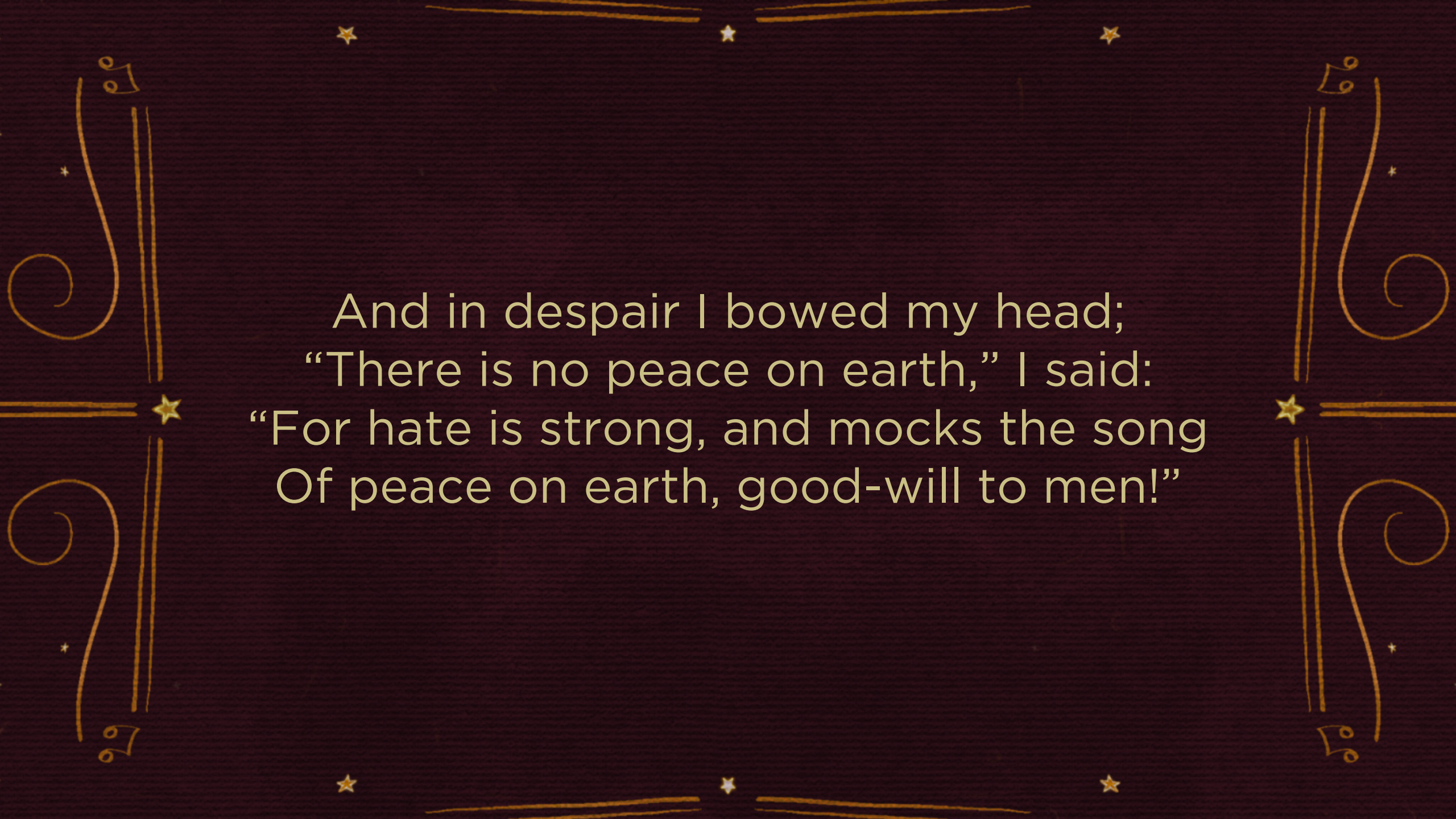
Countries with reported armed clashes between state forces and/or rebels in 2021*



* As of July 30.

