

# ***The Incredible Typology Regarding the Shroud***

## ***In the Letter to the Hebrews***

**(Hebrews 9:11-12)**

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An exegetical paper by Larry Stalley<sup>1</sup> written for the  
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### **Abstract**

In his literary masterpiece to Jewish believers, the biblical writer who penned *The Letter to the Hebrews* exhorted his readers to be steadfast in their faith commitment to Christ. They had suffered opposition and various hardships due to their enlightenment. The writer encourages faithfulness by detailing their ability to now have a clean conscience before God Almighty and, thereby, enter His presence. This has become possible due to the superior status of Jesus as a high priest and His superior sacrifice offered for their redemption. In expounding upon this teaching, the writer makes mention of "*the greater and more perfect tabernacle*" (9:11). What exactly was that superior "tabernacle"? This exegetical paper surfaces plausible reasons for concluding the solution to that question rests with the linen burial Shroud of Christ, residing today in Turin, Italy. The exegesis surfaces strong evidence demonstrating that the Apostolic Church was aware of the miraculous image on Christ's burial Shroud! Furthermore, this paper reveals how the early Church perceived the Shroud theologically—associating it with tabernacle theology—and reveals the typological teaching that developed around the Shroud. The implication of this exegesis is monumental, as the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin is no longer dependent on forensic science and historical evidence. Now this text, along with other puzzlingly passages analyzed by the author elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> provide "proof beyond reasonable doubt" that the biblical canon itself demonstrates that the apostolic Church was quite aware of the Shroud's existence.

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<sup>2</sup> Posted on *Academia.edu* July 2, 2024. Revised September 26, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> An extensive exegesis of this passage and other puzzling texts in the biblical canon—mystifying statements that, plausibly, should be associated with the Holy Shroud—can be found in the author's book, Stalley, L., *Divine Testimony for the Resurrection: Hidden References to the Holy Shroud in the Bible* (Jenny Stanford: Singapore, 2025).

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<sup>9</sup> Now even the first *covenant* had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. <sup>2</sup> For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which *were* the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the Holy Place. <sup>3</sup> Behind the second curtain there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, <sup>4</sup> having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant; <sup>5</sup> and above it *were* the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

<sup>6</sup> Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship, <sup>7</sup> but into the second, only the high priest *enters* once a year, not without *taking* blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. <sup>8</sup> The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the Holy of Holies has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing, <sup>9</sup> which *is* a symbol for the present time. Accordingly, both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshipper perfect in conscience, <sup>10</sup> since they *relate* only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.

<sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have now come, *passing* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; <sup>12</sup> and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered into the Holy of Holies once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. <sup>14</sup> How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

— Hebrews 9:1-14

## I. The *Sitz im Leben* Behind the *Letter to the Hebrews*

*Hebrews* is a literary exhortation intended to encourage Jewish Christians (likely residing in the capital city of Rome prior to 64 A.D.)<sup>4</sup> to persevere in their faith journey and commitment to Christ Jesus despite their current ostracism and suffering for their faith. Stay the course! Jesus, the Son of God, and His covenant of redemption, promises, and hope are superior to Moses, a servant in God's house, and the covenant God made with him and their ancestors who came out of Egyptian bondage.

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<sup>4</sup> See Heb 13:24. "*Those from Italy greet you!*" There is ambiguity in "*from Italy*" (ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας) (*apo tēs Italías*). The Italian Christians could currently be either within or outside Italy. Either way, the homily has an association either with or to Christians from Rome. If the writer is outside of Italy (cf. Acts 18:2), he is conveying to members of the house churches in or near Rome the greetings of Italian Christians who are currently away from their homeland. In that case, the writer has prepared his homily for readers living in or near Rome.

Who wrote *Hebrews*? In the third century Origen answered, “*God only knows!*”<sup>5</sup> Whoever the author was, he was brilliant! He displays a broad grasp of the Jewish Scriptures and was likely also a dynamic preacher, showing advanced training in rhetoric. The opening sentence of the letter is the best rhetorical Greek in the entire New Testament. He incorporates alliteration by beginning five words in verse one with the Greek letter for *p* ( $\pi$ ). He also claims to have received his knowledge of Christ from those who had known the Lord personally.<sup>6</sup>

If we had to give our “best guess” regarding authorship, we probably could do no better than to identify him with Apollos whom Luke described as being “*a Jew from Alexandria,*” “*a learned (or eloquent) man*” who was “*mighty in the Scriptures*” and who was speaking “*boldly in the synagogue*” about Jesus.<sup>7</sup> Apollos had a following at Corinth,<sup>8</sup> and there is evidence suggesting the recipients of Paul’s Letters to that city were familiar with the image on the Shroud (Picture 1).<sup>9</sup>



**Picture 1.** This is how the facial image on the Shroud appears to the natural eye, the characteristics of which resemble a photographic negative. © Vernon Miller, 1978<sup>10</sup>

*“Now we see (the face of Christ) in a mirror dimly,  
but then (i.e., when He returns), we shall see Him face to face.”*

— 1 Corinthians 13:12<sup>11, 12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* (Baker: Grand Rapids, MI, 1955) VI.XXV: 247.

<sup>6</sup> Heb 2:3

<sup>7</sup> Acts 18:24-26

<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor 1:12

<sup>9</sup> 1 Cor 13:12

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<sup>11</sup> This rendering of 1 Cor 13:12 is an expanded translation suggested by the current author as being the likely intent behind Paul’s incomplete statement whereby the verb “we see” lacks a direct object but can be logically discerned from the object provided in the final clause. Does Paul’s statement have any bearing on the facial image of “the man of the cloth” who is so mysteriously depicted by the image on the Holy Shroud?

<sup>12</sup> An exegesis for this verse can be found in the author’s book, Stalley, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit., chapter 10. This picture and text reveal how certain statements found in the New Testament might be associated with the

The thesis of this paper does not require the recipients of the *Letter* to have seen the **Shroud**. They may have. But maybe only the author and certain other informed believers had either seen or were aware of the Shroud's existence at the time. Likely they were among "*the mature*" who had advanced beyond "*the elementary teaching about the Christ.*"<sup>13</sup> In his *Letter to the Hebrews*, the author cryptically expounds upon a tabernacle theology that had developed in the early Church around the burial Shroud and its image of the crucified Christ.

## II. Typology in the Form of a Chiasmus

A typological motif<sup>14</sup> in the form of a **chiasmus**<sup>15</sup> extends through the central portion of this literary sermon (spanning five chapters, i.e., six through ten) focused on the Tabernacle, the priesthood, and the sacrificial offering Jesus made for the sins of humanity. The chiasmus takes the inverted form of AB/B'A':

**A** – "... a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within  
**the curtain**, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us..."<sup>16</sup>

**B** – "... **the true tabernacle** (sacred tent) (σκηνή) (skēnēs) which  
the Lord pitched, not man." <sup>17</sup>

**B'** – "... through (or, with) (διὰ) (dia) **the greater and more perfect tabernacle**  
(sacred tent) (σκηνή) (skēnēs), not made with hands, that is to say,  
not of ordinary building, and ... through (or, with) (διὰ) (dia) His own blood,  
He entered the Holy of Holies." <sup>18</sup>

**A'** – "... brethren, we have confidence to enter the Sanctuary by the  
blood of Jesus—by the new and living way, which was opened  
for us through (διὰ) (dia) **the curtain**, that is, by means of His flesh." <sup>19, 20</sup>

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image on the Holy Shroud. In the author's book, strong textual evidence is presented from no less than four canonical writers for each having one or more plausible, veiled references to the image on the Shroud. Further details about the book can be found on the author's website at [www.theincredibleshroud.com](http://www.theincredibleshroud.com).

<sup>13</sup> Heb 5:14; 6:1

<sup>14</sup> Note the writer's explicit mentioning in the larger context of "*a type (or copy) and shadow of the heavenly things*" (8:5). Furthermore, he contrasts the "earthly Sanctuary" (9:1) and its "priests" (8:4) with the high-priesthood of Christ Jesus (8:1-2; 9:11) and the heavenly "Sanctuary" (8:2a; 9:12, 24). Typology is certainly being discussed but not fully explained. In verse five, he essentially states: "*All this is full of meaning but we cannot enter now into a detailed explanation*" (J.B. Phillips New Testament).

<sup>15</sup> A chiasmus is an inverted literary pattern (e.g., ABCD/D'C'B'A') common in Hebrew. Two paths share parallel features corresponding to each other. The pattern can be helpful in clarifying the author's intent, meaning, or emphasis. The apex at the center of the pattern is often the focal point.

<sup>16</sup> Heb 6:19b-20a

<sup>17</sup> Heb 8.2

<sup>18</sup> Heb 9.11-12; cf. v. 24

<sup>19</sup> Heb 10.19-20

Two objects were of primary concern for the canonical author regarding his tabernacle theology and Messianic typology: (A) the inner **curtain** and (B) the superior, sacred **tent** (tabernacle). How were these two holy objects perceived typologically? How had the tent and the curtain—associated with the earthly sanctuary (9:1) and formerly erected by Moses (Picture 2)—served as “types” (cf. 8:5) of the Messianic Tabernacle that Christ ministered in?

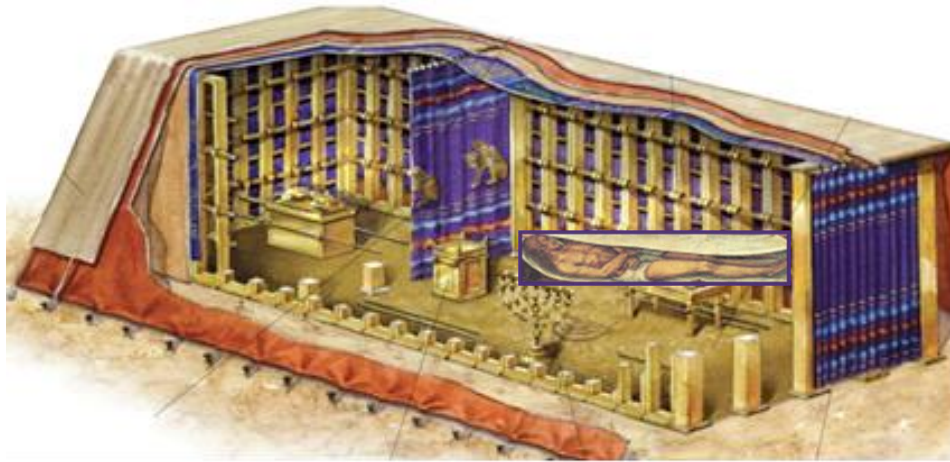


**Picture 2.** A model of the Tabernacle erected by the Israelites in the wilderness. The Stiftshuette Model of the Tabernacle Camp, as seen in Israel, Timna Park. Public Domain: *Wikipedia*

The current author’s **thesis** is that these two typological understandings were associated with the burial Shroud itself! That linen sheet of Cloth served as a “sacred tent” and was, thereby, equated with the first compartment or “the Holy Place” (cf. v. 2) of the greater Messianic Tabernacle. Furthermore, the “curtain” was the barrier wall that separated the first compartment of the grand Tabernacle from the second compartment, the Holy of Holies (Picture 3).

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<sup>20</sup> Compare the assertion made by the apostle John: “*This is the one who passed through (διὰ) (dia) water and blood, Jesus Christ...*” (1 Jn 5.6a; cf. Jn 19:34-35). See Stalley, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit., chapter 17.



