

THE DISCOVERY



By Tim Czaplewski

Many generations passed since the sailors turned their course and entered the harbor of Laodicea. The sense of mission that once empowered the Sea-men had long vanished from the hearts of their posterity. Their offspring continued to

meet together, but no one understood exactly why. Yet all of this was eventually going to change.

One day, a mother was frantically running up and down the shore searching for her lost son. It was not unusual for a mother to lose track of her child, it had happened before, but this incident was unusual. After many hours of searching, the entire town engaged themselves in the search for the missing lad. "We've found him!" someone cried, and the eager crowd ran towards the triumphant voice. The townspeople stood in shock as they gathered at the place where the ancient ships were moored.

Their eyes were fastened upon a little child traversing an old broken dock. His bright eyes were full of wonder as he gazed upon the imposing vessels. All were hushed so not to startle him. The mother held out her open arms and called for her son to return. When the young boy heard the mother's cry, his eyes again grew bright as he leapt across the rotten boards that composed the dock, throwing himself into his mother's arms.

After a loud sigh of relief from the townspeople who witnessed the event, the town's mayor approached the mother and said, "We have not seen such excitement in Laodicea for years!" He then smiled, lifted up the child, and looked into his eyes and said, "You are certainly a fearless young man!" and placed the child back into his mother's caring arms. From that day forward the child became known to the townspeople as "Fearless".

"Where did these ships come from mother?" asked the inquisitive child. "I don't really know," she replied. "Who do they belong to?" He asked. "I have heard some people say that they are part of the heritage of the Sea-men who came to our village long ago." "Mother?, what's a heritage?" After an endless series of questions asked by the inquisitive child, she said, "Maybe one day I will take you to the place the Sea-men meet and perhaps they can tell you of their stories. As for now, promise me that you will never return here without my permission.

Fearless grew and gained a reputation for his name. He was daring and adventurous, often finding himself at the center of attention because of his impetuous nature. As he became more independent, he ventured again to the place where the old ships were moored. He stood in admiration as he approached the mighty vessels. But as he looked, he observed something written on the bow of one of the ships that made him curious. "Many fishermen in Laodicea inscribed symbolic names upon their little boats." He thought, "I wonder what an imposing ship like this would be called."

Slowly and carefully Fearless stepped onto the dock. As he approached the bow of the ship, he began to rub off the dirt and debris that had accumulated over the past four generations. His could feel his heart begin to race as he began to unfold the mysterious wording. When all letters were finally legible, Fearless stood back to read! An uneasy feeling came over him as he read the letters inscribed upon the mighty ship who was named; "JUDGEMENT HAS COME!"

For the first time in the life of Fearless, he himself became afraid! The startled young man panicked and he fell between the missing boards of the old dock. He swam back to the shore as though he were swimming for his life! His wet form struggled up the hill. Exhausted from all his running, he fell to the ground to catch his breath. And looking up, he found himself at a mysterious grave stone which read;

"When the great storm comes, they will leap like rats!"

Terrified, the young man ran away, purposing in his heart that he would never venture to that awful place again! But as the evenings passed, he laid awake upon his bed as a great struggle raged inside of him. His imagination repeatedly brought his mind back to the three ships. In vain he tried to make sense of the mysterious objects that he had seen. Then he exclaimed, "The Sea-men! They must have the answers I need. Tomorrow, I will go and visit the place where the Sailors meet". "Since I was a child, I have always wanted to hear the legends of these great people".

Fearless slipped into the building and took his seat in the back. His heart thrilled as he heard everyone in attendance singing their courageous sailing songs! He listened to the speaker as he presented his 3-fold theme. "*Be happy, be active, and work together as one.*" The message was uplifting and though he was not of their heritage, the people eagerly accepted the young man. Fearless made his way to the front of the meeting house and approached the speaker and asked him to explain the mysteries of the three ships. He was taken back at the speaker's words as he said, "Those old ships ought to be torn apart and turned into fishing boats. Their usefulness came to an end when we arrived here many years ago." Then the speaker encouraged Fearless to find peace by abiding in his three fold theme.

The longer Fearless associated with the sea men, the more he realized that they were uninterested in solving the mysteries of the three ships. He read all the books that the shipmen had written. Many of these books were useful towards the goal of *happiness, activity, and togetherness*, but none could satisfy the young mans deep questions.

One night, Fearless laid dreaming upon his bed. He dreamed that he felt something moving in his clothes and this troubled him. He reached into his shirt to rid himself of the irritation, yet the object eluded him. With both hands he began brushing upward, and to his shock, what appeared before eyes was a very large rat which leapt off from him. And as soon as the rat jumped, he felt two more. Soon, he was overwhelmed by an army of vermin! The Breathless young lad arose from his dream in terror! It was at that moment that Fearless realized that he was never going to solve the mystery of the ships through the guidance of the seamen. He knew that he must go out and discover these truths for himself. But to do this, he would have to return to ships and solve the mysteries that had long troubled him.

That morning, Fearless arose, grabbed a bucket and a pile of rags, and off to the old docks he bravely went. With a dirt brush in hand, he approached the second of the three ships and began to wash off the dust and learned the name of the second ship called; "BABYLON IS FALLEN!" And then the third which was named; "WRATH OF GOD!"

He faced this new revelation unafraid. It was his love for the truth and his hatred of willful ignorance which seemed to dispelled all of his fears. Although he had no idea what the names of the three ships signified, he felt confident that the answers to the elusive mysteries would be found within the ships themselves. After days of relentless searching he ventured into the captain's quarters and located the ship's logbook. For weeks he poured through the many pages, indoctrinating himself with every detail of the mission. He learned of the sad events that led to the disappointment. He was shocked to learn of the cowardice of the Sea-men.

It became clear to Fearless that after years of living in Laodicea, the sea-men had become ignorant of their true purpose. They only needed to have someone explain the glorious mission contained in the captain's little book. He imagined how elated the Sea-men would be as they heard the wonderful news! "Perhaps," he thought to himself, "They might take me along to the battle!" And with overwhelming joy, fearless picked up the little book and made his way back to town to enlighten the Sea-men.

**More information can be found at
ShipOfTheWest.com**