Source: The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project

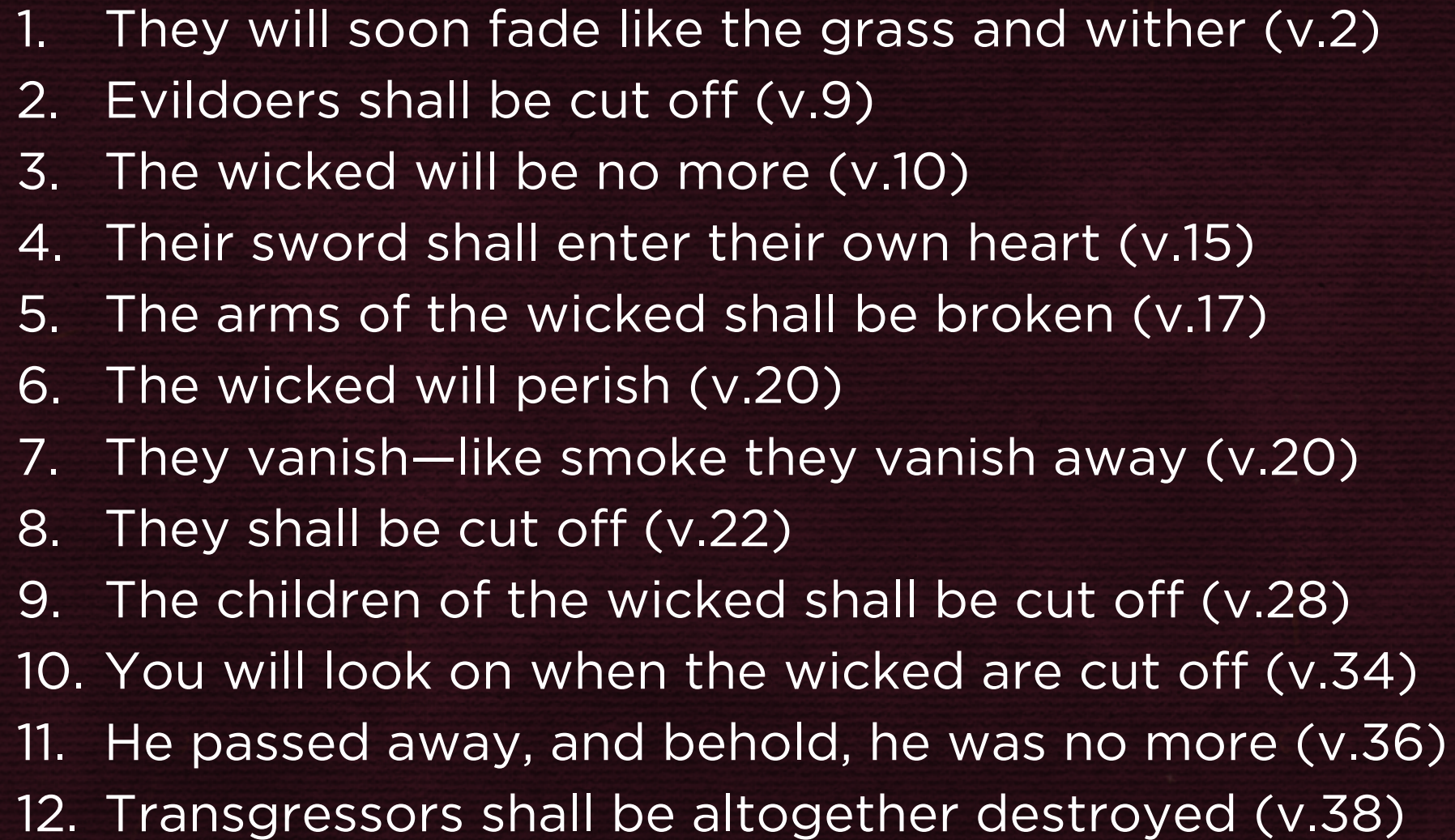




And in despair I bowed my head;
“There is no peace on earth,” I said:
“For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!”

Psalm 37:7-10

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land. In just a little while, the wicked will be no more; though you look carefully at his place, he will not be there.

- 
1. They will soon fade like the grass and wither (v.2)
 2. Evildoers shall be cut off (v.9)
 3. The wicked will be no more (v.10)
 4. Their sword shall enter their own heart (v.15)
 5. The arms of the wicked shall be broken (v.17)
 6. The wicked will perish (v.20)
 7. They vanish—like smoke they vanish away (v.20)
 8. They shall be cut off (v.22)
 9. The children of the wicked shall be cut off (v.28)
 10. You will look on when the wicked are cut off (v.34)
 11. He passed away, and behold, he was no more (v.36)
 12. Transgressors shall be altogether destroyed (v.38)

Psalm 73:16-20

But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end. Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors! Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms.

Question:

How should we as Christians respond to the ever-increasing evil in our world, so we can avoid bowing our heads in despair as Longfellow says in his poem?



12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

1. Have biblical expectations regarding evil.

Genesis 6:5, 11-12

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

...

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

Matthew 13:24-30

[Jesus] put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also."

Matthew 13:24-30

“So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, ‘Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

2. Understand that evil serves a divine purpose.

Proverbs 16:4

The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.

Psalm 92:7 NASB

...when the wicked sprouted up like grass and all who did iniquity flourished, it was

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

2. Understand that evil serves a divine purpose.

★ **Romans 9:22-23**

What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

3. Be bothered by evil.

2 Peter 2:7-8

...and if [God] rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard)

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

4. Be grieved by evil.

Ezekiel 9:4

★ And the Lord said to [Ezekiel], “Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.”

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

5. Be angered by evil.

Romans 1:18

★ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

6. Be fearless of evil.

Psalm 23:4

★ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

7. Laugh at evil.

Psalm 2:1-4

★ Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."

