



TITANIC: PARABLE OF THE END TIMES

By Kameel Majdali



MAJDALI: Titanic Parable of the End Times

"See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." --Hebrews 12:25,26

The Pride of the White Star Line

It is the material from which legends are made. Imagine a 46,000 gross ton British luxury liner eleven stories high and four city blocks long. Like society itself, it was divided into several classes, with little or no intermingling. Well-known wealthy families like the Morgans, Guggenheims, and Astors, along with other high society passengers, enjoyed opulent suites, plush carpet, fine dining areas and ball rooms, while the commoners were cramped into spartan quarters below. Private promenades and "French" sidewalk cafes graced its decks. Many would simply consider it an awesome work of art.

Most impressive of all was the part of the ship that people did not see. Built with sixteen watertight compartments encased in a double bottom, it was possible for the ship to remain afloat even if more than one compartment was flooded. Its sheer size and construction caused it to be called "the ship that God himself couldn't sink." And though it could hold three thousand passengers, it only carried twenty lifeboats. Why cramp the deck with more when this ship was one big lifeboat itself?

Sinking the Unsinkable

This ship, of course, was called the Titanic. The recent blockbuster movie by the same name only did not create, but only renewed (utilizing constant suspense and its special effects genius), the mystique, thrill, and horror that has captured the world's imagination since it became the history's most famous sea disaster eighty-six years ago.

It all happened on the night of 14 April, 1912, on the fourth day of its maiden voyage from Southampton, England, to New York. With stars shining overhead, the Titanic glided gracefully but incautiously across the biting cold black waters of the North Atlantic, 153 kilometers south of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. Though it had received six warnings of ice, the ship continued to sail at a relatively rapid 22.5 knots.

At 11:40 p.m., some small, sinister object, darker than dark, appeared. With each passing second, the 30 meter high iceberg came into clear focus. The warning bell sounded, the ship prepared to crash, and the crew braced themselves for impact. Finally, the Titanic began to turn and thus missed a head-on collision. What a relief, the crew thought...the worse is over.

But, no, something worse had happened. By turning the ship as they did, the crew exposed the entire starboard side to the sinister but awesome might of the iceberg. A terrible thud could felt as the iceberg sideswiped compartment after compartment of the Titanic. Having left its mark, the iceberg drifted back into the dark...and into history.

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Within minutes, it became frightfully clear that the ship was sinking quickly and the crew only had to launch twenty lifeboats (it had 1,178 boat spaces) to service 2,224 passengers. By 2:20 a.m. on April 15th, less than three hours after impact, the Titanic broke into two, and sank three kilometers to the bottom of the Atlantic. Only 705 passengers survived in its half-filled lifeboats. The magnificent and unsinkable Titanic had met a swift and untimely end, resting 3,950 meters on the ocean floor.

The Universal Shaking

Tragic as this maritime disaster was for the passengers and families, the sinking of the Titanic had an unnerving impact on the entire world. The periodic resurgent interest in the Titanic, usually heralded by books and movies, is a continuous reminder of a ship that has captured the imagination of a century. The reason is that the Titanic represents our world order in miniature. It is a "parable of the last days."

Hebrews 12 says that "yet once more I will not only shake the earth, but the heavens also." Echoed from the book of Haggai, this statement is ironically called a "promise" of God. The Lord is promising to shake one more time, both the earth and heavens, and there will be no where to hide.

One of the most apt descriptions of our twentieth century is the time of universal shaking. This will result in the removal of all temporal things and thus reveal those things that will remain eternally. It represents the mighty transition from the kingdoms of this world to the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15). Unlike the smooth post-election transfer of power from one political party to another, this change of world order will be enacted unexpectedly and violently. A good illustration would be a massive earthquake with frequent aftershocks.

A History of "Shaking"

By 1912 the world was coming out of the Victorian and Edwardian era. Relative prosperity and technological know-how were on the increase. Mankind's rising standard of living and international peace produced a self-sufficiency, arrogance, and independence from the living God. Humanism, evolution, and liberal theology were coming into vogue, causing humanity to become disengaged from the truth and enamored with material, temporal things. All these conditions rendered the world ripe for a shaking.

Consider the shaking that occurred simply during the decade of the Titanic.

- Two years after the disaster, the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo, Bosnia, on 28 June 1914, ignited the First World War. Tens of millions of people perished on the battlefields of Europe, including 60,000 soldiers from the newly-established Commonwealth of Australia.
- At the end of the war, major empires which had existed, in some cases for centuries, simply vanished. These included the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Chinese Imperial Empire with their emperors, the German Reich with its kaiser, the Ottoman Turkish Empire with its sultan. The once powerful Russian imperial dynasty of Romanov also fell and met a violent end.

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- If this wasn't enough shaking, after the conclusion of the War, a dreadful influenza epidemic commenced during the 1918-1919 winter, resulting in the deaths of the over twenty-million people worldwide.

This change-filled, apocalyptic decade of the Titanic was merely a warm-up for further shakings ahead.

Blessings and CURSES

Deuteronomy 28 promises abundant blessings to those who "diligently obey" the voice of the LORD. For those who do not want to obey God, however, are promised massive curses, an avalanche of evil. We will see both great blessings and awesome curses at work as we head into the wind-up of history.

"Titanic: parable of the last days" not only includes a mighty shaking, but the overthrow of every man-centered, self-centered machination. Murphy's Law comes ominously into force. Consider how everything that could go wrong did go wrong on that fateful night the Titanic sank. So many factors or pluses worked in favour of the Titanic arriving in New York. If even one of those factors were activated, perhaps all lives could have been saved.

- A ship called the *Californian* was nearby (30 kilometers all night) and could have rescued everyone...but its radio operator was off-duty and asleep;
- The ship *Carpathian* did pick up the Titanic's S.O.S.... but it was four hours away. It came to the scene 1 hour and 20 minutes after the ship sank;
- The watertight compartments were very strong indeed...but they were not built high enough to withstand the gash of the iceberg;
- The Titanic received six ice warnings...but ignored all of them.
- Several watertight compartments could have been flooded and the Titanic still remain afloat...but the iceberg hit one compartment too many.
- Had the iceberg been sighted a few moments sooner or later, or had it hit the iceberg in any other way, it would have been all right...but it didn't.
- The Titanic was equipped with lifeboats...but they were not enough. And no body bothered to practice the drills necessary to fill these lifeboats to the full.

Not one, but many curses came into play. As it turned out, 1,503 people met a swift and icy death. And the curse of death was so egalitarian...not only did poor Irish peasants get thrown into the icy waters, but even the millionaires John Jacob Astor, Benjamin Guggenheim and Isidor Straus went down with the ship, too.

Our "new" world order, proud, independent, distant from God, is also on a cursed collision course with destiny. Though it is endeavoring to forge unity and peace in our time, like the Titanic, it will hit uncharted and unfriendly waters. And, in the same manner of rapidity, it too will disintegrate and disappear, just like Nebuchadnezzar's statue which is struck by the stone (Daniel 2:31-35). That is why the Titanic is a "parable of the last days."