

The Costa Concordia Disaster, and Other News Joseph Herrin (1-17-2012)



Consta Concordia (lifeboats in foreground)

I have been following the story of the wreck of the cruise ship Costa Concordia for a few days. I am convinced that there is a parable contained in this catastrophe. The details surrounding this ship and its sinking are pregnant with significance.

The Costa Concordia is one of the largest passenger ships to ever sink, being 21 meters (68 feet, 11 inches) longer than the Titanic. The boat is relatively new, having been christened and taken its inaugural voyage in July of 2006. An ill omen was observed by maritime professionals as the champagne bottle used to christen the ship did not break when it was struck against the ship. Sailors have long considered this to be a harbinger of an ill-fated vessel.

The Costa Concordia's parent company is Carnival Cruise Lines, which is a British and American corporation. The word "carnival" means "flesh raising." Carnival's ships are renowned for their appeal to the fleshly passions of man. Free twenty-four hour a day buffets, fine dining restaurants, on ship stores selling luxury goods, Las Vegas style entertainment, casinos, discotheques, movie theaters, spas, and many more pleasures and entertainments are offered to appeal to the sensual nature of man. Carnival truly offers a "flesh raising" experience.

The ship was named "Concordia" to express the wish for "*continuing harmony, unity, and peace between European nations.*"

[Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costa_Concordia]

The sinking of the ship coincides with the most serious crisis the European Union has faced. A number of countries in the union are laboring under crushing debt loads. Nations with a stronger financial position are expected to bail out their troubled partners. Germany is by far the strongest nation economically in the European Union, but her citizens resent having the wealth of their nation used to shore up a profligate lifestyle among nations that did not execute a sound fiscal policy.

The stronger financial nations are seeking to enforce austerity measures upon those nations that need bailouts, but these austerity measures are odious to the citizens of the troubled countries. Greece, in particular, is in perilous financial shape, and could default on its debt in a few months if a *concord* is not reached with the other member states of the European Union. Greece, however, is just the tip of the iceberg, for Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Italy, Hungary, and other member states of the European Union are not far behind Greece, and may soon require saving as well.

The image of an iceberg seems appropriate. The moments after the Concordia struck the reef have been described by passengers as reminiscent of the sinking of the HMS Titanic which had a very similar gouge rent into her hull by an iceberg. The Titanic sank 100 years ago, in 1912, a fact which has been mentioned often in the media. To be more precise, the Titanic sank 99 years and 9 months prior to the Concordia. In the UK, the number 999 is the emergency telephone number, equivalent to the number 911 in America. The number 9 in Scripture is related to finality and judgment. E.W. Bullinger, in his book *Number in Scripture*, states the following:

It is the last of the digits, and thus marks the end; and is significant of the conclusion of a matter.

It is akin to the number six, six being the sum of its factors ($3 \times 3 = 9$, and $3 + 3 = 6$), and is thus significant of the end of man, and the summation of all man's works. Nine is, therefore, THE NUMBER OF FINALITY OR JUDGMENT...

[Source: http://philologos.org/___eb-nis/nine.htm]

While I am on the subject of numbers, the Concordia ran aground on January 13th. The number 13 also is of great significance in Scripture. Following is an excerpt from Bullinger's work.

As to the significance of thirteen, all are aware that it has come down to us as a number of ill-omen. Many superstitions cluster around it, and various explanations are current concerning them.

Unfortunately, those who go backwards to find a reason seldom go back far enough. The popular explanations do not, so far as we are aware, go further back than the Apostles. But we must go back to the first occurrence of the number thirteen in order to discover the key to its significance. It occurs first in Gen 14:4, where we read "Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and the thirteenth year they REBELLED."

Hence every occurrence of the number thirteen, and likewise of every multiple of it, stamps that with which it stands in connection with rebellion, apostasy, defection, corruption, disintegration, revolution, or some kindred idea.

[Source: http://philologos.org/___eb-nis/eight.htm#205]

When one views the testimony of these numbers, relating them back to the intended meaning of the ship's name, the message that comes forth is that "the harmony, unity, and peace" between European nations is about to come to a sudden and ignominious end. The

festive party atmosphere will suddenly give way to panic. Some unseen hazard will doom the concord that exists among nations, leading to a time of “rebellion, apostasy, defection, corruption, disintegration, and revolution.”

