

Here We Go Again!

Ponder: Mass shootings

Scripture: “Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord? Arise! Do not cast us off forever” (Psalm 44:23, NKJV).

Antioch; Las Vegas; Sutherland Springs. And those are just the most recent ones! Have mass shootings become the “new normal”? I’d like to think not, but it certainly appears so at times.

Why is this happening? After the dust has settled in the endless arguments over gun laws or the lack thereof, here’s the bottom line: God created us with the ability to choose between good and evil. Early in Genesis, Cain murdered his brother; and the situation has not improved since then. No, we haven’t always had frequent mass shootings in the USA; but the coarsening of the culture in recent decades has undoubtedly contributed to numerous acts of violence including mass shootings.

Unbelievers pounce on this issue to challenge: “If God exists, why doesn’t He stop these terrible events?” Even believers wonder why God allows them to happen. Have we done something to deserve it? Since God has not revealed that, we should not presume one way or the other. It’s good to see trials as wakeup calls, but it isn’t wise to start pointing fingers. Why doesn’t God just stop evil from occurring? That would require transforming us into robots mindlessly going about doing whatever we are pre-programmed to do. But God desires obedience from the heart (Romans 6:17). That necessarily requires the possibility of disobedience.

Two recent shootings occurred in houses of worship. I can remember when church buildings were routinely left unlocked 24/7. It was unthinkable to steal from a church or assault those inside the building. Obviously, those norms are long since gone. Now brethren are wondering, “Are we safe? Do we need to lock the doors during our services? Should we have armed security?”

The concern is legitimate, but let us not become preoccupied with such matters! Job one is still faithfulness to the Lord, and our focus ought to be on spreading the gospel. We are sheep in the midst of wolves; let us be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16). And let us not fear those who can only destroy the body, but fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell (Matthew 10:28).

Song: “Faith Of Our Fathers”

Prayer: Gracious Father, we grieve for the families of the victims of these shootings and other violent assaults. We pray for the repentance of those who would perpetrate such horrible acts, and for our own repentance and that of others in our land, that You might be pleased to bring healing and peace to us. Help us not to be afraid, but to serve You boldly and faithfully. In Jesus’ name, Amen.