

## The Ultimate Deception: Religious But Lost!

The year was 1912 and the Titanic was the largest ship ever built. It stretched three football fields in length. It stood eleven stories tall. It weighed 46,000 tons. She was the largest moving object ever created. As a floating palace of staggering proportions she was billed as unsinkable. Tragically, all she ever did was sink.

On her maiden voyage she left England carrying 1,312 passengers plus a crew and staff of 914. She was warned about pack ice and many icebergs. Tragically, wireless operator Jack Phillips placed the warnings underneath a paperweight. He continued sending personal messages for passengers. Five more warnings were received and five more warnings were discarded.

At 11:40 PM the ship struck a skyscraper sized iceberg. Six of her sixteen watertight compartments flooded. Some jumped into the water and tried to swim but hypothermia quickly set in. In all, only 753 lives were saved. Thousands of people gathered outside the White Star Shipping Line office in New York to receive word of their loved ones. When they posted the report next to each name, all that mattered was **saved** or **lost**.

The tragedy of the Titanic reminds us of a far greater truth. Spiritually every person is either saved or lost. You must be certain you are saved. Salvation is found only in the lifeboat of Jesus. He died. He was our substitute. He carried our sins. He offers eternal life. The greatest thing in all the world is to be saved. The second greatest is to be absolutely sure you are saved.

1 John provides assurance of salvation. How can you know for certain that you born again? The Apostle John spells out vital signs that indicate spiritual life. If you are truly saved, these vital signs will be present in your life.

The first vital sign is communion with Christ (1:1-4). If you have eternal life, you will have a relationship with God. There will be intimacy with the Almighty. John wrote, "... that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (verse 3). The word fellowship means the formation of a joint venture between two or more people. A saved person has close communion with God. There is a vital relationship. There is the sense that God is working through your life.

The second vital sign is confession of sin (1:5-2:2). A Christian mourns over his sin. He confesses his sin. He understands that his sin nailed Jesus to a tree. The apostle wrote in verse 6, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." A believer will not walk in habitual sin. He will hate his sin. In verse 9 John continued, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." A Christian forsakes and confesses his sin.

The third vital sign is commitment to God's Word (2:3-6). John said, "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (verse 3). Faith produces action. Saving faith produces obedience. Verse 4 says, "The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in Him." Jesus lived a life of total obedience. Even in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus said, "Not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). If a person knows Jesus, he will also obey Jesus.

Zaccheus was a chief tax collector. He supervised many other agents. He made lots of money all at the expense of his fellow citizens. When he met Jesus his life changed. In Luke 19:8 he said, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." His life was changed. He became committed to obeying God's Word.

The Titanic struck the iceberg at 11:40 PM. At 12:45 the first lifeboat was lowered into the water below- half empty. Some jumped into the water and tried to swim. Others stayed on board the ship and climbed to the highest point. They also died. Another ship, the Carpathia, heard the frantic distress calls of the Titanic. The Carpathia arrived on the scene in less than an hour. Only those who believed the ship was sinking and climbed into the lifeboats were saved. Make certain you are in the lifeboat marked Jesus.

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