In Roman mythology, Concordia is “*the goddess of agreement, understanding, and marital harmony.*”

[Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concordia_%28mythology%29]



Image of Goddess Concordia on Roman Coin

“In art, Concordia was depicted sitting, wearing a long cloak and holding onto a patera (sacrificial bowl), a cornucopia (symbol of prosperity), or a caduceus (symbol of peace). She was often shown in between two other figures, such as standing between two members of the Royal House shaking hands.”

[Wikipedia]

Artists depicted Concordia between two members of the Royal House as a testimony of her role in producing harmony among political and national rulers. What then is signified when a ship bearing her name, filled with passengers from many nations, strikes a rock and quickly sinks? One need not be a prophet to understand the message.

I believe it is significant that Concordia’s image was put on coinage of the Roman Empire. The European Union has been described by some as a re-birth of the Roman Empire. Achieving financial unity was one of the chief aims of the European Union. Yet it is issues of money that have plagued the union. England has refused to adopt the Euro for its currency, as have nine other nations that are EU members. Financial issues are a leading source of contention among member nations.

The message is that Concordia has failed. The nations she sought to join in peaceful union as they all pursued common goals of *prosperity* and *security*, will fracture as none are willing to make the *sacrifices* needed to maintain the union. Many have been prophesying that 2012 will be a year of great shaking among the nations. This sign upon the earth would seem to give credence to the thought that tremendous disruptions are near at hand.

More could be written about the role of the captain of the ship in this catastrophe, and how his failings relate to the missteps of government leaders among the nations. It is reported that he departed from the specified cruise course and steered too close to Giglio Island. He was further reported to have immediately been in denial of the seriousness of the damage to the ship, and he waited too long to get all of the lifeboats launched and the passengers

and crew disembarked.

Perhaps, more damning, is the fact that the captain left the ship before everyone had been evacuated, and when asked by an Italian Coast Guard official to return to the ship to oversee the evacuation, he refused to do so. We will surely see parallels to this behavior in days ahead as government leaders seek to save their own necks while abandoning those they were elected to serve and protect.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding in these days.

Affirmations to Costa Concordia Parable
Joseph Herrin (01-18-2012)



Europe and America Sinking Together

The image above was taken from an article posted on Financial Times on July 4th of 2011. The article was titled *America and Europe Sinking Together*. Following is an excerpt:

In Washington they are arguing about a debt ceiling; in Brussels they are staring into a debt abyss. But the basic problem is the same. Both the US and the European Union have public finances that are out of control and political systems that are too dysfunctional to fix the problem. America and Europe are in the same sinking boat...

[Source: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/8e68bc52-a671-11e0-ae9c-00144feabdc0.html>]

This rather prescient article used the metaphor of a sinking ship to describe the impending economic ruin of the United States and Europe. Little did the author suspect that this parable would be duplicated before the world in stunning fashion seven months later when the cruise ship Costa Concordia ran aground and capsized. There are many, even among the worldly and non-Christian members of society who have discerned a parable in this catastrophe. This morning a brother forwarded me a link to an article posted yesterday on the Wall Street Journal's website.

JANUARY 17, 2012

What Is Europe Sinking About?

The shipwreck of a cruise liner is a metaphor for a continent.

By BRET STEPHENS

The Lord works in mysterious ways, or so it is often said. But in an era when few can read His signs, those signs have a way of becoming a bit more obvious. Like 45-10. Or how about another Titanic-type event, right on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the first one, as a way of prefiguring some great European disaster?

OK, probably better to leave Him out of it. But as metaphors go, Friday night's tragic-ridiculous shipwreck of a cruise liner off the Italian coast is an apt one for a continent in which nine countries had their credit ratings downgraded earlier that same day. Even the biggest ship can founder in calm waters if the captain is negligent. Even a rescue operation 50 feet from shore can turn into a fiasco if nobody has conducted a drill and the crew have no idea how to steer a lifeboat.

When the hors d'oeuvres are listing hard to starboard and the waiters tell you nothing's wrong, something's terribly wrong.

That last detail—from passenger accounts of the accident—reminded me of listening to European Council President Herman Van Rompuy in New York last fall, explaining that Greece would never default, that the euro zone's financial position was not a serious cause for alarm, and that the main thing was to prevent further outbursts of market irrationalism. In other words, it wasn't the ship that was sinking, in Mr. Van Rompuy's view, it was just that the passengers had an odd way of occasionally going berserk.

