

For Such a Time as This

Esther 4:14b And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this? NIV

Captain Arthur H. Rostron was known as a spiritual man who turned to prayer in times of crisis. His kindness and decisiveness had won the allegiance of his crew. As he slept that night, he didn't realize that his "for such a time as this" experience was about to happen.

The crewman had just locked the radio room door for the night and as he walked away, heard the wireless clicking out a message. The Titanic radio distress call was almost missed.

Rostron turned the Carpathia around and plotted a course to the Titanic. The ship's theoretical top speed was only 14 knots but was soon slicing through the ice debris at 18 knots. The ship's boiler output that would normally have provided hot water for the passenger cabins was routed to the engines for maximum speed. Rostron advised his Second Officer, James Bisset "I count on you, with your good eyesight, and with God's help, to sight anything in time for us to clear it". Bisset later recalled seeing the Captain with his head bowed in prayer. Icebergs were sighted, avoided and quickly disappeared astern all while the ship remained at full speed. During the 3 ½ hour trip, Rostron gave detailed orders that prepared the ship to receive an unknown number of survivors. Hot drinks and soup, medical facilities and beds were made ready. At a distance of 10 miles out he ordered rockets fired to give hope to the survivors that help was only minutes away. By early the next morning the survivors had all been brought onboard and Rostron held a memorial service in the dining saloon for those over 1500 souls who had been lost and in thanksgiving for the 705 survivors now safe onboard. The loss of life could have been much greater if it was not for this quiet Godly man who was available "for such a time as this".

As Rostron recalled, "When day broke, I saw the ice I had steamed through during the night. I shuddered, and could only think that some other hand than mine was on that helm during the night."

Historical research for this meditation:

<http://www.webtitanic.net/framequotes.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Louvre/2209/rostron.html>

<http://www.execpc.com/~reva/html3c1.htm#Rostron>

<http://discoverweb.hypermart.net/titanic/7.htm>

<http://www.congressionalgoldmedal.com/ArthurHenryRostron.htm>

<http://www.titanic-titanic.com/captain%20arthur%20rostron.shtml>

For Such a Time as This: The untold story of the Titanic

Esther 4:14b NIV

And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?

Captain Arthur H. Rostron was known as a spiritual man who turned to prayer in times of crisis. His kindness and decisiveness had won the allegiance of his crew. As he slept that night, he didn't realize that his "for such a time as this" experience was about to happen.

The crewman had just locked the radio room door for the night and as he walked away, he heard the wireless clicking out a message. The Titanic radio distress call was almost missed.

In response to the emergency, Rostron turned the Carpathia around and plotted a course to the Titanic some 58 miles away. His ship's theoretical top speed was only 14 knots but was soon slicing through the ice debris at 18 knots. The ship's boiler output that would normally have provided hot water and cabin heat for the passenger rooms was instead routed to the engines for maximum speed. Rostron advised his Second Officer, James Bisset "I count on you, with your good eyesight, and with God's help, to sight anything in time for us to clear it". Bisset later recalled seeing the Captain with his head bowed in prayer. Seven men were stationed in the crow's nest and on the ship's bridge corners to spot the icebergs and large ice pieces that had to be avoided. Icebergs were sighted, avoided and quickly disappeared astern all while the ship remained at full speed. The Carpathia was but one third the size of the mighty Titanic which had apparently been seriously damaged by an iceberg similar to the ones they were now dodging at full speed. Rostron described it this way, "Icebergs loomed up and fell astern and we never slackened. It was an anxious time with the Titanic's fateful experience very close in our minds. There were 700 souls on Carpathia and those lives as well as the survivors of the Titanic herself depended on the sudden turn of the wheel."

During the 3 ½ hour trip, Rostron gave detailed orders that transformed the passenger ship into a hospital ship ready to receive an unknown number of survivors. Hot drinks and soup, medical staff with facilities and beds were made ready. At a distance of 10 miles out Rostron ordered rockets fired to give hope to the survivors that help was only minutes away. As they arrived on the scene at 4AM, the Carpathia lookouts could not understand why they could not see the Titanic and concluded that must be floating with its lights off after the ship's generators had failed. Instead they found only the ship's lifeboats and a few survivors clinging to debris. For the next four hours the scattered lifeboats were located and brought alongside Carpathia and the survivors were lifted to safety. Some of the lifeboats were beginning to swamp as the sea swell increased so Carpathia's arrival was very timely and came just before more survivors ended up in the freezing water. By 8:30 the next morning all the survivors had been brought onboard and before Carpathia departed, Rostron held a memorial service in the dining room for those over 1500 souls who had been lost and in thanksgiving for the 705 survivors now safely

onboard. The loss of life could have been much greater if it was not for this quiet Godly man who was available “for such a time as this”.

As Rostron recalled on the morning after the tragedy, "When day broke, I saw the ice I had steamed through during the night. I shuddered, and could only think that some other hand than mine was on that helm during the night."

In the aftermath of the sinking there was the question of how the Titanic passengers onboard the Carpathia would be returned to port. The shipping company wanted to send the White Star ship Olympic to pick up the passengers but the compassionate Rostron insisted he would bring the Titanic survivors the New York to spare her survivors the trauma of boarding the Olympic, which was a visually identical sister ship to the Titanic.

Rostron became a decorated hero in both the Great Britain and in the United States and received many honors including being knighted and receiving a Congressional Medal of Honor. He was given a very substantial \$15,000 thank you gift from the Titanic survivors committee but being a modest man, promptly distributed these funds to his Carpathia crew. A loving cup was presented to him on behalf of the grateful survivors by Margaret Brown (The unsinkable Molly Brown). Eventually he became the Commodore of the Cunard fleet and retired in 1931. In 1940, at age 71, he died and was buried in the West End Church cemetery near Southampton. Coincidentally, Southampton was the port where Titanic began its doomed voyage.

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