

Her enormity set her apart, but what made her famous were claims that she was unsinkable. In her belly were 16 watertight compartments designed to keep her afloat.

Inside she was a floating palace, a vision of affluence. It would be impossible not to be awed by the glass dome over the grand staircase, the gold-plated chandeliers and the exotic ambience.

She was not just a boat; she was a symbol. She was born in an age of optimism, gaiety and progress. At the beginning of what some historians consider to be the most amazing century the world has ever known, people were ready to see how far they could go. The *Titanic* was a technological masterpiece that showcased man's abilities.

In Genesis 11, we learn that thousands of years before, a mass of people set out to build a mighty tower in the quest to make a name for themselves. Various evidences of ancient history agree that these people had rejected their Creator. Those people wanted their own name, and they received it but not in the way they planned.

The *Titanic* and the Tower are fascinating stories of sightless presumption, but my own selfish stories are just as engaging. I could reach into the archives of my own heart and tell tales of blind confidence and tragic demise.

Every time I have sought my own gain instead of what is best for the kingdom of God, I have failed. When my hope has been built on my own dreams, I have been paid back in full from their futility.

God has consistently brought down my pride despite the cleverness of my hands (Isaiah 25:11). When one challenges God with a desire for a great name, God may just take the dare. In any event, the arrogant will be bested in the battle.

Another titanic narrative in the Old Testament stands apart. Despite the iceberg warning the Lord had sent to him through dreams, King Nebuchadnezzar boasted credit for building mighty Babylon and yawped about his own power and majesty over the

rooftops of the kingdom (Daniel 4:30). This immediately brought him affliction in the form of insanity and the loss of his kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar's reign and sanity were only restored when from the depth of his disgrace he uttered, "His dominion is an eternal dominion ... No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have You done?'" (vv. 34-35).

Nebuchadnezzar eventually praised, exalted and glorified the King of heaven because everything He does is right. All His ways are just and "those who walk in pride he is able to humble" (Daniel 4:37). My ego may be less obvious than that of Nebuchadnezzar, but it can be just as destructive to my walk as a child of God.

I have often been disgraced because of foolhardiness in my spiritual life. In attempts to look exemplary, I have ignored the fruits of the Spirit and let my flesh perform. As a result I have been the emptiest when people were patting me on the back. I build towers and ships and then offer them on the altar of ego.

Harold Bride, one of the *Titanic*'s radio communicators, had nightmares until the end of his life about the iceberg warning he ignored because of the ship's unproven claims to be unsinkable. I refuse to yield to those kind of memories, and I pray to God that I choose the way of Nebuchadnezzar instead.

That goes for every part of my life—marriage vows, children, church leadership, career. They are all God's. My first fruits go to Him, and then He enables me to succeed in all my relationships. When my best laid plans go awry, may I lift my hands in glory to the One whose hand is not held back. I am nothing compared to Him. The wise preacher said, "The voice of the Lord twists the oaks and strips the forests bare" (Psalm 29:9).

No matter what feats I accomplish in my lifetime, no matter who remembers my name because of what I have done, my prideful squawks are still foolish when compared to the sound of His voice.

In 1898, 14 years before the *Titanic*, Morgan Robertson wrote a novel about a terrific Atlantic liner

larger than any built before it. Robertson loaded his ship with smug and affluent people and then ran it into an iceberg one cold April night after warnings of ice had been ignored. The fictional ship held lifeboats for only a fraction of the number of people on board. Robertson chose to call his ship the *Titan*.

Although the irony this storyteller created is mesmerizing, I dare say he did not have in mind to be a prophet. God's hand was obvious when the people were scattered in Babel and when the great king lost Babylon for a time. But I am not concerned with whether God handcrafted an iceberg especially for the *Titanic*. I only pause to wonder what icebergs lie ahead for me if I build with my own blueprints.

God is not waiting for us to hope, only to destroy us. He simply wants our egos to be destroyed so that we can hope in Him. Anything on the drawing board without God's instruction and guidance is but a pipe dream and just dares Him to undo it.

"God Himself could not sink this ship" is repeated in almost every story of the *Titanic*. What a challenge that ignorant man was making! Yet I find Satan slinking that thought into my life all the time although most of us label the words as being the stupidest thing to come out of someone's mouth in recorded history. When did "Lord willing" leave my vocabulary?

On April 11, 1912, *Titanic* passenger Charles Hayes, be he sarcastic or pessimistic, lifted his glass at dinner and proclaimed that "the time has come for the greatest and most appalling of all disasters at sea" (*Her Name, Titanic*, Charles Pellegrino, p. 22). As I sketch and design my towers and ships, a chill runs down my spine to think that at the same time someone in heaven may be raising a glass to me. □

Reprinted from April 1999 Gospel Advocate. Anne-Geri Gray lives in Norcross, Georgia.