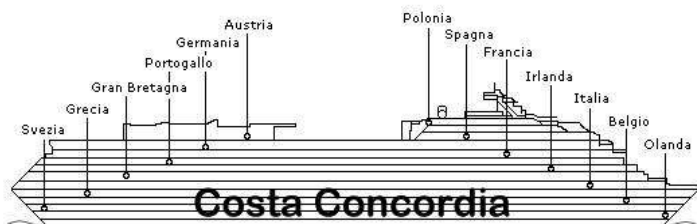
[S o u r c e :
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204468004577164593941995760.html>]

It is truly amazing to me to find this article on the Wall Street Journal website. Christ's saying is true:

Luke 16:8

For the sons of this world are wiser in their generation than the sons of light.

The church continues apace proclaiming a prosperity gospel while many in the world are recognizing that the party is about to come to a sudden end. The Concordia Wreck is quite obviously a sign of great financial and political trouble coming to the world. It would be hard to construct a more fitting metaphor of the foundering of nations. Following is an diagram of the Costa Concordia showing the names assigned to the various deck levels.



Translating these nation names to English, they are: Sweden, Greece, Great Britain, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Poland, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Belgium, and The Netherlands. This ship was clearly designed to convey a message of unity (corcord) among nations. The United States enters the picture by virtue of the parent company, Carnival Cruise Lines, being a British and American corporation. What happens in Europe clearly has an impact upon America.

Art, a brother in Christ who has the New Wineskin blog, posted the following comment to yesterday's post:

It is no coincidence that the ship went down just as several major bond rating agencies (such as Standard and Poor's) were downgrading the sovereign (i.e., national) debt of several European countries (but not all), raising their borrowing costs and driving yet another wedge between them.

The first press release regarding those downgrades was issued by S&P at 4:36 PM Eastern Standard Time, which was 10:36PM Central European Time (i.e., in Italy).

The Concordia had hit a granite outcrop off Giglio Island slightly less than an hour prior to that, at 9:42 PM European Central Time.

[End Quote]

God is certainly giving a sign of impending disaster. The nations will be shaken. Even secular sources of news and commentary have made the connection to this event and the conditions in Europe and the United States. This is attested to by the following political cartoons.



The Concordia is renamed Euro in this cartoon, indicating that the Euro is soon to fail as a monetary system. This will set the stage for a new, global monetary system to be put in place, plans for which have already been put in place.

September 9, 2009

United Nations Proposes New "Global Currency"

By Declan McCullagh

(AP)

The United Nations would like the dollar, euro, yen, and other national currencies to be succeeded by a new "global currency."

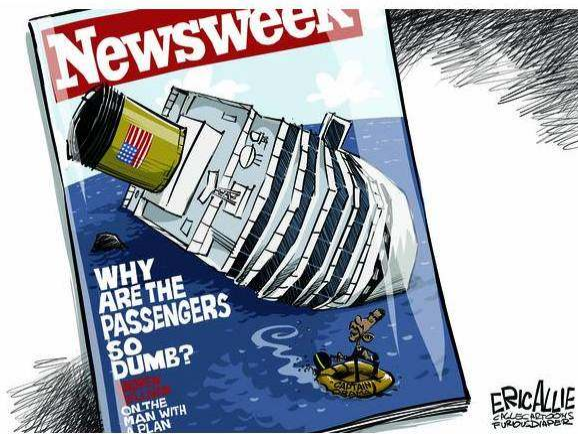
That recommendation appears in a U.N. report released this week, which suggests the dollar's outside role in international finance has ended -- and says that it's time to invent a successor currency that would be managed by a "Global Reserve Bank."

[Source: http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-504383_162-5298305-504383.html]

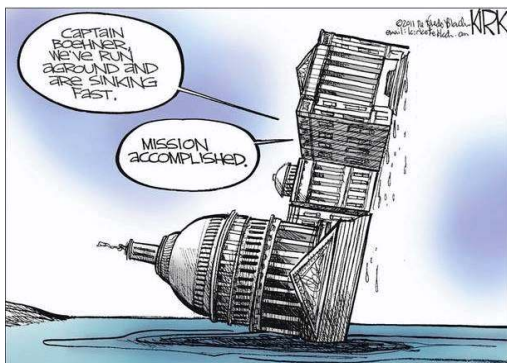
It is interesting to note that the date of the report above is 9/9/9, a number mentioned yesterday in the post on the Concordia disaster. The Concordia wreck occurred 99 years and 9 months after the wreck of the Titanic. In the same post it was mentioned that the number 9 in Scripture is "THE NUMBER OF FINALITY OR JUDGMENT."



