

Connecticut Shootings: Why the Shock and Awe?

Amid the “most wonderful season of all” comes the tragic news of a deranged young man entering an elementary school in **Newtown, Conn.**, killing 27, including 20 children. Tragically, Christmas for these families will likely be the darkest of many dark hours to come. The days when parents could send their children off to school with confidence that they would be cared for and protected seem long gone.

Just this summer we watched a senseless shooting spree in a Colorado movie theatre take the lives of 12 people and injure another 59. The national premiere of *The Dark Knight Rises* had Americans clamoring for tickets to be entertained by violent behavior. When tragedies like these occur, why do we respond with such shock and awe? Psychiatrist Keith Ablow said, “This kind of shock registers with people—because it seems like the unthinkable keeps moving into the sphere of our reality.”

The “unthinkable” first surfaced in mankind thousands of years ago when Cain killed his brother Abel out of mere jealousy and rivalry. God had warned Cain, “Sin is crouching at your door,” but Cain ignored God’s word and committed murder. God punished Cain for taking innocent life but the violent shedding of blood has continued for centuries. Why?

The Bible answers this question with certainty, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). In fact, the Bible gives clear testimony to just how evil the human race became. “The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord “was grieved in His heart” (Gen. 6:5-6).

Where do we go from here? We might start by looking at what we

watch and listen to. For example, South Korean rapper sensation Psy, who has gained worldwide acclaim by singing that Americans should be killed “slowly and painfully,” including, “daughters, mothers, daughters-in-law and fathers” was featured last weekend at “Christmas in Washington,” a charity concert attended by President Obama. Parents and children are feeding on entertainment that portrays violence whether through lewd television programs, violent movies, offensive music, vulgar video games and anything- goes Internet gaming sites.

Society craves violence as long as it comes in the form of entertainment. Our outlook changes when we become its victims. This is precisely why God did not stand by unconcerned. His love for mankind is so overwhelmingly powerful that His wrath against evil is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and the unrighteousness of men (Romans 1:18). The Bible says that people suppress the truth through unrighteous behavior that begins in the mind.

During this **Christmas season**, we should turn our minds and hearts from wickedness and remember what God has done for the world He loves. He sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Christmas Child to point us to the way of truth. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). His innocent blood was shed to cover our sinful hearts, and to those who will seek Him, He offers His abiding peace. He is the peace that surpasses all understanding.

The same God who gave the world His greatest gift, will also comfort the hearts of the grieving—in Newtown, Conn., or anywhere else—for He understands grief. He became a curse for us so that His promise would be fulfilled through faith in Him (Galatians 3:13). This is the shocking awe, that God would send so great a message in the form of a child. Indeed, this is the message of Christmas.

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