

VICTORY OVER DEATH

STORY OF THE TITANIC

Several shipwrecks have been recorded in history. Of them, the sinking of the Titanic in 1912 resulting in the loss of 1513 lives is worthy of special note. This big ship built in England, having a length of 900 feet, had 16 water-tight compartments which ensured its safety against all possible dangers. It started its maiden voyage from England under the captainship of Edward Smith on 10th April 1912. Its destination was Newyork in America. On 14th night however, the air became unusually cold and radio messages were received warning that there were several icebergs floating on the sea. But captain Smith and the officers under him did not take these warnings seriously, as they thought nothing in the sea could pose a threat to their ship. The ship continued speeding across the ocean towards the coast of America. However when it was past midnight the unexpected happened; the ship struck against a floating mountain of ice resulting in serious damage to its hull; water began entering its water-tight compartments and after a couple of hours the ‘un-sinkable’ Titanic sank to the bottom of the Atlantic ocean. As its deck bowed before the onrushing waters, amidst the cries and screams of panic-stricken men and women, a song, loud and clear, was heard; the ship’s orchestra joined by a few others were singing, “Nearer my God to Thee, Nearer to Thee....” As they were singing the lines of this song, the waves of the ocean swept over the deck and it was with the words of this song still coming forth from their throats, that they sank into the cold deep watery

grave of the Atlantic. The sound waves of their song lingered in the air above the surface of the ocean, testifying to the great scriptural truth, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...” Revelation 14:13. Never before and never afterward have the victims of a disaster of this magnitude encountered their misfortune with so great calmness, so great courage and so great hope.

Uniqueness of the Event

Today the story of the Titanic stands out unique among all the innumerable maritime disasters as the most spoken about, the most written about, and the most remembered one. The secret behind this is the message it has conveyed to us: It tells us that it is most unwise and dangerous to ignore warnings issued to us from authoritative sources. It also tells us that those who believe in Jesus Christ and have accepted Him as their Lord and Saviour, do not have to fear death and that they will be with God the moment they depart from this world. Let us examine the relevance of this message to human destiny in the light of the Word of God (Bible).

Warning in the Word of God

We have seen that it is most unwise to ignore warnings about dangers to our physical safety; it is far more unwise to ignore the warning in the Word of God about the eternal punishment for sin. It is stated in the Word of God that all men are to die once and then to appear before the judgement seat of God (Hebrews 9:27). This means judgement after death is as certain as physical death in the present world. There are some who think that there is no such thing called The Last Judgement. The fond hope of some people that there is no Last Judgement is going to

be proved a great miscalculation. We should not ignore the warnings in the Word of God about sin and its punishment as the Titanic's crew ignored the wireless messages warning about the presence of icebergs. The Bible says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and that the punishment of sin is death, spiritual as well as physical (Romans 6:23). Spiritual death leads to one's eternal punishment in hell for the sins committed during one's earthly life. It is stated in the Bible that Adam was the first man created by God; he was given the freedom to obey or disobey his Creator; it so happened that he yielded to the temptation of Satan, obeyed him and disobeyed God, his true Lord. His obedience to Satan resulted in his slavery to sin; through him the whole of humanity was brought under the yoke of sin. That is why all people in the world are found committing sins and behaving unjustly, untruthfully and selfishly. No man, however good, can be perfect and sinless in the eyes of God. So if one does not get one's sins forgiven one cannot escape eternal punishment in hell.

Means of Salvation

The manner in which the children of God on the deck of the Titanic faced death tells us that those who have got their sins forgiven have the assurance that they will spend their eternity with God in heaven. The Bible tells us that the problem of sin and its punishment was at first temporarily solved by the divine provision of animal sacrifices which pointed to the real and perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the sinless man on the cross of Calvary, which was to take place in due course. We learn from the New Testament of the Bible that Christ, the Son of God came into this world two thousand years ago, became

man by being born of virgin Mary, offered Himself as a sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, rose from the grave on the third day and ascended to heaven fulfilling all the prophecies about God Himself making atonement for all the sins of humanity.

It was in accordance with the commandment of Jesus that His disciples and apostles wrote the books of the New Testament of the Bible. They point out that a person becomes a child of God when he believes in Jesus Christ and accepts Him as his Lord and Saviour. Thus, for salvation and forgiveness of sins, one has to pray sincerely: “Lord Jesus, I admit that I am a sinner; I believe that you came into this world, became man, suffered death, the punishment of my sins, and rose from the dead on the third day. I accept you as my Lord and Saviour; I thank you for saving me.” When a person sincerely prays so or experiences in his heart the faith expressed in these words, he gets salvation and eternal life according to the Word of God (John 3:16). He becomes a **new creation** in Christ Jesus. Then he will feel a desire to study the Word of God and lead a life in obedience to the commandments of Christ described in the Gospels and Epistles. He will worship God in the company of other believers and convey the Gospel to other people. He will not view his obedience to Jesus as a religion; instead he will view it as the true way of life God has prescribed for all humanity. He will believe in accordance with the Word of God that Jesus will come back just as He went up into heaven. When this happens all the dead in Christ shall rise from their graves (burial places), putting on heavenly bodies; those believers who are alive, also will put on the same kind of immortal bodies and all will be caught up together in the clouds to meet their Lord. Then each believer will receive rewards according to his (her) obedience to the Word of God. This will be followed by the Last Judgment resulting in

the eternal punishment of all sinners resurrected and made to stand before **The Great White Throne**. They will be cast into the lake of fire along with Satan and thus the problem of sin and evil in the universe will be solved forever. Then the new heaven and the new earth will emerge; they will be occupied by the people of God.

It is the truth of the great hope of those who believe in Jesus Christ that was proclaimed on the surface of the Atlantic Ocean when those believers on the deck of the Titanic sang, “Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee” and went down into its icy depths. Do you have the assurance of eternal life and forgiveness of sins that those people had? If you don’t, you can have it now; believe in Jesus and accept Him as your Lord and Saviour and enjoy the peace of God that transcends all religious beliefs, surpasses all human wisdom and enables you to have the assurance that you have become a child of the Almighty God. For further details read **SALVATION THE GIFT OF GOD** in the website: www.biblestudycentre.net