**Picture 3.** The picture above depicts the interior of the portable Tabernacle, the desert shrine the Lord instructed Moses to erect for worship rituals and communion with their God, Yahweh. This “tent” traveled with the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness for forty years following their deliverance from Egyptian slavery by the mighty hand of Yahweh. This “earthly sanctuary” is spoken of in Hebrews 9:1ff. The current author has implanted the enshrouded corpse of Christ into the “first room” (9:2) to help conceptualize the typology the canonical writer was expounding upon cryptically. The Holy Shroud served as the Holy Place and the curtain of the greater Messianic Tabernacle.

Both the Holy Place and the curtain within the earthly Mosaic tabernacle (sacred tent) foreshadowed, typologically, the Holy Shroud of the Messiah. To comprehend this truth, five concepts must be understood:

1. The Tabernacle in the wilderness was a tent (σκηνή) (*skēnē*).<sup>21</sup> The Greek word utilized for “tabernacle” in *Hebrews* is the common word for “tent.” The significance of this particular tent was due to the presence of God residing within it. Therefore, it was understood to be a “holy tent” or “sacred tent.”<sup>22</sup>
2. Two basic aspects of a tent are that it serves both as a “covering”<sup>23</sup> and as a “place of abode” or “dwelling” (cf. Heb 11:9; Jn 1:14).
3. The “earthly sanctuary” (τό τε ἅγιον κοσμικόν) (*to te agion kosmikon*) (9:1) erected by Moses had two interior compartments or rooms. They were respectively named Ἅγια (*Agia*), “the Holy Place” (v. 2), and Ἅγια Ἁγίων (*Agia Agion*), “the Holies of Holies” (or “the Most Holy

<sup>21</sup> The Greek noun σκηνή (*skēnē*) is used in Genesis for nomads who *dwelt in tents* (Gen 4:20; 12:8), and the writer of *Hebrews* uses the word that way for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (11.9). It is used of a soldier’s *tent* in the N.T. apocryphal, *Gospel of Peter* (8:33). Σκηνή is used for the sacred *Tabernacle* or *Tent of Testimony* in the Pentateuch (Exodus 27:21; 29.4; Lev 1:1; Num 1:1. **The word can be used for the whole structure** (Heb 8:5) **or for either of the two separate compartments that made up the superstructure** (Heb 9:2, 3, 6, 8). Σκηνή (*Skēnē*) in Hebrews 9:11 can be understood in more than one way (see section IV). In the sense of location, the writer is likely using σκηνηζ (*skēnēs*) for the “first” (outer or front) compartment (cf. vv. 2, 6, 8), that is, the Holy Place.

<sup>22</sup> In the marginal notes of the *New American Standard Version* (NASV), when σκηνή (*skēnē*) is in reference to the “tabernacle,” it is often explained with the optional rendering “sacred tent”.

<sup>23</sup> “In secular Gk. *skēnē* originally denoted a tent-covering,” such as “the cover of a wagon or the cabin of a ship.” [Harris, M. (1978). “Tent, Tabernacle,” ed. Brown, C. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1978), 3:811].



Place”) (v. 3). The writer refers to each of these compartments as a “tent” (σκηνή) (*skēnē*) (vv. 2, 3). In addition, he distinguishes between the two compartments by the numerical terms πρώτη (*prōtē*), “first” (vv. 2, 6, 8), and δεύτερον (*deuteron*), “second” (vv. 2, 7). He, thereby, divides the larger tent-sanctuary into a ‘front’ sanctuary and a ‘rear’ sanctuary. Consequently, these two terms are given a spatial nuance.<sup>24</sup>

4. Before entering the second compartment, the Holy of Holies, the High Priest first had to be within and pass “through” the first compartment, the Holy Place (Picture 3).
5. These two compartments were separated by a common wall or linen “curtain” (see 9:2-3).

**The apex of the grand chiasmus is B’** (9:11-12) where the writer reaches the thematic highpoint of his exhortative argument and where we find another contemplative chiastic arrangement that was carefully crafted, one comprised of both positive (A & B) and negative (C) statements:

**A** – “When Christ ... appeared as the High Priest ...

**B** – **through (διὰ (*dia*) the greater and more perfect tent**

**C** – not made by human hands, that is not of ordinary building;

**C’** – and not by means of (or through) (διὰ (*dia*) the blood of goats and calves,

**B’** – but by means of (or **through**) (διὰ (*dia*) **his own blood ...**,

**A’** – He entered the (heavenly) Holy of Holies ...”<sup>25</sup>

### III. “The Greater and More Perfect Sacred Tent” (v. 11)

What was the identity of this “greater and more perfect sacred tent”?

*The identity of the tent has been a constant puzzle to exegetes past and present. It is a tent well known to the addressees of the epistle.*<sup>26</sup>

The reader is left with a cryptic, typological riddle or puzzle. The writer had something specific in mind regarding this “tent,” but what was it exactly? Based on what the canonical writer states, his puzzle can be expressed by the following question:

**When Christ came<sup>27</sup> and ministered as the superior High Priest, what could be described as being (1) a “sacred tent” (tabernacle) (σκηνή) (*skēnē*) that Jesus (2) passed “through,” that was (3) “not made with human hands, that is to say, not**

<sup>24</sup> See Lane, W. (1991) *Word Biblical Commentary: Hebrews* (Thomas Nelson: Nashville, TN), 47b, p. 219.

<sup>25</sup> Heb 9:11-12; cf. v. 24. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 235, 237.

<sup>26</sup> Swetnam, J. (1966). ‘The Greater and More Perfect Tent’: A Contribution to the Discussion of Heb. 9:11. *Biblica*, 47, pp. 91–106. Bold font has been added by the current author for emphasis. James Swetnam served as the dean of the biblical faculty at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. His area of specialization was in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

<sup>27</sup> The verb (παράγενόμενος) (*paragenomenos*) (9.11) is a past tense, aorist participle from παραγίνομαι (*paraginomai*), meaning “to come” or “to appear.” It, therefore, envisions one prior occasion when Jesus came or made His appearance (i.e., debut) as the superior High Priest. When did that take place? The passage speaks of His sacrificial “blood” being present on that occasion. It also speaks of “the greater tent” being present before He “entered the (heavenly) Sanctuary.” Therefore, the occasion must have occurred prior to His physical Ascension that took place forty days following the Resurrection (cf. Acts 1:3, 9; Jn 3:13).

**of ordinary building,”<sup>28</sup> yet was (4) associated with His actual “blood” and (5) His “entry” into the heavenly<sup>29</sup> “Holy of Holies”?<sup>30</sup>**

The biblical writer provides several clues that serve as **criteria** when determining the correct solution to his cryptic<sup>31</sup> puzzle. From the text we can discern that “*the greater and more perfect tent*” was:

- Something typologically associated with Christ’s High-Priestly ministry—such as “*the Holy Place*” (cf. v. 2), the inner curtain (v. 3), and possibly also the linen tunic or vestment worn by the High Priest when entering the Holy of Holies (cf. 6:19-7:3).<sup>32</sup>
- Something that could be described as a “*tent*” and, thereby, serve Christ as being both a “covering” and a “dwelling”—a place of abode or sanctuary for God.
- If not a place, then something that assisted Christ in carrying out His High-Priestly ministry, such as the priestly attire of His white “holy linen tunic” (Lev 16:4).
- Something closely associated with Christ’s own sacrificial “*blood*.”
- Something that His “*flesh*” passed “*through*” (cf. 10:19-20).
- Something different and distinct from the (heavenly) “*Sanctuary*” of verse 12.<sup>33</sup>
- Something “*not made by human hands*.”<sup>34, 35, 36</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Literally, this second explicative phrase about the greater tent states that it was “*not of this creation*.” Both Lane and Zerwick suggest the rendering: “*not of ordinary building*.” “*The phrase means that it was not of the same order as the earthly tabernacle specified in 9:1*” [Lane, op. cit., p. 230, fn. e].

<sup>29</sup> See Heb 9:24.

<sup>30</sup> The use of the preposition διὰ (*dia*) with “sacred tent” (9.11) requires it to be understood as different from the “sanctuary” (9.12). “*The syntax of vv. 11-12 demands that a distinction be made between the σκηνή, ‘front compartment,’ through which Christ passed and τὰ ἅγια, ‘the sanctuary,’ into which he entered*” [Lane, op. cit., p. 238].

<sup>31</sup> Why the need for secrecy? In section V, the reader will be provided with logical reasons for why the canonical author apparently felt the need for secrecy and cryptography regarding certain truths and mysteries of the Faith.

<sup>32</sup> The linen tunic that the High Priest wore into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur is a possible third “type” intended by the writer pertaining to the Shroud and “*the greater tent*”—that is, in addition to the Shroud being perceived as being (1) the Holy Place and as (2) the inner curtain of this Messianic “tent”. The tunic that the High Priest wore that day into the Tabernacle (Lev 16:4, 23, 32) can be intended in Hebrews 11:9 as being a “type” for “*the greater and more perfect tent*” if the first διὰ (*dia*) preposition of the passage is understood in an instrumental sense, “*with*” or “*by means of*,” rather than in a locative sense, “*through*.” The writer speaks of when “*Jesus appeared as the High Priest ...*” The verb “appeared,” is an aorist participle (see fn. 27) that envisions a particular moment in the past when Jesus “*came*,” or “*arrived* (on the scene)” as the superior High Priest of the greater covenant. This Greek verb is used in the Gospels for when John the Baptist made his debut or “*first public appearance*” (Matt 3:1, 4-6). Question: How did Christ appear on that occasion? By what means was He able to appear as the High Priest and enter the presence of God? How could Jesus have made his debut as the kingly High-Priest (Heb 7:1; cf. Rev 1:5-6, 13) without wearing the proper attire (cf. Rev 1:5-6, 13; 19:16; Lk 24:44-48)? It is intriguing and likely quite relevant (neither accidental nor coincidental) that the linen Shroud possessed the four necessary traits of Aaron’s priestly tunic: (1) made of “*fine linen*” (Ex 28:5, 39), (2) made with a special “*checkered work*” weave (Ex 28:4, 39; cf. 39:27-29), (3) a cloth that had first been “*consecrated*” (i.e., sanctified or made holy)—by having the “sacrificial blood” sprinkled upon it before entering the Sanctuary (Ex 29:21; cf. Heb 9:21), and (4) a garment “*reaching down to the feet*” (ποδήρη) (LXX: Ex 29:5; cf. Rev 1:5-6, 13).

<sup>33</sup> See fn. 30.