He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

8. Expose evil.

Ephesians 5:11

★ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

9. Avoid dwelling on evil.

Philippians 4:8

★ Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

10. Overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

10. Overcome evil with good.

Matthew 5:38-41

You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

11. Be forgiving of great evil.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

12. Pray against evil.

Matthew 6:9, 13

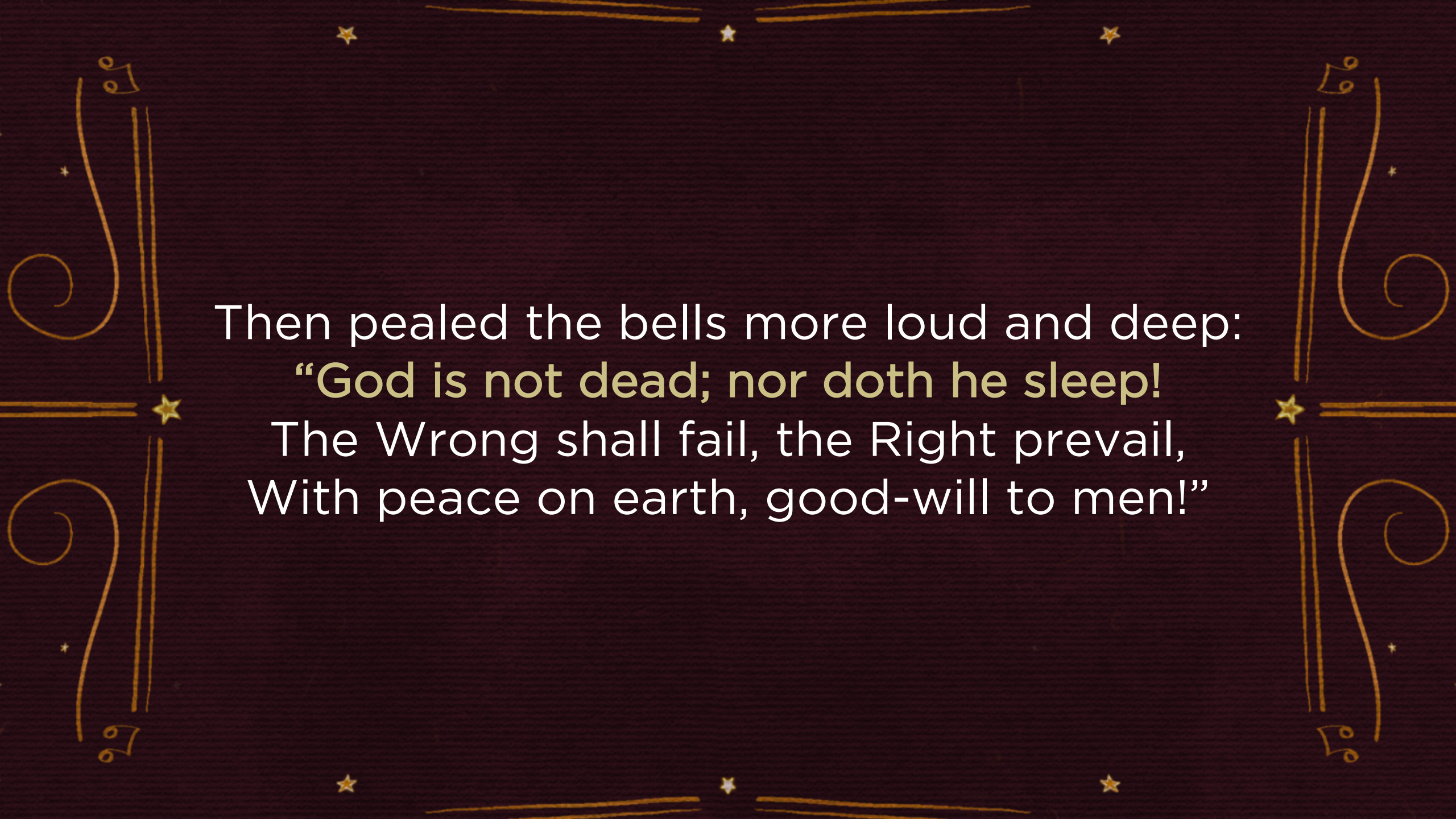
Pray then like this:

...

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

12 Ways We're to Respond to Evil

1. Have biblical expectations regarding evil.
2. Understand that evil serves a divine purpose.
3. Be bothered by evil.
4. Be grieved by evil.
5. Be angered by evil.
6. Be fearless of evil.
7. Laugh at evil.
8. Expose evil.
9. Avoid dwelling on evil.
10. Overcome evil with good.
11. Be forgiving of great evil.
12. Pray against evil.



Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
“**God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!**
The Wrong shall fail, the Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!”



"God is dead."

- Nietzsche, 1883

"Nietzsche is dead."

- God, 1900



World Religions by Population in 2021

Christianity	31%
Islam	24%
Nonreligious	16%
Hinduism	15%
Buddhism	7%
Folk religions	6%
Other	1%



Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris



