

## Unsinkable

"Gentlemen, I regret to say that the Titanic sank at 2:20 this morning." –Philip Franklin –VP White Star Line, NY

*The Titanic struck an iceberg shortly before midnight. Some passengers were asleep, but many were still partying. The band was playing. People were dancing, eating, and enjoying life. They were confident life would go on, because the ship was "unsinkable."*

*The ship sank just 2 1/2 hours later at 2:20 AM. April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1912. Many were still in their party clothes. Others were still in their night clothes, dressed for bed. Many died that way. None expected to die that night.*

### The Titanic

- \*It was the largest ship of that day (though larger have been built since).
- \* It was one of the fastest ships of that day, but not the fastest (and faster has been built since).
- \* It was on its maiden voyage
- \* It was the most luxurious ship ever built.
  
- \*First-class accommodations rivaled the finest hotels on shore.
- \*The first-class dining hall could seat 500 people in one room.
- \*The greatest showpiece was the Grand Staircase, which ascended four decks.
- \*The cost for a one-way passage in the finest suites would equate to \$80,000 in 1997 money!
- \*The passengers included some of the world's greatest millionaires.

## Pride and Destruction

### Proverbs 16:18

**18** Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

- \*Many passengers and crew members believed the Titanic to be unsinkable, and the ship's designers believed it was almost true.
- \*One passenger asked a ship's agent for extra insurance on some valuables in her luggage. The agent replied, "Ridiculous. This boat's unsinkable".
- \*Captain Smith himself was asked about the safety of the Titanic. He answered:  
  
\*"I cannot imagine any condition which would cause a ship to founder. I cannot conceive of any vital disaster happening to this vessel. Modern shipbuilding has gone beyond that."
- \*After the ship had struck the iceberg, a passenger asked her employer if they should do something about it. He replied, "Go back to bed. This ship is unsinkable" .
- \*The ship began to list as it took on more water. When a passenger expressed concern, another passenger replied, "You cannot sink this boat" .
- \*When early reports about the tragedy began to gradually reach America, Philip Franklin, vice-president of the White Star line in New York, responded: "We place absolute confidence in the Titanic. We believe that the boat is unsinkable" .
- \*One passenger asked a dock hand, "Is this ship really unsinkable?" The man replied, "Yes, lady. God Himself couldn't sink this ship"

## Time and Chance

### Ecclesiastes 9:11

**11** I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

- \* The ship's sailing had been postponed for three weeks. Had she sailed any other time, the iceberg would not have been there.
- \* If the ship had traveled one mile per hour faster or slower, the iceberg would have been in a different position.
- \* The iceberg was "blue," the most difficult kind to see.
- \* The night was moonless -- no light to show the iceberg.
- \* The night was windless. Wind would have made waves to splash on the iceberg making it more visible.
- \* Men in the crow's nest had no lookout glasses. They were on the ship, but had been misplaced.
- \* Even so, the crew saw the iceberg in time to begin turning. If the crew had seen the iceberg 10 seconds sooner, the ship would have missed it.
- \* If the crew had seen the iceberg ten seconds later, they would have hit it head on, causing damage which would not have sunk the ship. The ship sank because it grazed the berg, slicing open a long section of its side.
- \* The ship could carry over 3000 people, but had lifeboats for only 1178 (this was all that laws then required). Even so, only 700 people actually got in the lifeboats.

Over 1500 people died, the greatest number of deaths in a non-military transportation accident up to that time (and I don't know of any greater since that time).

John Jacob Astor died, as did many others as famous or nearly as wealthy as he was (he was the richest man aboard the Titanic). The man who designed the ship was also on board and died.

## The Danger of Neglecting Warnings

The crew of the Titanic received many warnings about the danger they faced, but those warnings went unheeded.

- \* The ship builders pointed out that the ship could easily handle far more lifeboats. But the White Star line refused to build more, because it would be too expensive (interesting, considering the luxury of the ship). Besides, the ship already met all legal requirements, and furthermore it was "unsinkable" so it didn't need lifeboats!
- \* As the Titanic proceeded, her crew received no fewer than six messages from other ships warning of ice in the very area where she eventually struck the iceberg. She received messages from the *Coronia*, the *Noordam*, the *Baltic*, the *Amerika*, the *Californian*, and the *Mesaba*.

These reports described heavy pack ice, large icebergs, and field ice, giving positions where they were located. Had these positions been carefully plotted on a map, they would have revealed a belt of ice 78 miles wide, directly in the path of the Titanic.

But wireless was new and there were no organized procedures for handling messages. On the Titanic some messages were just pocketed. One was plotted on the map. Only one or two reached the captain. For whatever reasons, they were largely ignored.

So the Titanic steamed on at essentially full speed on a black night, refusing to alter course, disregarding all possible danger

### I Peter 5:8

**8** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

### Hebrews 2:1-3

**1** Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip.

**2** For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

**3** How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

### **Hebrews 3:12-14**

**12** Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

**13** But exhort one another daily, while it is called to day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

**14** For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

### **II Thessalonians 1:8-9**

**8** In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

**9** Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

## **Helping Those in Distress and the Danger of Doing Nothing**

The Californian

As the Titanic was sinking, the lights of another ship were visible on the horizon. This ship had stopped for the night, presumably because it had seen or heard of icebergs in the area. Clearly it could have come to Titanic's aid. The Titanic's crew tried to signal this ship by wireless Morse code messages, by blinking light, and by rocket flares.

The captain of the Californian always denied that his ship was the ship the Titanic crew saw, but consider the evidence.

\* The crew of the Titanic definitely saw another ship. The Californian was in the area, and no other ship has ever been proved to be anywhere nearby.

\* The crew of the Californian reported seeing the lights of a ship that night. That ship also was not moving, so they wondered how it eventually disappeared. But they thought little of it.

\* The Californian did not receive the Titanic's radio messages, because its radio had been had turned off for the night. The Titanic sent up eight white rockets, and the crew of the Californian reported seeing eight white rockets.

\* Three times the crew reported these rockets to their captain. But it was the middle of the night and he was asleep. They awoke him, but he said the rockets meant nothing. The crew wondered why a ship would send up eight rockets in the middle of the night if it had no purpose.

So the Californian stood by while 1500 people drowned. It could easily have rescued them, but its captain did not believe there was a problem and was unwilling to be bothered in the middle of the night.

## The Carpathia

As the Titanic sank, her wireless operators tried heroically to find another ship near enough to come to its rescue. A little after midnight they contacted the Carpathia, a small British ship about 58 miles away. The Titanic's message said: "...SOS--SOS... Come at once. We have struck a berg..."

The radio operator of the Carpathia reported the message to his first officer. Together they barged into the room of Captain Arthur Rostron, waking him from a sound sleep. When he heard the message, this captain said, "All right, tell him we are coming along as fast as we can."

Here is a description of this captain:

"He was ... noted for his piety; he neither smoked nor drank, was never heard to use profanity, and in a day and age when recourse to the Almighty was not regarded as quaint or a sign of weakness, [he] was known to turn to prayer for guidance" .

The captain gave every command he could think of to prepare for a rescue mission. All routine work was stopped, life boats swung into place, lights rigged all along the ship's sides, all gangway doors opened, block and tackle made ready to hoist boats aboard and slings to lift the injured.

The captain had ordered full speed ahead, but the Carpathia had a top speed of 14 knots. At that speed it would take 4 hours to reach the Titanic. Captain Rostron determined to do better. He ordered all off-duty stokers to the engine room to get every ounce of steam the boilers could make. Heat and hot water were turned off throughout the ship. All power went to the engines.

From its top speed of 14 knots, the Carpathia increased speed. 14 knots ... 15 knots ... 16 knots ... 17 knots -- 3 knots faster than her top speed, the Carpathia sped to rescue the perishing.

The captain ordered extra lookouts in the crow's nest, the bow, and the bridge. He was steaming faster than full speed in the middle of the night into an area where he knew there were icebergs, to rescue a ship that had already struck an iceberg.

The captain called the stewards together. He explained the plight of the Titanic and the mission of the Carpathia. He looked each man in the eye and said, "Every man to his post and let him do his duty like a true Englishman."

"In all this excitement, one other thing was not overlooked. The second officer noticed it. Then every man on the bridge noticed. Captain Rostron stood at the back of the bridge holding his cap an inch or two off his head, eyes closed, lips moving in silent prayer."

1500 people from the Titanic died that night, because they could not get into the lifeboats. Of those who were able to get into the lifeboats, 700 were rescued, all of them by the Carpathia. No other ship arrived in time.

## John 4:35-36

**35** Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

**36** And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

## Luke 19:10

**10** For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

## James 1:22

**22** But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

## Devotion to Duty

Devotion to duty was such a strong virtue among Englishmen in that day that the book records: "...there isn't a single recorded incident of any crewmen trying to force their way into any of the lifeboats" .

"It was devotion to duty that ... kept Trimmer Hemming on board working at loading and lowering the boats long after his assigned lifeboat had gone; it kept [wireless operators] Phillips and Bride at the wireless even after Captain Smith released them; it kept Chief Engineer Bell and the rest of the engineering staff in the engine room even when they knew that it was far too late to reach the upper decks and get away; it kept [band leader] Wallace Hartley and the band playing until they were pitched into the sea."

While it is true that a majority of the passengers died, of 892 crew members 678 died. "...the only explanation can be that they deliberately stayed away from the [life]boats" .

When the lifeboats were being loaded, the rule was "women and children first." A few men acted cowardly, but most did not.

Story after story told of men putting their wives and/or children into the lifeboats, then calmly walking away rather than insisting on getting in themselves.

"There was ... Colonel Gracie, working as hard as any crewman to help launch [two lifeboats]. There were Lieutenant Steffanson and Hugh Woolner helping Purser McElroy, stop a rush on [a lifeboat]. There was John Jacob Astor, meekly turning away [when told] 'Women and children only' ...; or Isidor Strauss refusing to get into a boat before any other man..."

## Luke 17:10

**10** So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, **We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.**

Unprofitable = not needed, no use for.

## Luke 14:33

**33** So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

## John 15:13-14

**13** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

**14** Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Are we hearing and listening to the warnings God is giving us or are we prideful and thinking that we are unsinkable? Do we realize that life is precious and but a vapor-time and chance happens to us all. Are we devoted to what God is calling us to do? Do we realize the dangers of DOING NOTHING for the Kingdom? Do we realize the importance of our devotion to duty in serving a Risen Savior. God Forbid – let us be humbled and Serve The Lord.

We are unsinkable only through the Salvation of Jesus Christ!