<sup>34</sup> The Greek word ἀχειροποίητα (*acheiropoiēta*) is used for an image of Christ on linen cloth no later than 554 A.D. At that time, this word was used for the “*Image of God Incarnate*” when a group of orthodox priests



- Something “*not of this creation*” or “*not of ordinary building*” (i.e., miraculous).<sup>37</sup>
- *Something that existed after Christ’s death but prior to His Ascension* (see fn. 27, 32, 47).
- Something known by informed recipients of the *Letter* but intentionally veiled by the writer.
- Something that the writer purposely kept veiled or secret (v. 5b) from those less mature in the Faith who were not ready for “solid food” (cf. 5:10ff).<sup>38</sup> Why did he feel the need to be so secretive and cryptic about this “*greater tent*”?
- Something the writer apparently perceived with wonder and awe since, although he describes this first compartment of the Messianic Tabernacle in verse 11 (i.e., the Holy Place) with impressive explanatory clauses, he fails to describe the second compartment in verse 12 (i.e., the heavenly sanctuary or the Holy of Holies) in any similar manner. Why?
- Before Christ “*entered into the Holy of Holies*” (v. 12), He had to first be present within the first compartment, the Holy Place (cf. vv. 1-3; see fn. 30). “*The greater and more perfect tent*” was that first compartment. **So, when was Christ in that first compartment “with**

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publicly paraded an image of Jesus on linen throughout the regions of Cilicia and Cappadocia. This Greek word literally means “*not made by (human) hands*.” It would be another way of saying *the image* was “from heaven” and “not a product of human creation.” Therefore, the cloth was not associated with being a “graven image,” in violation of the Second Commandment. This word, ἀχειροποίητα, is strikingly similar to the wording we find our writer using in his first-century, written sermon (*Hebrews*): οὐ χειροποιήτου (*ou cheiropoiētou*), meaning “*not made by a (human) hand*.” The difference between how Christians were describing their image of Jesus on linen cloth in the sixth century and how the writer of *Hebrews* describes the greater “sacred tent” could be likened to the difference between “atheist” and “not a theist.” The former makes use of an “alpha- privative” to negate the word, while the latter phrase uses the negative particle “not.” In addition, the author of *Hebrews* used the singular noun “hand” (i.e., by “the hand of man”), whereas the sixth-century word is plural: “hands.” Due to the similarity of how that Christ-image-bearing-cloth was described in the sixth century with how “*the greater and more perfect tent*” is described in *Hebrews*, it seems quite plausible that Christians at the time in that region had a similar understanding regarding the “greater tent” in the *Letter to the Hebrews* as the thesis of this paper is postulating. They simply compacted or simplified the description found in *Hebrews* into a single word.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. 8:2, “... *the true tabernacle (tent), which the Lord pitched, not man*.” After completing the most extensive scientific study of the linen Shroud of Turin ever undertaken and tasked with explaining how its mysterious image was originally formed, the STuRP team of scientists in 1978 was unable to provide a natural explanation but, at the same time, ruled against it having been made by human hands, concluding the image “*was not the work of an artist*” [Heller, J. (1981). A Summary of STURP’s Conclusions, <https://www.shroud.com/78conclu.htm>].

<sup>36</sup> Rather than being something that was of human construction, this greater tent was divinely pitched (cf. 8:2). This tent was the work of the Spirit, not man. Verse 8 of the passage spoke of the working or “symbolic revealing” of the Holy Spirit regarding this greater tabernacle theology. While the linen Shroud itself was something made by human hands and could, therefore, be described as “of this creation,” the miraculous **image** imprinted upon the Shroud was not! Its formation was “**of the Spirit**.” Citing the explanation given by the angel to Joseph regarding the pregnancy of Mary, “*that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit*,” John Chrysostom gave this exact response (Matthew 1:20) when defending his own, patristic understanding of “the greater tent.” His statement will be discussed shortly (cf. 1 Jn 5:7). Verse 8 of our passage explicitly mentions the working or “*revealing of the Holy Spirit*.” And the *image* on the Shroud was not the work of man but, rather, “*the testimony of the Father that He testified concerning His Son*” (1 Jn. 5:9-10). Consider, similarly, how the two “*tablets of the covenant*” (mentioned in verse four of our passage), although being earthly stones, were divinely engraved—not by man, but rather—by “*the finger of God*” (Ex 31:18). “*And the tablets were God’s work, and the writing was God’s writing engraved on the tablets*” (Ex 32:16).

<sup>37</sup> See section X.2.2 below for an explanation of this explanatory phrase.

<sup>38</sup> See fn. 102.

***His own blood” (v. 11)? And where was He when that took place?*** The most plausible answer is during the time His body was within the burial Shroud inside the tomb.

Some major English translations confuse the spatial identify of “the tent” (v. 11) and that of “the sanctuary” (v. 12) by, apparently, equating them as being one and the same compartment. For example, The New American Standard Version, renders the two places both with the verb “to enter.”

*<sup>39</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things having come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands, that is, not of this creation; <sup>40</sup> and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all time, having obtained eternal redemption.* <sup>39</sup>

Some Bible scholars do believe “the tent” of v. 11 is the same as “the sanctuary” of v. 12. However, for the syntax of the preposition “through” (dia) (διὰ)—associated with “the tent” in verse 11—to have a locative understanding, it would require “the Sanctuary” of verse 12 to be a different place or chamber. Equating the two chambers as one and the same place introduces a logical contradiction: In ascending into the heavenly realm, how could it be stated that Christ “entered” (v. 12) what He had just passed “through” (v. 11)?

There are four strong reasons why the two compartments are not one and the same place. First, of necessity, Christ had to pass “through” the Holy Place (v. 2) to enter “the Holy of Holies” (v. 3). Logic and the syntax demand this distinction. Second, this division of the Tabernacle into two chambers has been clearly delineated in the context leading up to these two verses (see 8:2-5; 9:2-3, 6, 8). Third, the two antecedent usages of “the first tent” (vv. 6 & 8) suggests this is the intent behind “the tent” of verse 11. It also places a priority for a locative understanding of the preposition (“through”) (dia) (διὰ) in verse 11, rather than an instrumental understanding (i.e., “with” or “by means of”). Finally, parallel statements made elsewhere in *Hebrews* suggest the writer intends “the tent” here in verse 11 be associated with “the Holy Place.” For example, earlier he stated how “Christ had entered inside the curtain” (6:19-20). To reach and then enter inside “the curtain,” the high priest would of necessity first have had to pass “through” the first chamber of “the Holy Place.”

Understood as “a place,” the syntax regarding the preposition “through” (dia) (διὰ) demands a distinction between “the tent” of verse 11 and “the sanctuary” of verse 12. William Lane makes the following comment in his insightful and critical commentary:

*The syntax of vv. 11-12 demands that a distinction be made between the σκηνή (tent), “front compartment,” through which Christ passed and τὰ ἅγια, “the sanctuary,” into which he entered.* <sup>40</sup>

The two verses are skillfully and carefully crafted, allowing the dia (διὰ) preposition of v. 11 to be understood in either a locative or instrumental sense. The author does not think this was accidental but rather, intentional. And the thesis of this paper provides a plausible understanding for both: as a locative it can be understood as the first chamber, “the Holy Place”. Then the burial Shroud functioned, typologically, as the Holy Place of the Messianic Tabernacle, while the tomb functioned as an earthly type of the second chamber, the Holy of Holies with its Ark of the Covenant (cf. John 20:12). On the other hand, the preposition understood in an instrumental sense allows

<sup>39</sup> *New American Standard Version (NASV)*, (1995), *Hebrews* 9:11-12.

<sup>40</sup> Lane, op. cit., p. 238.

“the tent” (v. 11) to be understood as the special white garment worn by the High Priest on that special day of the year.

During the author’s research, he came across eight different interpretations or understandings down through the centuries for this “*greater and more perfect tent*.” Interestingly, six of the eight identified the tent with Christ’s “*body*” in some way (cf. Jn 2:18-22).<sup>41</sup> For example, Church Fathers during the early centuries of the Faith commonly interpreted the “tent” as being Christ’s “flesh” or “humanity.”<sup>42</sup>

John Chrysostom, “Golden Voice” and Bishop of Constantinople (398 A.D.), identified this “*tabernacle not made by hands*” with Jesus’ own “flesh.” He commented: “*Here he means the flesh.*”<sup>43</sup> Although the biblical passage described the “tent” as being “*not of this creation*” (i.e., “not of ordinary building”) Chrysostom defended his interpretation by pointing to the virgin birth: “*For it would not have been ‘of the Spirit’ (Matt 1:20) if man had constructed it.*”<sup>44</sup>

*But when Joseph had considered this (i.e., to put her away secretly), behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying: “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is **of the Holy Spirit**” (emphasis added).*<sup>45</sup>

In more recent years, B. F. Westcott—an accomplished and esteemed Greek scholar, biblical theologian, and past Bishop of Durham (d. 1901)—understood the “tent” as being the “Church” of Christ’s body.<sup>46</sup>

However, all eight of the solutions proposed have problems and are inadequate. Each one fails to meet the criteria identified and outlined above. For example, how could it be said that Christ’s “flesh” passed “*through*” the Church (10:19-20)? Or—regarding the patristic understanding of equating the “tent” (9:11) and its “curtain” (10:20) with Christ’s “flesh,” “humanity,” or “body”—how could it be said that “*His flesh*” (10:20) “*passed through*” (10:19-20; cf. 9:11; 6:19-20) His body? That is nonsensical! In 10:20, “the curtain” should not be understood as a metaphor for “his flesh.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Lane comments: “If *διά* is understood in an instrumental sense (i.e., Christ obtained access to God “by means of the greater and more perfect σκηνή”), it becomes necessary to give to σκηνή a symbolic value, so that it signifies Christ’s body in some way (so Westcott, 256-60; Vanhoye, *Bib* 46 [1965] 1-28; Swetnam, *Bib* 47 [1966] 91-106; Cody, *Heavenly Sanctuary*, 155-65; among others; cf. Sabourin, *VD* 46 [1968] 238-48)” [Lane, op. cit., pp. 236-237].

<sup>42</sup> This is how both the Greek and Latin Fathers understood this greater “tent” during the patristic period [See Westcott, B. (1903) *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan: New York), p. 257].

<sup>43</sup> *Works of St. Chrysostom*, Homily XV [69].

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

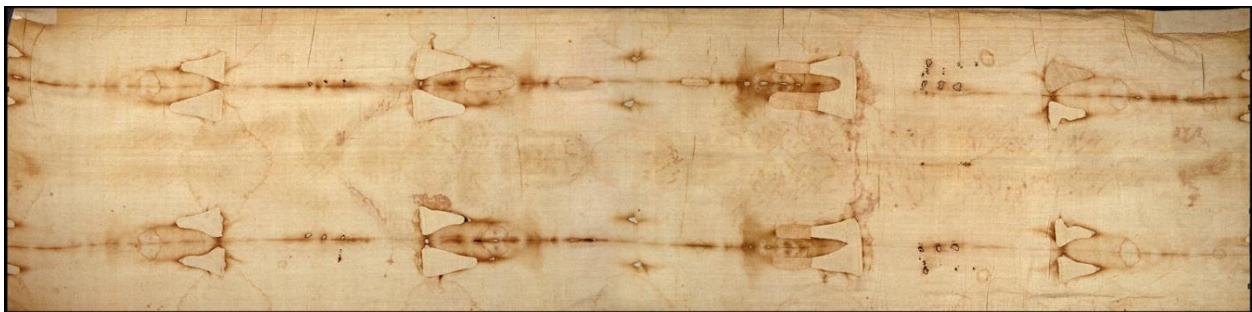
<sup>45</sup> Matt 1:20

<sup>46</sup> Westcott, *Hebrews*, op. cit., pp. 256-259.

