

# I Survived the Sinking of the Titanic

by Elias Nicola-Yarred

## **Awake**

1981

"In March 1912, we sailed to Marseilles, France. While there, we booked passage on the Titanic to sail on its maiden voyage to New York. The date of its sailing was April 10, 1912. My father had to be left behind in Marseilles because he could not pass the required physical examination due to an eye infection." My uncle smiled and exclaimed: "A very fortunate turn of events for him!"

"On Sunday, April 14, our fifth day at sea, the weather turned exceptionally cold-so bitterly cold that not many people were out on the promenade deck. We heard that there were warnings of icebergs in the area. None were expected to be sighted on the ship's course, so the Titanic maintained full speed ahead. However, the captain of the Californian, another ship in the North Atlantic, radioed a warning to the Titanic about icebergs being sighted in our path. This was ignored. The price paid for overconfidence on the part of Captain Smith, nearly 700 fellow crewmen and over 800 passengers, was indeed very high.

"'Go back to sleep,' I called to her. 'You worry too much.' Soon an elderly man, whom we had met on board and who took a fatherly interest in us, came to our cabin and said calmly: 'Come out of your cabin and go to the upper deck. Don't bother about taking your belongings for now. You'll get them later.'

My uncle was quiet for a while, remembering. He then continued: "An SOS had been sent out about midnight. It was received by the S.S. Carpathia of the Cunard White Star Line. It was about 58 miles (93 km) away and immediately turned around from its course, which was heading for Gibraltar, and proceeded full steam ahead to the rescue. It arrived at about 4:30 a.m. Interestingly, the S.S. Californian was only 20 miles (32 km) away from the spot where the Titanic sank, but the radio operator did not pick up the SOS signal because he was off duty. Later reports showed that the Californian did see flares in the night, but thought the passengers on the Titanic were shooting fireworks in celebration of the maiden

voyage.

"Later the captain of the Carpathia called all the survivors to come on deck and see the iceberg. My 12-year-old mind recorded it as being as high as a two-story house, much wider and with a huge chimney. The ship delivered us to New York before continuing its trip to Gibraltar, a very kind act on the part of the management of the Cunard White Star Line. We arrived in New York at 8:30 p.m., Thursday, April 18, and were taken to the Cunard White Star docks.

"I only know of one person in our lifeboat who died from the cold. The body was wrapped in a sheet and slipped overboard."

"On our arrival in New York, we expected to be taken to Ellis Island to clear immigration procedures. However, this was waived because of the pain and suffering already endured by the survivors. We were turned over to the Red Cross to be united with our families. My older brother, Isaac, was in New York and our meeting was mixed with joy and sadness. My father was still in France. However, we concluded that had he been on the Titanic with us, he would not have survived because of the women-and-children-only rule. Maybe even our being survivors would have been affected. We would have found it hard to leave Dad on board the Titanic and be seeking our own safety. Fortunately for him, he arrived safely three months later on another ship."

"The truth of God's Word," he declared, "has been a guiding force in my life. I thank Jehovah for sparing my life in the Titanic disaster and that I have had the opportunity to serve him now in these critical 'last days.'" He lived near his older brother and his wife and together with them served Jehovah to the best of his ability to the day of his death. Never did he cease praying for God's will to be done on earth as in heaven. (Matt. 6:9, 10) It was his strong hope that, should he die before Armageddon, God would rescue him from the power of the grave by a resurrection to life.

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