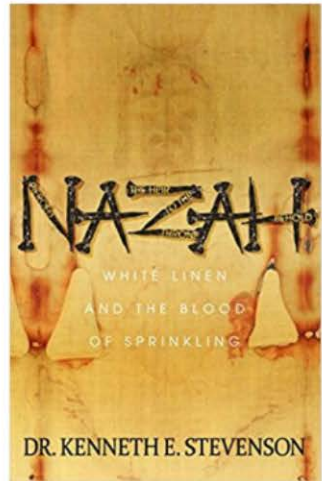


‘Nazah: White Linen and the Blood of Sprinkling’ by Kenneth Stephenson
A review by Hugh Farey

Dr Kenneth Stephenson was a member of the 1978 Shroud of Turin Research Project, and the author, with Gary Habermas, of *Verdict on the Shroud*, an early general work, committed to the conviction that the Shroud is the authentic burial cloth of Christ. He has not changed his opinion, so it may seem bold for the editor of this Newsletter to ask a leading proponent of the Shroud’s medieval origin to review it. Paradoxically, however, I found this book interesting, not for its science, with which I almost entirely disagree, but for its insight into the author’s personal exploration of Jewish atonement theology.



The author’s interpretation of early Christianity is closely associated with Messianic Judaism, in which the concept of the Christian Messiah is embedded in its ancient Jewish context. Although this sits uneasily with mainstream Christianity of today, it is relevant and meaningful to an investigation of the Shroud. To support his ideas, Dr Stephenson often uses the Tree of Life version of the bible, albeit with idiosyncrasies of his own. Jesus here is Yeshua and Moses is Moishe, but God is usually referred to as Hashem (the Name), or the slightly (to me) unnecessary G-D, which is from a different tradition. Christ, Messiah and Mashiach are rather arbitrarily interchanged.

The essence of the book is how the Shroud embodies Old Testament references, in particular those relating to sacrifice, such as the ‘white linen’ and the ‘blood of sprinkling’ of the subtitle. ‘White linen’ has been explored before, but Stephenson is particularly taken by the word ‘Nazah’ whose meaning extends from the eponymous ‘sprinkling’ (blood around the altar) to ‘scattering’ (of nations in terror). In two detailed Chapters, Stephenson examines these in their original context, and explains how he

sees them as prophetic at the time they were written and fulfilled in the Shroud. The explanation is densely worked and supported by biblical extracts and dictionary definitions taken in quite dense extracts from various sources, themselves containing conventions, abbreviations, and changes in typeface, orthography and emphasis, few of which are further explained, making it tough going, but he certainly makes his point.

A further chapter is a more ambitious attempt to derive prophesy from a pictographic interpretation of individual Hebrew letters. Thus we learn that Y-H-W-H, the standard abbreviation for Yahweh, is composed of the letters Yud - Hey - Vav - Hey, which have the pictographic meaning of Hand - Behold - Nail - Behold, and that Nazah, which is the word used in Isaiah for 'sprinkle', converts to "Behold the heir to the throne, pierced." There is quite a lot more of this, but for me, it requires a good deal more careful philological elucidation to be convincing.

The book ends with a review of some of the evidence adduced to support the authenticity of the Shroud, which I will pass over, and a long, slightly apocalyptic sermon and prayer, which I assume is preached from the point of view of Stevenson's own Everlasting Covenant church.

Few of the original STuRP team are still with us, but even when they were alive, most of them kept their own views about the Shroud to themselves, so it is interesting to read the journey one of them has made in the last forty years, both academically and personally.

Nazah is available from Amazon by search or via this [link](#).

Editor's Notes

Until recently BSTS membership has been in decline. However, I am pleased to say that there are signs of a reversal of fortunes. The digital option has made joining much easier and since its inception our base has almost doubled. Of course, there are many who still prefer to have the printed version as well, as do I, and, thanks to Brenda and Stuart Benton, the distribution is running better than ever. Our overseas membership is