<sup>47</sup> Most commentators and many translations (e.g., TEV) have understood the explicative clause in 10:20 (“*that is, his flesh*”) as a metaphor, equating “*the curtain*” with Christ’s “flesh.” However, is it not “*symbolically strange to equate the body, which was offered as a sacrifice, with the curtain which divided the outer sanctuary from the inner sanctuary*”? [Ellingworth, P. and Nida, E. (1983), *Translator’s Handbook on The Letter to the Hebrews* (United Bible Societies: New York, NY), p. 229.] Due to the similar syntactical construction between vv. 19 and 20, no such metaphor is likely intended. Instead, the “*that is*” clause of v. 20

The explanatory phrase, “*not of this creation,*” is itself an explanation of “*not made by human hands.*”<sup>48</sup> The qualifying phrase causes some to insist that the writer must be speaking of a heavenly tent that Jesus entered at the time of His Ascension. However, that would require a period of several weeks to have elapsed from when Christ shed His “*blood*” on the Cross and when, as the superior High Priest, He “*appeared*” (v. 11), “*entered the Most Holy Place with His own blood*” (v. 12), and “*offered Himself*” to God (v. 14). To speak of Christ’s shed “*blood*” being present in such a manner several weeks after the crucifixion is surely incorrect.<sup>49</sup>

The different criteria required by a methodical exegesis of the text suggests the best and most plausible solution for this greater Messianic “tent” was something other than any of the eight proposed solutions suggested by earlier commentators. The most agreeable and best solution to the puzzle is the linen burial Shroud that had served Christ both as a “covering” for His *body* and as the place of “dwelling” for the Son of God during His time in the tomb (Picture 5). Only the Holy Shroud satisfies all the exegetical criteria listed earlier. The burial Shroud checks all the boxes! Significantly, due to the Resurrection, that tent-covering was found bearing a *miraculous image* of Christ’s crucified *body* and was found stained with His actual *blood* (Picture 4 & 6). Ever since, the Shroud’s *image* and *blood* have served as a divine “witness” and as a “sign” for humanity regarding the Son of God.



**Picture 4.** The double, full-body, negative image of the crucified “man of the cloth” on the Shroud of Turin as seen by the naked eye. The combination of wounds depicted—such as numerous abrasions on the scalp (plausibly from a crown of thorns)—are known to have occurred to only one man in recorded history. Used with permission. © 1978 Barrie M. Schwartz Collection, STERA, Inc.

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is meant to further explain the way of access into the heavenly sanctuary mentioned in v. 19. Access for Christians into the Sanctuary in v. 19 is “*by means of the blood of Jesus.*” Now, in v. 20, the “*new way*” of access into the Sanctuary is stated to have been initiated by Christ Himself “*through the curtain,*” “*that is, (by means) of His flesh.*” “*By means of His flesh*” in v. 20 should be understood in parallel with “*by means of His blood*” in v. 19. This calls for an instrumental understanding of the explicative clause: “*that is, (by means of) His flesh,*” with an unstated *διὰ* (*dia*) preposition understood in an instrumental manner. “*Both v. 19 and v. 20 conclude with a reference to Jesus’ sacrificial death as the means by which the way into the heavenly sanctuary was provided*” (Lane, op. cit. p. 275). Lane provides a helpful diagram showing the analogous, syntactic structure between the two verses. See also, Ellingworth and Nida, *Translator’s Handbook on Hebrews*, op. cit., pp. 228-229.

<sup>48</sup> See fn. 28.

<sup>49</sup> Verse 12 states, “*He entered into the Holy of Holies once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*” “*Once for all*” here concerns the sacrifice Christ offered when He entered the heavenly Sanctuary in order to obtain “*eternal redemption.*” Entering the Sanctuary to, once again, offer His blood in a sacrificial ritual never needs to take place. Compare “*once for all*” in 7:27 and 9:26.

Interestingly, the assertion that the body of Christ went *through* His burial Shroud at the time of the Resurrection is made elsewhere in Scripture, although cryptically.<sup>50</sup> Such an event was also suggested by the “unconventional hypothesis” postulated by physicist John Jackson back in 1991. He suggested an immense, but extremely brief burst of radiated energy came forth from the body as the body itself became mechanically transparent and passed *through* the cloth! Jackson believes this process produced the 3D-negative image on the Cloth:

*... we must assume the body became mechanically ‘transparent’ to its physical surroundings.... The hypothesis of a collapsing cloth into a radiating body appears to explain all known characteristics of the Shroud image...*<sup>51</sup>

#### IV. The Holy Shroud as a Royal-Priestly Garment<sup>52</sup>

Considerable debate has occurred as to whether the *διὰ* (*dia*) preposition of verse 11 should be understood in a locative or instrumental sense. Exegetes such as Weiss, Moffatt, Andriessen, and Lane, favor(ed) the former understanding while Davidson, Westcott, Dods, and Montefiore prefer(ed) the latter.

With regards to Hebrews 9:11, the Church Father’s understood the *διὰ* (*dia*) preposition in an instrumental sense as “*with*” or “*by means of*”: “*He appeared by means of the greater and more perfect tent.*” As a result, they identified Christ’s body with this “greater tent.” However, *διὰ* (*dia*) is normally understood in a locative sense as “*through* (a place).” The locative seems more appropriate in verse eleven due to the broader context where the two compartments (vv. 2-3) within the grand, earthly sanctuary (v. 1) have been mentioned.<sup>53</sup> Yet, the carefully crafted and ingenious syntax of verse eleven allows for either an instrumental<sup>54</sup> or a locative<sup>55</sup> understanding for the first of three *διὰ* (*dia*) prepositions appearing in vv. 11-12.

<sup>50</sup> Jn 20:5-9ff. and 1 Jn 5:5-13. See *Divine Testimony*, op. cit., chapters 16-17.

<sup>51</sup> Jackson, J. (1991). “An Unconventional Hypothesis to Explain all Image Characteristics Found on the Shroud Image” in *History, Science, Theology and the Shroud*, ed. Berard, A. (St. Louis, MO: Symposium Proceedings, June 22-23, 1991).

<sup>52</sup> See fn. 32.

<sup>53</sup> Σκηνή (*skēnē*) is clearly used in a spatial sense in verses 2-3. Furthermore, regarding verse 11, “*the context* (παράγονόμενος ... εἰσῆλθεν, “when Christ appeared ... he entered”) *indicates that* (διὰ) *dia* *relates to a space and must be understood in a local sense*” (Lane, op. cit., p. 229, fn. c).

<sup>54</sup> The two subsequent *διὰ* (*dia*) prepositions found in verse 12 have an instrumental understanding (“*with*”). Generally, the syntax would demand that, in this string of subordinate clauses, the first instance of the *διὰ* preposition function in the same way as the subsequent two occurrences of the same preposition. See Westcott, B. (1903) *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1903), p. 256; and Montefiore, H. (1964) “A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *Harper’s New Testament Commentaries* (New York: Harper, pp. 151-52).

<sup>55</sup> Cf. fn. 53. Such an understanding for *διὰ* (*dia*) in verse 11 is similar to how the writer used the preposition in 10:20, first in a locative sense as “*through*,” but then in an instrumental (although unstated) sense as “*by*”

And, when the Holy Shroud is associated with the biblical writer's intended typology, "the greater tent" of verse eleven can plausibly be associated with Jesus' High Priestly tunic! That is, when Jesus "appeared as a high priest," He did so "with" or "by means of" His priestly tunic:

*But when Christ appeared as High Priest ... with (διὰ) (dia) the greater and more perfect sacred-tent-covering (σκηνή) (skēnēs) ... and not with (διὰ) (dia) the blood of goats ... but with (διὰ) (dia) His own blood ... He entered once for all into the (heavenly) Sanctuary.*

This potentially allows for a third type in the writer's typology regarding the Holy Shroud. Not only did he likely associate the Shroud in a locative sense with (1) the Holy place and (2) the curtain of the greater Messianic Tabernacle, but the writer plausibly identified Jesus' burial cloth with (3) His Royal-Priestly garment!<sup>56</sup>

No doubt the visual impact of the miraculous image of Jesus' crucified "body" displayed so graphically on His burial cloth, along with the visual bloodstains, were strong reasons for the priestly-garment typology. After all, how could Jesus "appear as a high priest"<sup>57</sup> without a priestly garment?

However, for many more the matter is not that simplistic. More evidence is required to substantiate this hypothesis! The identity of "the greater and more perfect tent" is not clearly explained by the biblical writer. Critics will claim that postulating a typological linkage between that "tent" and the Shroud (as Jesus' priestly garment) is untenable, especially since there no specific mentioning of a high-priestly garment found in the *Letter*. "This association of the two is simply a matter of eisegesis!" Aware of this likely and reasonable objection to this aspect of the paper's thesis, what might the author say in response to such criticism?

Yes, the identity of "the greater and more perfect tent" in this passage is not clearly explained by the biblical writer. It, therefore, presents us with a puzzle calling for clarification. As mentioned earlier, one esteemed scholar of *Hebrews* commented: "The identity of the tent has been a constant puzzle to exegetes past and present. **It is a tent well-known to the addressees of the epistle.**"<sup>58</sup>

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means of": "...a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, (by means of) His flesh." See fn. 47.

<sup>56</sup> Consider the typology in *Hebrews* of Jesus being both a king and a priest "according to the order of Melchizedek" (6:20-7:2).

<sup>57</sup> "When Christ appeared as a high priest..." (v.11). The aorist participle, "appeared" (παράγενόμενος) (paragenomenos), envisions a particular moment in the past when Jesus "appeared," "came," or "arrived (on the scene)" as the superior High Priest of the greater covenant. The verb denotes the idea of "coming forth" and "making one's public appearance" [Thayer, J. (1889), trans., "παράγινωμι," in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), p. 480.] This Greek verb is used in the Gospels for when the Maji from the east "arrived" in Jerusalem seeking "He who has been born King of the Jews" (Matt 2:1) and when John the Baptist "arrived" on the scene in the wilderness (Matt 3:1), making his appearance dressed in "a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt about his waist ...," preaching and calling the people to repent. This Greek verb is similarly used for the arrival or public appearance of Jesus (Lk 12:51; cf. fn. 27). It is "the usual word for 'appearing' or 'coming forward' as a historical person: appearing on the stage of the world" [Alford, H. (1976), *Alford's Greek Testament: An Exegetical and Critical Commentary* (Guardian Press: Grand Rapids, MI), IV:167].

<sup>58</sup> Swetnam, *The Greater and More Perfect Tent*, op. cit. Bold font added by the current author for emphasis.

So, it is appropriate to ask what solutions might surface from a grammatical and historical exegesis of the passage. Our task is to examine whatever evidence we can obtain and then, like a detective using inductive reasoning to solve a crime, determine which if any of those solutions seems plausible and most probable in resolving the puzzle.

Briefly, in response to the accusation of eisegesis, it should be noted that **(a)** the writer does state **“of these things we cannot now speak in detail”** (v. 5),<sup>59</sup> and, as already discussed, **(b) the syntax** allows for an instrumental understanding of “the tent.” Furthermore, **(c)** we might ask: “What instrumental understanding fits better in the context than the priestly garment of the high priest?” And **(d)** It is contextually rational to ask the question, **how could Jesus “appear” in the role of a high priest without being dressed in a priestly garment?** Therefore, the linen covering provided by “the tent” could legitimately be regarded, typologically, as the priestly tunic worn by Jesus when He “appeared as a high priest.”

