



"In keeping silent about evil, in burying it so deep within us that no sign of it appears on the surface, we are implanting it, and it will rise up a thousand-fold in the future."

—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

20-Apr-07

April Murder

April 19, 1993: Seventy-nine people die, including 21 children, when the FBI conducts a dawn assault on the Branch-Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. The cause of the uncontrollable inferno that killed so many is still a point of controversy.

April 19, 1995: The Alfred R. Murrah Building in Oklahoma City is bombed, killing 168 (of which 19 were children) and injuring over 800. Timothy McVeigh, Terry Nichols, and Michael Fortier are all later convicted for their parts in this tragedy. McVeigh is executed in 2001.

April 20, 1999: Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold massacre twelve students and a teacher at Columbine High School just west of Littleton, Colorado. Twenty-four others are wounded. Harris and Klebold commit suicide at the scene.

April 16, 2007: South Korean émigré Cho Seung-Hui kills 32 (and himself) and injures 29 during two separate rampages on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, Virginia.

For future reference, it might be prudent to be extra careful during the third week of April next year and in all years after that. In the past fourteen years, 292 people were killed in the above four April mass murders in the United States, and perhaps others could be added to the tally.

Most "rational" people would conclude that the chronological convergence of these atrocities is merely coincidence, that there is no evidence that links them, and they are probably right. There are more differences than there are similarities. But, just for kicks, let us consider the possibility that these tragedies are connected. What are the commonalities among them?

First, there are the dates, of course. On the Gregorian calendar, they all occurred within four days of each other, in different years. Conventional [wisdom](#) suggests that the Oklahoma City Bombing was specifically timed to occur on the anniversary of the Waco Assault, in retaliation for the government's unlawful use of power against its own citizens. The Columbine Massacre may also have been planned for April 19, as both killers mentioned on videotape that they intended to top the carnage of the previous mass killings, but the making of propane bombs delayed their plans for a day. So far, no word has come out that Cho timed his killing spree to coincide with the others. For what it is worth, Adolf Hitler's birthday was April 20, 1889.

Second, there are the large casualty figures. The smallest of them, the Columbine slaughter, totaled 39 dead and wounded, including the perpetrators. Cho's rampages caused 62 casualties; the FBI's assault, 79; and McVeigh's bomb, nearly 1,000. While none of these figures approach the nearly 3,000 deaths of September 11, 2001, they are nonetheless atrocious, and in the Columbine and Blacksburg murders, very personal. Also, the first two tragedies killed high numbers of children (21 and 19, respectively), while the last two were perpetrated by students on school campuses, leaving many students dead (12 and 27, respectively). Finally, the last two also ended in the suicides of the killers.

Third, there are the killers' grievances. All of them, including the FBI, felt justified in taking multiple lives in retaliation for real or imagined [offenses](#) committed against them. As an agency, the FBI was frustrated and confused by the unorthodox beliefs and staunch resistance of the Branch-Davidians, and its morning assault appeared to be an over-the-top response to this

defiance. Allegedly, McVeigh and his cohorts used their bomb to express their indignation against the federal government. Columbine killers Harris and Klebold evidently struck out against those who looked down on them and bullied them. Cho's "multi-media manifesto" rails against rich, pampered, dissolute Americans. While none of these gripes justify mass murder, they provided rationales for their homicidal behavior.

But there is a fourth commonality that too few people—and even fewer media pundits—are comfortable in pointing out: All four of these atrocities were acts of pure evil. Americans are so liberal and humanistic in outlook that they can hardly imagine, much less verbalize, that some of their fellow citizens are evil people. The "experts" provide them with convenient dodges: The killers had "issues"; they were "disturbed"; their frontal lobes had been "compromised," making them unable to control themselves; they had been led astray by violent video games or movies; they had been trained to kill in war or in their line of work; etc., *ad nauseum*. Why can many not accept the fact that there are genuinely evil people who do indisputably evil things?

In an insightful commentary on the Virginia Tech massacre, *Wall Street Journal* columnist Peggy Noonan relates her conclusion about the matter:

The most common-sensical thing I heard said came Thursday morning, in a hospital interview with a student who'd been shot and was recovering. Garrett Evans said of the man who'd shot him, "An evil spirit was going through that boy, I could feel it." It was one of the few things I heard the past few days that sounded completely true. Whatever else Cho was, he was also a walking infestation of evil.

The reason for evil being so unimaginable in present-day America resides in her citizen's rejection of revelation and enthusiastic embrace of so-called scientific reason. Science cannot empirically test evil, nor its ultimate source, [Satan](#) the Devil. Having spurned the Bible's warnings about the ruler of this age, who has deceived the whole world ([Revelation 12:9](#)), and accepted on [faith](#) that human nature is on an evolutionary course toward perfection, many people never really consider if true wickedness even exists. They coin euphemisms to describe evil acts: They become "crimes," "tragedies," "misdeeds," "atrocities," "psychopathic violence," even "outbursts of a

tortured soul." And by ignoring the existence of evil, they bar themselves from seeking real solutions to it.

[Proverbs 8:13](#) says, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate." When so many in this nation forsook the fear of [God](#), they failed to hate evil, and evil, unrecognized and ignored, began to grow and spread, breaking out in murder and mayhem in April and September and in every other month of the year. Until Americans once again acknowledge the presence of evil within the "desperately wicked" human heart ([Jeremiah 17:9](#)), they will not be able to devise viable solutions to counter it. And if they refuse to change their approach, the [days of Noah](#) are at hand ([Matthew 24:37](#)).

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[The Fear of God](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The church at large has downplayed the fuller dimension of the fear of God by emphasizing awe, respect, or reverence, while ignoring its other dimensions such as fright, dread, or terror. Consequently, many have inadvertently adopted a soft concept of God, disrespecting and showing contempt for God's authority and power. Mistakenly, we transfer or appropriate our fear to human beings, who cannot revoke the penalty of death hanging over us. When Moses and Isaiah recognized God's presence, they became aware of their own vileness in comparison to God's holiness and power. By legitimately fearing God, we lose our human terror, finding sanctuary in God Almighty. Godly fear is a gift given to us as a result of His calling, compelling submission to His purpose and leading to godly knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.

From the Archives: Featured Article

'As It Was In the Days of Noah'

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

What did Jesus mean when He said the end time would be like the days of Noah? Did He mean that the last days would be violent and corrupt, or that the last days would come suddenly on an unsuspecting world? Amazingly, the waning years of this century fulfill both.

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