This is another political cartoon. Angela Merkel of Germany and Nicolas Sarkozy of France are shown atop the sinking Eurozone ship while Monti, the leader of Italy is desperately clinging to the side of the ship.



This political cartoon makes a correlation to Obama saving himself from the sinking ship of America even as the captain of the Concordia abandoned ship while passengers were still aboard.



Here is a further twist on this idea that emphasizes Congress's role in causing America to founder. People of God, we would do well to pay heed to the signs that are being given. Even the world is taking note, though I doubt too many are actually taking any steps that will prove beneficial in surviving the coming economic collapse and resulting political turmoil.

Are you truly prepared to weather what is to come? What will you do when the dollar is devalued, and your wealth ends up at the bottom of the ocean? Have you already divested yourself from an attachment to the world's goods and possessions? Are you walking as a true disciple of Christ? You do not want to have attachments to that which God is testifying will soon sink beneath the waves. It is those who are free from entanglements that will find it easiest to extricate themselves from the wreckage.

II Timothy 2:3-7

Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Yahshua. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier... Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

Have you learned to walk by faith, being directed by the Spirit, and confident of God's provision and care for your life? Do you have the assurance that there will be corn supplied to you in a time of famine? Those who do not have faith in God will be swept up in the panic that follows the sinking of the world economic system.

Do not say to yourself that it will not happen. Very few would give any credence at all to the thought that financial systems would be rocked in 2008. Nevertheless, the world faced a tremendous calamity with one crisis following hard on another. Major financial companies like Bear Stearns, Merrill Lynch, and Lehman Brothers became insolvent. AIG, the world's largest insurance company faced imminent collapse. Home values that had been rising at double digit rates year over year suddenly tanked. In the ensuing years millions lost their homes to foreclosure. Millions more lost their jobs as the economy contracted and businesses failed.

Now, four years later, nothing has improved. State after state has faced a severe budgetary crisis. The Federal government has continued only by increasing debt load to "titanic" levels. The weight of all of this debt must soon pull the ship of state under water.

What should you do seeing that Yahweh is giving testimony to the catastrophic things soon to occur? First, do not place your confidence in leaders who do not walk in the ways of God, nor do they have compassion for the people they are elected to serve. They are mere hirelings. When they see danger come, they will flee. Place your trust and confidence in God. What He tells you to do, you must do, and that without delay. Get your house in order. Free yourself from worldly entanglements lest you be unable to escape the coming ruin.

If you have yet to accept the cost of being Christ's disciple, there is no time to lose. To be Christ's disciple you must yield yourself to His leadership. What He says do, you must do. Where He says go, you must go. You must lay aside self-governance and surrender to be governed by Christ. He must be the One who determines what you do with your time, money, and possessions.

Luke 14:33

"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."

I Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that... you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price...

In the aftermath of the Concordia disaster it became known that the people had not been prepared for an emergency. The ship's captain had not carried out rescue drills. Overconfidence gave rise to complacency. The ship had sailed (nearly) the same route many times. There had never been need to abandon ship or use lifeboats before. The ship seemed exceptionally solid. She appeared to be able to remain floating for the imaginable future. No one, from captain to passengers, anticipated that this magnificent vessel would soon have a huge breach in her hull and quickly fill up with water and capsize.

Even after the damage was done, the captain refused to acknowledge what had occurred. It was passengers on board who reportedly contacted land based authorities with their cell phones to be the first to report a crisis.

Do not wait for the leaders of your nation to tell you a crisis is at hand. Do not look to them to tell you how to safely respond to what is to come. You will suffer loss if you do. Press into God. Seek His mind. Ask Him what He would have you do, and you must do this in all things. Do not just ask God how to survive economic and political turmoil. You must ask Him what He would have you to do in all things.

Psalms 146:3-10

Don't put your trust in princes, each a son of man in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, and he returns to the earth. In that very day, his thoughts perish. Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in Yahweh, his God: Who made heaven and earth, *the sea, and all that is in them*; Who keeps truth forever; Who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. Yahweh frees the prisoners. Yahweh opens the eyes of the blind. Yahweh raises up those who are bowed down. Yahweh loves the righteous. Yahweh preserves the foreigners. He upholds the fatherless and widow, but *the way of the wicked he turns upside down*. Yahweh will reign forever; Your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise Yah!