In a nutshell, the above is a fourfold response to the objection some will make against identifying this “greater tent,” typologically, to the high-priestly garment of Jesus. However, let’s now pursue the matter in more detail. While the passage makes no specific mention of a priestly garment, might first-century Christians have associated the Shroud, typologically, with such a garment? There are many reasons why such a role for the Holy Shroud might indeed have been within the author’s typological understanding for Christ’s burial Shroud. The reader will now be presented with a dozen reasons why typologically linking this “*greater tent*” in *Hebrews* with Jesus’ high-priestly garment is plausible.

1. As mentioned already, **the carefully crafted syntax of verse eleven allows for an instrumental understanding behind the *διὰ* (*dia*) preposition.** The syntax not only permits a locative interpretation for the preposition (as a place, i.e., “*through*”), the syntactic structure permits the preposition to be understood in an instrumental sense as well (as a means, i.e., “*with*” or “*by means of*”). Both options are possible!<sup>60</sup>

The context favors a locative understanding.<sup>61</sup> However, the syntax favors an instrumental sense.<sup>62</sup> In the opinion of this writer, the contextual understanding is the stronger of the two. Yet, why did the biblical author not include an additional verb to go along with the preposition? “*But when Christ appeared as a high priest ... through the greater and more perfect tent ...*” does not communicate plainly. The translators for the *New International Version*, for example, felt the need to clarify the matter by editorially adding a verb not found in the Greek text:

*“When Christ came as a high priest ... he went through the greater and more perfect tent...”*<sup>63</sup>

Remarkably, the Holy Shroud can be perceived as being a plausible solution for resolving either of the two options. That is, the linen cloth of the Holy Shroud can perceptually fit either a

<sup>59</sup> See section V in this paper for thoughts regarding secrecy in the early Church.

<sup>60</sup> The instrumental understanding for the *διὰ* (*dia*) preposition in this verse is also supported by the similar such usage of the preposition in the parallel passage found in the final component of the grand chiasmus (A') at 10:19-20. See fn. 47 and 55.

<sup>61</sup> See vv. 1-8 and fn. 51.

<sup>62</sup> See fn. 55 and 60.

<sup>63</sup> Hebrews 9:11, *New International Version* (NIV) (1973). (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI).



locative or an instrumental understanding. Might the writer—due to his skillful syntactic structure—have intended both?

2. **A basic understanding for “tent” is that of a cloth that serves as a “covering.”**<sup>64</sup> The priestly tunic was a garment that served as a covering, and The Shroud once wrapped and enclosed the body of Christ much like a garment (Picture 5). Therefore, with typology and cryptography in mind, “*the greater and more perfect tent*” of verse 11 might be thought of in the following manner: “*When Christ appeared as a high priest ... with the covering (or tunic) of His priestly attire ... and with His own blood, He entered the Sanctuary.*”



**Picture 5.** Note how, as a “tent,” the burial Shroud served both as a covering and as a place of abode for the Son of God while He was in the tomb. In addition, the angelic beings displaying the Shroud illustrate quite effectively how the image should be looked upon as a precious gift<sup>65</sup> and as a powerful witness of divine testimony,<sup>66</sup> one “*not made by human hands*”. *The Descent from the Cross with the Holy Shroud* (c. 1625) is generally attributed to G.B. Delarovere. Photo courtesy of Barrie M. Schwartz Collection, STERA, Inc.

3. **What better alternative is there for such an instrumental understanding of the verse than a priestly garment?**

The patristic fathers postulated the “flesh,” “body,” or “humanity” of Christ as the solution or identity for this special “greater tent.” However, problems have already been mentioned in this

<sup>64</sup> See fn. 23.

<sup>65</sup> The image depicts how great His love is for us! Note how our passage in *Hebrews* speaks of the “*manna*” (9:4) that God graciously supplied the Israelites with for food during their years in the wilderness and how Jesus saw Himself as being “*the bread of life*” that “*he who eats this bread shall live forever*” (Jn 6:31, 48-51, 58). The Apostle John, thereby, associated Christ’s flesh, metaphorically and typologically, with manna from heaven.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Jn 5:37; 1 Jn 5:9-10

paper regarding that interpretation. So, if not the priestly tunic worn by the High Priest when performing his duties on the Day of Atonement, what other solution is more plausible?

4. **A priestly tunic fits nicely with the motif found earlier in *Hebrews*** whereby Jesus is declared to be a king and a priest “*of the Most-High God,*” “*after the order of Melchizedek ...*” (7:1; 6:20).
5. **How could Christ have either “appeared” or performed His priestly duties without being clothed in the proper attire?**
6. Both in the canonical record and in early Christian writings **we find the motif of Jesus wearing a royal-priestly robe.**

For example, John’s *Apocalypse* of the biblical canon speaks of a royal-priestly robe belonging to Christ:

- “... from Jesus Christ ... the ruler of the kings of the earth. ...and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.... And having turned I saw ... a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle...”<sup>67</sup>
- “And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, in the popular allegorical poem known as *The Hymn of the Pearl*, written no later than 224 A.D.,<sup>69</sup> the prince’s royal robe is placed on center stage. Similar to the image on the Shroud of Turin, the “garment of light” in that cryptic poem featured a whole body, two-fold image of the prince himself, the king’s son:

*The splendid robe became like me, as my reflection in a mirror.  
I saw it wholly in me,  
And in it I saw myself quite apart from myself,  
So that we were two in distinction.  
And again, one in a single form....  
And the image of the king of kings was completely embroidered all over it.*<sup>70</sup>

John’s *Apocalypse* in the biblical canon speaks of a similar robe belonging to Christ:

*And on His robe and on His thigh, He has a name written,  
“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”*<sup>71</sup>

7. **The Shroud of Turin possessed the special features of a high-priestly tunic!** This is significant when evaluating the validity of the thesis under discussion. What special features characterized the tunic of the Jewish high priest? Interestingly, Jesus’ burial cloth had the four characteristics particularly required for the high-priestly tunic:

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<sup>67</sup> Rev. 1:5, 6, 13

<sup>68</sup> Rev 19:16; cf. 1:13; Dan 7, 10; Matt 17:2.

<sup>69</sup> See fn. 134.

<sup>70</sup> See fn. 135. For more about *The Hymn of the Pearl*, see Stalley, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit., chapter 4.

<sup>71</sup> Rev 19:16; cf. 1:5-6, 13; Dan 7, 10; Matt 17:2.

- 1) Made of “fine linen”.<sup>72</sup> The fine quality of the linen associated with the Shroud of Turin does suggest that it, likely, was intended to be a priestly garment.
- 2) Made of a special “checker work” weave.<sup>73</sup> The Turin Shroud has an unusual Z-twist (clockwise) of the threads with a 3:1 twill.
- 3) Consecrated (i.e., made holy)—by having the “sacrificial blood” sprinkled upon the cloth.<sup>74</sup> Note how “*tent*” (B) and “*blood*” (B’) parallel each other in the skillfully constructed chiasmic structure of the extended sentence that comprises 9:1-12 (see the top of p.7 above).
- 4) “*Reaching down to the feet*” (ποδήρη).<sup>75</sup>

Are these features just a coincidence, or did astute early Christians associate the Shroud with the typological motif of it being a priestly garment for Christ Jesus, the Lord’s chosen High Priest?

*And Jesus said to them, ‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?’ And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.*<sup>76</sup>

8. **The typology of a high-priestly tunic** that has been stained and consecrated by the blood of the sacrifice **resonates with the graphic full-body image of Christ crucified** seen on the linen cloth with its visual bloodstains (Pictures 6 & 7).
9. **Philo’s Hellenistic Judaism of the second temple period viewed the curtain of the temple as representing the dividing wall separating the heavenly realm from the material world. Furthermore, the Logos was the heavenly High Priest. And when the Logos passed through the curtain—passing from heaven to earth—He clothed Himself with it, taking on material form and becoming the manifested God to the world.**<sup>77</sup>

This Jewish allegorical understanding regarding the temple supports the thesis that the Holy Shroud served both as the curtain and as the priestly robe that Christ wore. More will be stated about this matter later (section VI.1). But for now, consider John’s statement regarding the Logos in the context of Philo’s understanding above. That is, with Incarnation of the Logos Christ would have passed “through the curtain,” from heaven to the material world of earth:

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<sup>72</sup> Exodus 28:5, 39

<sup>73</sup> The diagonal three-over-one “Z” twist used on the Shroud of Turin is extremely rare. The spindle was rotated clockwise as opposed to the more common S-twist spun. This type of counter-twined linen was also more laborious and complex to produce than the simpler one-over-one twist. This rare herringbone “Z” twill weave was used for the fabric described in Exodus for the tunic of the High Priest (Ex 28:4, 39; cf. 39:27-29). The higher manufacturing complexity would certainly have increased the cost of the fabric, and it would have been highly prized in the time of Jesus. Fanti, G. and Malfi, P. (2020). *The Shroud of Turin: First Century After Christ*, 2nd Ed. (Jenny Stanford Publishing: Singapore), pp. 10 and 183.

<sup>74</sup> Exodus 29:21; cf. Heb 9:21

<sup>75</sup> Exodus 29:5; cf. Rev 1:13-14, 5 and Dan 7:13; 10:5-6.

<sup>76</sup> Luke 24:25-27

<sup>77</sup> Barker, M. (1992) *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel’s Second God* (Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky), p. 98.

*And the Word (Logos) became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*<sup>78</sup>

Further support for associating the “greater tent” with the high priestly robe of Christ is found in **Philo’s perception of the high priestly robe**. Philo was an influential Jewish philosopher during the period of early Christianity. He was the leader of Hellenistic Judaism in Alexandria, Egypt. In his first century writings, we find a very interesting comment about the white linen tunic worn by the high priest. Philo stated that when the high priest enters the innermost parts of the holy temple, he:

*... assumes a linen robe, made of the very finest flax. And this is an emblem of vigor, and incorruptibility, and the most brilliant light. For such a veil is a thing very difficult to be broken, and it is made of nothing mortal, and when it is properly and carefully purified it has a most clear and brilliant appearance.*<sup>79</sup>

When the high priest wears a white robe in the sanctuary, Philo hinted that it symbolized the heavenly state since:

*... when he enters the shrine to offer incense, because its fine linen is **not, like wool, the product of creatures subject to death.***<sup>80</sup>

We can add to the above how Ben Sira—author of the deuterocanonical *Book of Sirach* (between 196 and 175 BCE)—described the vestment worn by the high priest as a “robe of glory.”<sup>81</sup> Such a robe was commonly associated with heaven.

**10. A motif exists both within the biblical canon itself and within extracanonical literature whereby a “robe of glory” or a “garment of light” is given to those who pass from the material world into the heavenly realm.**<sup>82</sup>

For example, in John’s apocalyptic book of *Revelation*, we are told that each of the martyrs was “given a white robe.”<sup>83</sup> Then, a little later, we read that those who are praising the Lamb in heaven are “clothed in white robes standing before the throne.”<sup>84</sup> Then one of the elders asks John: “Who are these who are clothed in the white robes, and from where have they come?”<sup>85</sup> And John replies: “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Jn 1:14

<sup>79</sup> Philo, *On Dreams*, 1.XXXVII (1.216-217). <https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/yonge/book21.html>.

<sup>80</sup> Philo, *Special Laws*, I.84.

<sup>81</sup> *Sirach*, 50.11

<sup>82</sup> For example, the Peshitta (old Syriac) translation of Daniel 10:5 and 12:7 states that the (heavenly) man (i.e., Angel) who came to Daniel wore a “robe of glory.” John’s description in his heavenly vision of the risen Christ being “clothed in a robe”—recorded in the *Apocalypse* (i.e., *Book of Revelation*), 1:13-15—is likely, in part, looking back to this verse in *Daniel*.

<sup>83</sup> Rev 6:11

<sup>84</sup> Rev 7:9

<sup>85</sup> Rev 7:13

<sup>86</sup> Rev 7:14

These “white robes” should cause us to recall how, at the Transfiguration, Jesus’ garment is described as becoming “white as light.” In addition, we are reminded that, at the empty tomb, Mary beheld “two angels dressed in white robes.”<sup>87</sup>

Furthermore, in the parable of the wedding feast, Jesus tells how the king threw out the unfortunate man who had no wedding garment. That is, apparently, he was someone who had attempted to enter heaven without a white robe, a garment of light.

This motif of those entering heaven being given a white, glorious robe is not only found within the biblical canon itself. It is also found often in extracanonical Jewish and Christian literature.<sup>88</sup> For example, in the pseudepigraphal book of *3 Enoch*, the patriarch Enoch ascends into heaven and is transformed into an angel.<sup>89</sup> The Holy One wrapped him in a shining robe, and his material body was burned up by the power of the divine light.

*He made me a garment of glory on which were fixed all kinds of lights, and He clad me in it. And He made me a robe of honor on which were fixed all kinds of beauty, splendor, brilliance and majesty.*<sup>90</sup>

**So, if the saints who pass from the earthly realm into the heavenly realm are dressed in white robes, how could the Lord Himself enter the heavenly sanctuary (9:12) and into the presence of God Almighty, as the Messianic High Priest, without being dressed in a royal-priestly robe or tunic?**

11. There is yet another strong and significant reason for associating the Shroud with a priestly garment, which has been saved for last. In **Galatians 3:1**, the Apostle Paul wrote of how his readers had seen the crucified Christ posted up before their eyes, as if on a placard:

*You stupid Galatians! You must have been bewitched—you before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly displayed upon his cross!*<sup>91</sup>

The current author has written elsewhere why this statement is very likely an early, cryptic reference to the image on the Holy Shroud within the biblical canon itself.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Jn 20:12

<sup>88</sup> See Barker, M. (2009), *On Earth as it is in Heaven* (Sheffield Phoenix Press: Sheffield, England), pp. 61-72.

<sup>89</sup> In his book to the Colossians, Paul mentions the heresy regarding “the worship of angels” (Col 2:18). Texts such as *3 Enoch* may have contributed to a belief that Jesus, when leaving the material world and entering heaven, became the supreme angel. However, the Christology of *Hebrews* places Jesus above the angels as God’s unique Son who is worthy of worship (see Heb 1:4-14).

<sup>90</sup> *3 Enoch*, 12; [https://archive.org/stream/HebrewBookOfEnoch3/BookOfEnoch3\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/HebrewBookOfEnoch3/BookOfEnoch3_djvu.txt). See also chapter 15 where Enoch’s “flesh was changed into flames.” His material body is described as having been taken up in the fiery chariot and transformed into a heavenly being by the splendor of the Shekinah glory.

<sup>91</sup> *The New English Bible: New Testament* (NEB) (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1961) 322.

<sup>92</sup> In addition to chapter 9 of the author’s book, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit., the author has written two exegetical papers on this text in Galatians. See Stalley, L. (2020), “The Crucified Christ Seen by the Galatians: A Literal Context for ΠΡΟΕΓΡΑΦΗ (Galatians 3.1),” *Academia.edu*, [https://www.academia.edu/42193265/The\\_Crucified\\_Christ\\_Seen\\_by\\_the\\_Galatians\\_A\\_Literal\\_Context\\_for\\_%CE%A0%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%95%CE%93%CE%A1%CE%91%CE%A6%CE%97\\_Galatians\\_3\\_1\\_](https://www.academia.edu/42193265/The_Crucified_Christ_Seen_by_the_Galatians_A_Literal_Context_for_%CE%A0%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%95%CE%93%CE%A1%CE%91%CE%A6%CE%97_Galatians_3_1_); and Stalley, L. (2023), “Did the Galatians See the Image on the Holy Shroud?,” *Academia.edu*, [https://www.academia.edu/104480342/Did\\_the\\_Galatians\\_See\\_the\\_Image\\_on\\_the\\_Holy\\_Shroud](https://www.academia.edu/104480342/Did_the_Galatians_See_the_Image_on_the_Holy_Shroud).

Prior to that intriguing assertion of having seen the crucified Christ with their “eyes,” Paul had identified his own suffering with having been “*crucified with Christ*.”<sup>93</sup> The visual “marks” he bore on his body from when he had previously undergone one or more beatings, “the stigmata,”<sup>94</sup> identified himself with the crucified Christ.

Similarly, in 3:27, Paul encourages his readers to understand that they too should perceive themselves as having undergone a linkage to the crucified Christ when, on the occasion of their baptism, they had symbolically “clothed themselves with Christ.”

*For all of **you** who were baptized into Christ **have clothed yourselves with Christ**.*<sup>95</sup>

Elsewhere the Apostle wrote of baptism linking the believer with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ:

*<sup>3</sup>Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup>For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup>knowing this, that **our old self was crucified with Him**, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; <sup>7</sup>for he who has died is freed from sin. <sup>8</sup>Now if **we have died with Christ**, we believe that we shall also live with Him.*<sup>96</sup>

The implication of Paul’s teaching is quite intriguing. How was Christ “clothed” when, in the tomb, He underwent a transition from death, to burial, and then to Resurrection? During that period Jesus had been within the garment of His burial Shroud.

The tense of the verb “*clothed*” in Galatians 3:27 is in the Greek aorist tense. The same is true for the verb “*baptized*” in both passages cited above, as well as the verbs “*buried with*” and “*crucified with*” in Romans 6:3-6. This past tense of the verbs envisions a single occasion in their past when his readers had linked themselves, symbolically, with the garment of Christ that had been associated with His death, burial, and Resurrection! And that occasion in their past had been their baptism. That theological motif is plausibly the historical source behind a white robe being traditionally worn by those being baptized.<sup>97</sup>

So, just as Paul could speak of being associated with the cruciform suffering depicted by the visual image of “the man of the Cloth” (Gal 2:20; 6:17), likewise his readers are exhorted to identify themselves with such cruciform living due to their own association with that image on Christ’s burial Cloth, having been linked to it and “*clothed with Christ*” (Gal 3:27) on the occasion of their baptism. The outcome was for each of them having now become a “*new creation*.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Gal 2:20

<sup>94</sup> Gal 6:17

<sup>95</sup> Gal 3:27

<sup>96</sup> Rom 6:3-8 (NASB)

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Rev 1:4-6, 12-13; 6:11; 7:14

<sup>98</sup> 2 Cor 5:17; cf. 2 Cor 3:18 and Col 2:9-13; 3:5-11

*For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God....*<sup>5</sup> *Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.*<sup>6</sup> *For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,*<sup>7</sup> *and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.*<sup>8</sup> *But now you also, **put them all aside**: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.*<sup>9</sup> *Do not lie to one another, since **you laid aside the old self** with its evil practices,*<sup>10</sup> ***and have put on (i.e., clothed) the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—***<sup>11</sup> *a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.*<sup>99</sup>

12. Finally, but certainly not the least significant, it is legitimate to postulate the Shroud (in the role of a priestly garment) as the typological identity of “the greater tent” because the biblical writer himself stated **“of these things we cannot now speak in detail”** (v. 5),<sup>100</sup> So, if he had felt free to say more, how would he have identified the instrumental type he was hinting at? What better solution do we have to his puzzle than Jesus wearing the attire of a priestly garment when “*he appeared as (the superior) high priest*”?

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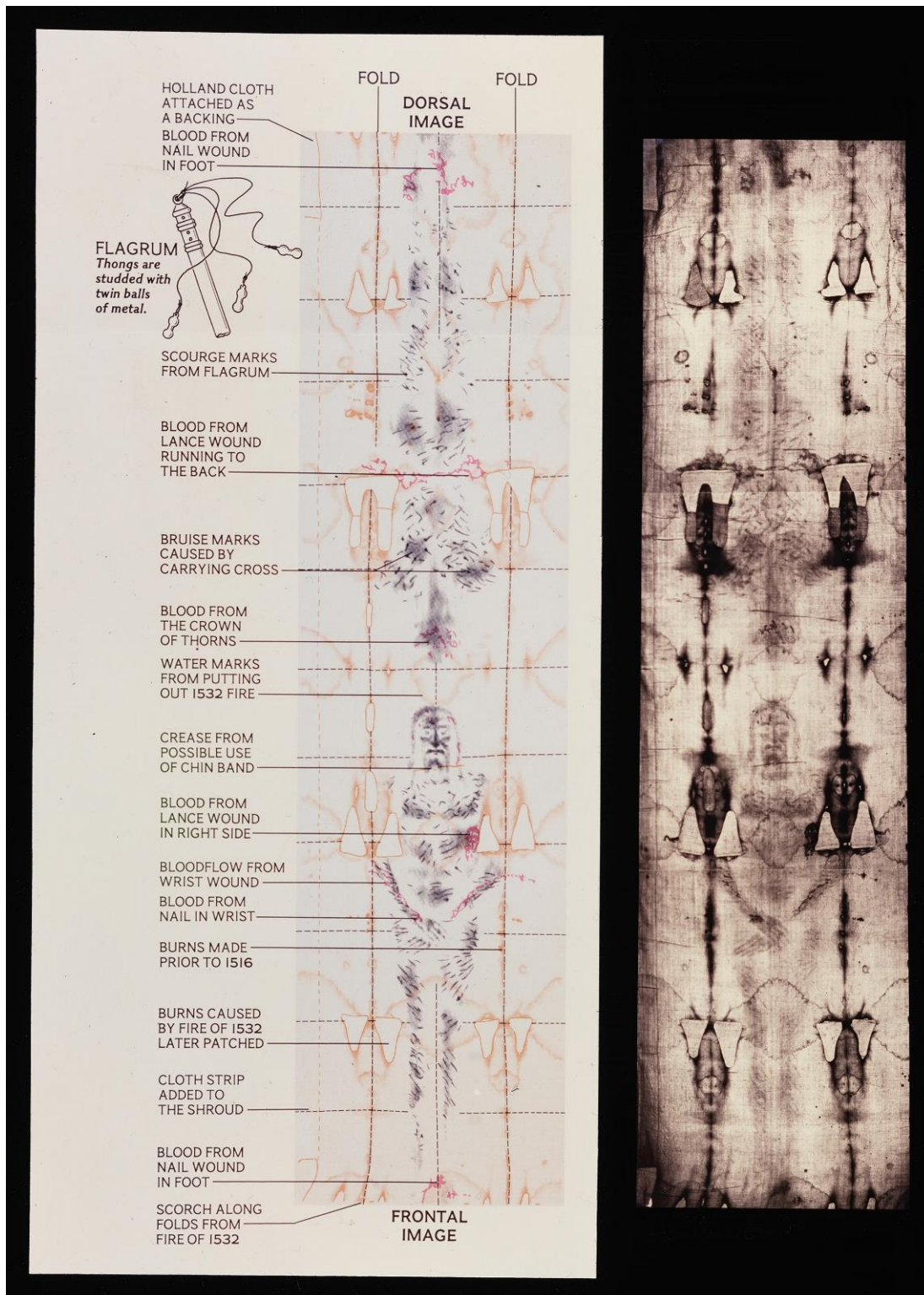
<sup>99</sup> Col 3:3, 5-11 (NASB)

<sup>100</sup> See section V in this paper for thoughts regarding secrecy in the early Church.





**Picture 6.** The frontal image of “the man of the cloth” with bloodstains highlighted. Courtesy of Barrie M. Schwartz Collection, STERA, Inc.



**Picture 7.** Full-body image with explanation of wounds. © Vernon Miller, 1978.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> No unauthorized reproduction of Material on other Websites is allowed without prior written permission from the shroudphotos.com copyright holder. Original photos are available for free at [www.shroudphotos.com](http://www.shroudphotos.com).

## V. Why Reference the Holy Shroud in Secrecy and with Cryptography?

In verse five the writer states, “*but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.*” Is that statement a very early allusion, if not the earliest reference, to what eventually became known in the Church as *The Discipline of the Secret*?<sup>102</sup> The “mysteries”<sup>103</sup> and “pearls”<sup>104</sup> of the Faith needed to be carefully guarded<sup>105</sup> from the uninitiated who had not first undergone a process of catechism. “Milk”<sup>106</sup> and “*the elementary principles of the oracles of God*”<sup>107</sup> were given to “babes.”<sup>108</sup> On the other hand, “*solid food is for the mature.*”<sup>109</sup>

Why exactly did the biblical writer feel the need for secrecy<sup>110</sup> and cryptography<sup>111</sup>? This question is also highly applicable for other veiled references to the Holy Shroud present in the New Testament. In the author’s book, *Divine Testimony for the Resurrection*,<sup>112</sup> strong exegetical evidence is put forward revealing no fewer than four canonical writers who each made at least two veiled references to the Holy Shroud: three Apostles (Paul, John, and Matthew), as well as the biblical author who penned the four veiled references we are focusing on in the *Letter to the Hebrews* (which, collectively, form one giant chiasmus within the central portion of the *Letter*).

So, why secrecy and cryptography? At least two reasons for this are easy to comprehend.

First, secrecy was appropriate to safeguard the Shroud from harm and, potentially, from confiscation and possibly destruction by enemies of the Faith during a time when Christians frequently faced persecution for their beliefs.

Second, secrecy was also appropriate due to the strong iconoclastic feelings prevalent among Jewish circles because of the Second Commandment of their Decalogue and its prohibition against graven images made by men.<sup>113</sup> When Caius Caesar (d. 21 A.D.) wanted to erect statues of himself as a god in the temple at Jerusalem, the first century Jewish historian, Josephus, informs us about the strong resistance that rose up from the Jews themselves. Not only were the men willing to be slain in opposing such images, but they were also willing for their wives and children be slain as well. Josephus writes concerning their opposition:

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<sup>102</sup> For more information on a rule of secrecy in the early Church, see Barnes, A. (1909). “The Discipline of the Secret.” *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Robert Appleton Company: New York, NY); Stalley, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit., chapter 7; and the first two chapters of Markwardt, J. (2021) *The Hidden History of the Shroud of Turin* (Jack Markwardt), pp. 3-10.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Matt 13:11; 1 Cor 13:2; Heb 5:11-13

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Matt 7:6

<sup>105</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 3:1-3

<sup>106</sup> Heb 5:12

<sup>107</sup> Heb 5:12; 6:1

<sup>108</sup> Heb 5:13

<sup>109</sup> Heb 5:14; cf. v. 12

<sup>110</sup> Note verse 5 of our passage which was quoted at the beginning of this section.

<sup>111</sup> Namely, why the cryptic typology associated with “*the greater and more perfect tent*” (9:11; 8:2b) and its inner “*curtain*” (6:19; 10:20)?

<sup>112</sup> See fn. 3.

<sup>113</sup> See Lavoie, G. *The Shroud of Jesus and the Sign John Ingeniously Concealed* (Sophia Institute Press: Manchester, NH, 2023) 29-31.

*... they insisted on their law, and the custom of their country, and how it was ... not permitted them to make either an image of God, or indeed of a man, and to put it in any despicable part of their country, much less in the temple itself...*<sup>114</sup>

So, we can understand why the early Christians had good reasons to be secretive about the existence of the image on Jesus' burial Shroud. While they themselves understood the image was (1) "*from heaven,*"<sup>115</sup> "*not made by (human) hands, that is to say, not of this creation,*"<sup>116</sup> and (2) that the Cloth had been sanctified<sup>117</sup> (i.e., made holy) due to the "blood" on it being the very blood of "the lamb of God," nonetheless, they understood the need to be guarded about speaking openly of the image.

Caution was necessary to safeguard the Shroud from harm that might arise from enemies of the Faith if opponents became aware of its existence. This would have been in keeping with the Lord's warning:

*Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.*"<sup>118</sup>

What would early Christians have regarded as being holier than the Shroud itself, possessing a miraculous image formed by the finger of God and stained with His Son's sacrificial blood, the Lamb of God?

## VI. The Furniture within the Holy Place (v. 2)

*For there was a tabernacle (σκηνή (skēnē) ("tent") prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place (v. 2).*

When the writer begins to expound upon the earthly sanctuary erected by Moses, he mentions two pieces of furniture found within its "*first*" (πρώτη (prōtē) or front compartment, "the Holy Place." These two items were (1) "**the lampstand**" and (2) "**the table**" where the "**consecrated bread**" **was placed**. The thesis of the current paper associates this first compartment of the Messianic Tabernacle with the Holy Shroud. If this thesis is correct, might these two pieces of furniture have some kind of typological association with Jesus Himself?

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<sup>114</sup> Josephus, F. "War of the Jews," trans. Whiston, W. *Josephus Complete Works* (Kregel: Grand Rapids, MI, 1960), II.X.4 (p. 480).

<sup>115</sup> Matt 16:1

<sup>116</sup> Heb 9:11

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. "... the greater and more perfect tabernacle" was a sacred tent that had both covered and served as the abode of—or (earthly) sanctuary for—the divine (i.e., the Son of God) when Jesus carried out His ministry as the superior "*High Priest*," "*passing through the tent*" (9:11) and its "*curtain*" (10:19-20), and thereupon entering the (heavenly) "*Sanctuary*" (9:12).

<sup>118</sup> Matt 7:6

Although the biblical writer does not go into any typological explanation regarding these two items, he does mention them in laying the groundwork for his typology that contrasts the “*earthly sanctuary*” (9:1) of Moses with “*the greater and more perfect tabernacle (tent)*” (9:11) “*when Christ appeared as a priest*” (9:11), “*the true tabernacle (tent) which God pitched, not man*” (8:2b).

The writer does state how he is unwilling or unable to “*speak in detail now about these things*” (9:5). So, apparently, there was more he could have explained about these pieces of furniture. Therefore, we are not out of bounds to wonder and to ponder what kind of typological significance these two items might have had regarding the high-priestly ministry of Jesus. How might the Apostolic Church have understood these two pieces of furniture within “the Holy Place” of the Messianic Tabernacle? In this regard, *John’s Gospel* is especially illuminating.

#### **A. The Lampstand: “*I am the light of the world!*” (John 8:12)**

The first item mentioned being within “the Holy Place” is “*the lampstand.*” The seven-branched candlestick (menorah) was placed at the south side of the Holy Place in the desert Tabernacle.<sup>119</sup> It served to illuminate the chamber.

“Light” and “lamps” came to have symbolic meanings associated with “guidance,”<sup>120</sup> “life,”<sup>121</sup> “joy,”<sup>122</sup> and “prosperity.”<sup>123</sup> The personal name, Neriyah, meant “*The Lord is my light.*”

“Light” was an important motif for the Apostle John in his *Gospel* regarding the Christ. Immediately after the prologue, he writes how John the Baptist spoke of Jesus as being “*the light.*”<sup>124</sup>

*There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, that he might testify about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light but came that he might bear witness to the light. There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.*<sup>125</sup>

Later in that *Gospel*, the Apostle recorded the following assertion spoken by Jesus Himself: “*I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness but shall have the light of life.*”<sup>126</sup> And then during His last public discourse, Jesus stated:

*For a little while longer the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light.*<sup>127</sup>

Do we have any evidence suggesting the burial Shroud was associated with the “light of Christ” in some way? What we do have are several intriguing statements associating the clothing of Jesus with “light.”

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<sup>119</sup> Ex 26:35

<sup>120</sup> Ex 13:21; Prv 6:20, 23

<sup>121</sup> Job 21:17; Prv 20:20

<sup>122</sup> Ps 119:105

<sup>123</sup> 2 Sam 22:29

<sup>124</sup> Jn 1:7

<sup>125</sup> Jn 1:6-9

<sup>126</sup> Jn 8:12

<sup>127</sup> Jn 12:35-36

Each of the Synoptic Gospels relate the story of the transfiguration when the “face of Jesus shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.”<sup>128</sup> Luke states, “His clothing (singular) became white and gleaming (lit., flashing like lightning).”<sup>129</sup> John likely alludes to this story when, in his opening chapter, he wrote: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt (lit., tabernacled) among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”<sup>130</sup> Did the incident of the transfiguration foreshadow and prepare the disciples for the Resurrection to come and the image left behind on the burial Shroud?<sup>131</sup>

In the Revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave to John, seven golden lampstands appear and symbolize the “seven churches” of Asia.<sup>132</sup> John stated:

*... in the middle of the lampstands, I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters ... and His face was like the sun shining in its strength...*<sup>133</sup>

Earlier (section IV.10) we demonstrated how a motif is present both within the biblical canon itself and within extracanonical literature where a “robe of glory” or a “garment of light” is given to those who pass from the material world into the heavenly realm.

In addition to the texts already mentioned earlier, the reader is asked to consider three other statements found outside the biblical canon which plausibly suggest the burial Shroud was associated with the Messianic motif of “light.”

### 1. *The Hymn of the Pearl*

*The Hymn of the Pearl* became a popular story in the third century. The story reveals evidence of having been written no later than 224 A.D.<sup>134</sup> *The Hymn* took the form of an allegorical poem. It told the story of a prince whose Kingly Father had given him the task of rescuing a priceless pearl from the clutches of a dragon. The prince is cast as the identical twin of Jesus. Once he is victorious, his royal robe is returned to him from his Father and is placed on center stage. Upon its delivery, the garment now has a remarkable image etched upon it that has similarities to the Shroud of Turin.

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<sup>128</sup> Matt 17:2

<sup>129</sup> Lk 9:29

<sup>130</sup> Jn 1:14

<sup>131</sup> See chapter 21 of the author’s book, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit., pp. 557-585.

<sup>132</sup> Rev 1:20, 4

<sup>133</sup> Rev 1:13-16

<sup>134</sup> *The Hymn* became embedded in the later gnostic document, *Acts of Thomas*, which is one of the non-canonical writings making up the *New Testament Apocryphal*. *The Hymn* is dated no later than 224 A.D. and its origin remains a mystery. “It may go back to the first century” [Segal, J. (1970), *Edessa, The Blessed City* (Oxford University Press: London), p. 68]. Another student of the *Hymn* states: “...a date within the first two centuries CE is thought to be probable” [Burns, D. (nd), “The Garment Poured Its Entire Self Over Me”: Christian Baptismal Traditions and the Origins of the Hymn of the Pearl,” in *Gnosticism, Platonism and the Late Ancient World: Essays in Honor of John D. Turner*, p. 261, <https://books.google.com/books?id=BfiZAAAAQBAJ&pg=PA261>].



**“The garment of light”** now features a whole body, two-fold image of the prince himself, the king’s son (i.e., the identical twin of Jesus):

*The splendid robe became like me, as my reflection in a mirror.  
I saw it wholly in me,  
And in it I saw myself quite apart from myself,  
So that we were two in distinction.  
And again, one in a single form....  
And the image of the king of kings was completely embroidered all over it.*<sup>135</sup>

## 2. Book of Sirach

Ben Sira was a Hellenistic Jewish sage and allegorist from the Second Temple period. He authored the deuterocanonical *Book of Sirach* between, approximately, 196 and 175 BCE. His work is also known as “Ecclesiasticus” and is part of the canon of Old Testament Scripture for the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and the Assyrian Church of the East. However, modern Jews and most Protestants regard the book as Apocrypha.

An important description is found in this book by Ben Sira that aligns perfectly with the Shroud being looked upon by the earliest Christians as a robe of light. Ben Sira describes the vestment worn by the high priest as a “robe of glory.”<sup>136</sup>

Professor Margaret Barker reveals how:

*... “robe of gory” was a phrase used to describe the dress of angels; the Peshitta of Dan. 10.5 and 12.7 says that the Angel who came to Daniel wore a ‘robe of glory’ and Yahoel in the Apocalypse of Abraham ... wore the dress of the high priest.”*<sup>137</sup>

Furthermore, in Philo’s Alexandrian Judaism the veil or curtain of the temple represented the material world. And, as mentioned earlier in this paper (section IV), the Logos was the heavenly high priest. **When the Logos passed through the curtain—passing from heaven to earth—He clothed Himself with it, taking on material form, and becoming the manifested God to the world.**<sup>138</sup>

*And the Word (Logos) became flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*<sup>139</sup>

Maybe the writer of *Hebrews* was influenced by Philo’s allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures. Maybe not.<sup>140</sup> What we can discern is that he pictured a similar scenario as having

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<sup>135</sup> “Image” is the translation rendered by Mead, G. (1908), “The Hymn of the Robe of Glory,” in *The Mead Collection: Echoes from the Gnosis* (The Gnostic Society Library), [www.gnosis.org/library/grs-mead/grsm\\_robeofglory.htm](http://www.gnosis.org/library/grs-mead/grsm_robeofglory.htm). For more about *The Hymn of the Pearl*, see Stalley, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit., pp. 75-79.

<sup>136</sup> *Sirach*, 50.11

<sup>137</sup> Barker, *The Great Angel*, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>139</sup> Jn 1:14

<sup>140</sup> Westcott provides an informed response: “The style of the Book is characteristically Hellenistic, ... as far as the evidence goes, Alexandrine; but the teaching itself is, like that of St John, characteristically Palestinian.... The writer holds firmly to the true historical sense of the ancient history and the ancient legislation. Jewish



taken place, yet it was from the opposite perspective. Instead of Jesus coming to this world, He departed this material realm and entered heaven. That is, “*when Jesus appeared as a high priest*” (9:11), clothed in the proper attire—i.e., the Shroud as His typological robe of glory (evidenced by its miraculous image)—“*He passed (at the moment of the Resurrection) through the tent*” (9:11) (i.e., the Holy Place) and, at the same time, “*through the curtain*” (10:20). In so doing, Jesus left behind the material realm of this world and entered the presence of God (with His superior sacrificial offering) within the heavenly Holy of Holies (9:24).

### 3. Eusebius

That the vestment of the Jewish High Priest was described as a “robe of glory” may have relevance concerning another intriguing statement from the period of the early Church. The Church historian, Eusebius, made an interesting assertion that was briefly mentioned earlier in this paper (section I). In the late second or early third century, he wrote the following remark about the Apostle Peter traveling to Rome:

*He (Peter), fortified with divine armor, bore **the precious merchandise of the revealed light** from the east to those in the west, announcing the light itself...*<sup>141</sup>

What did Eusebius mean by “divine armor”? As Peter made his journey to Rome, how exactly was he “*fortified with divine armor*”? Did he have possession of the Holy Shroud on that journey? If so, was that divine garment looked upon as providing him with a measure of divine presence and/or protection?

The literary context of Eusebius’ remarks concerns the devil’s scheme of seizing spiritual control of Rome through his agent, Simon Magus.

The Greek word Eusebius used for “armor” (ὅπλοις) (*oplois*) is used elsewhere in ancient texts for a large “shield.” It is a different word than that used by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians, chapter 6, regarding the “armor” (πανοπλία) (*panoplia*) of the Holy Spirit. Did Eusebius purposely use a different word in order to differentiate his intent away from Paul’s treatment regarding “the armor of God”?<sup>142</sup> Was Eusebius using the term cryptically for the Shroud as a suit of armor? Perhaps!

It should be noted that Eusebius does not clearly equate this “divine armor” with the armor of the Holy Spirit. And, if Eusebius intended his readers to understand this armor as being the same armor Paul had written about, why did he use a different Greek term?

Both Paul (τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ) (*tēn panoplian tou theou*) and Eusebius (τοῖς θείοις ὅπλοις) (*tois theiois oplois*) used a plural form of their noun, “armor”. Both terms refer to a complete suit of armor. Armor is something worn around the body. Was this armor a cryptic reference to the Holy Shroud that had once wrapped the entire body of Jesus, the Son of God?

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*ordinances are not for him, as for Philo, symbols of transcendental ideas, but elements in a preparatory discipline for a divine manifestation upon earth. Christ is High-priest not as the eternal Word, but as the Incarnate Son who has lived and suffered and conquered as true man.”* Westcott, B. (1889), *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI, 1970), p. lxi.

<sup>141</sup> Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, II.XIV. Cruse, C. (1955), trans., *Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History*, II. XIV (Baker: Grand Rapids, MI), p. 64.

<sup>142</sup> Eph 6:13

Eusebius does associate this “merchandise” that accompanied Peter on his travels to Rome with “the revealed light.” Specifically, he calls it “the precious merchandise of the revealed light.” Textiles were prominent merchandize sold by merchants in the ancient world, and Mark’s Gospel informs us that Joseph of Arimathea “bought” a linen burial cloth for Jesus.<sup>143, 144</sup> And, while cloth would be sold in the marketplace, it is doubtful that pieces of armor would be commonly sold in the agora—such as a breastplate, shield, or a warrior’s helmet.

It has been suggested Peter may have traveled to Rome as early as 42 A.D.<sup>145</sup> when he left Jerusalem and “went to another place.”<sup>146</sup> Was the linen cloth of the Holy Shroud “the precious merchandize of the divine light” that he took along with him to Rome?

The adjective “precious” is from the Greek word πολυτίμητος (*polutimētos*) and meant “very costly” or “highly honored.” It was frequently used in addressing a divinity. Our English word “emporium” (ἐμπορία) (*emporía*) is derived from the Greek word Eusebius used in this statement that has been translated as “merchandise.” The word carried the idea of “commerce,” “business,” “selling,” or “trading.” **It seems a bit odd, though, even offensive, to speak of “announcing the light itself to those in the west” (i.e., evangelism) as “commerce.”** The offensive notion of referring to evangelism as “business” or “selling” adds strength to the identity of “the merchandise of the revealed light” being the Holy Shroud.

Jesus claimed to be “the light of the world,”<sup>147</sup> the light that brings enlightenment and enables men not to remain in darkness.<sup>148</sup> “The precious merchandize of the revealed light” sounds very much like it is an object, like a garment, that once belonged to Jesus.

Is there an affinity between this cryptic statement by Eusebius concerning “the precious merchandise of the revealed light” and the aforementioned “garment of light” (i.e., the prince’s robe that was the focal point of the *Hymn of the Pearl*), an allegorical story that Eusebius would have been quite familiar with and had originated in Edessa a century earlier? Do both terms envision the “robe of glory” worn by the High Priest, as evidenced by Philo? While we cannot be certain, it does seem very plausible that one, if not both terms (i.e., “the precious merchandise of the revealed light” and “the garment of light”), were cryptic references to the Holy Shroud.

## B. The Table of Showbread: “I am the bread of life!” (John 6:48)

The second piece of furniture the writer of *Hebrews* mentions being within the Holy Place is “the table and the sacred bread.” This table with its consecrated bread stood at the north side of the

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<sup>143</sup> Mark 15:46

<sup>144</sup> The word *Mark* used is the verb form of the noun “agora” (ἀγοράζω), which was the marketplace in the cities of antiquity. The Greek word Eusebius used translated “merchandise” is ἐμπορία, from which we get our English word “emporium.” An extremely close association exists, conceptually, between “commerce” (emporium) and the “marketplace” (agora). On an occasion when the author was contemplating and discussing this statement of Eusebius with other interested persons online, he visited Bush Gardens in Tampa, Florida on a family vacation. Upon entering the theme park, he saw a perfect example of the close, conceptual relationship between those two words. He was struck by the fact that a gift shop on the right side of the street was named the “Emporium,” while opposite, on the left side of the street, there was the “Agora Café.”

<sup>145</sup> Wehnam, J. “Did Peter Go to Rome in 42?”, *Tyndale Bulletin* (1972) 23:94–102.

<sup>146</sup> Acts 12:17

<sup>147</sup> Jn 8:12; 9:5; 12:35; cf. 1:4

<sup>148</sup> Jn 1:4-5; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36, 46

front compartment, across from “the lampstand.”<sup>149</sup> This bread was set before “*the face or presence*” of God.<sup>150</sup> Each sabbath day the priest would place freshly baked bread on the table, in two rows of six loaves each. The old cakes would then be eaten by Aaron and his sons in the Holy Place because the bread was “*most holy*.”<sup>151</sup>

What was the significance or implication of this sacred bread in the Holy Place? Exodus does not provide us with a clear answer. Passages concerning the “showbread” might imply that “*God is man’s provider and sustainer, and that man lives constantly in the presence of God*.”<sup>152</sup> The Christian understands that, in some sense, this sacred bread pointed forward, typologically, to Christ.<sup>153</sup>

Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, the *Fourth Gospel* does not include the eucharistic words of Jesus during the Last Supper. *Matthew* informs us:

*Jesus took bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ And He took a cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is to be shed on behalf of many for forgiveness of sins.’*<sup>154</sup>

Instead, the *Fourth Gospel* includes a discourse that occurred one day between Jesus and “the Jews.” Jesus spoke difficult words that day, causing “*many of His disciples to withdraw and not walk with Him any longer*.”<sup>155</sup> The manna their ancestors had eaten in the wilderness was the topic at hand with Jesus proclaiming to be “*the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die*.”<sup>156</sup> On that occasion Jesus proclaimed:

*I am the bread of life.... I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.*<sup>157</sup>

The Eucharist has been the sacred meal of the Christian Faith since the Resurrection, with it being initiated at the Last Supper during the Passover. The meal shared by the risen Christ on the day of His Resurrection—with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus—had eucharistic overtones. In that Lukan story we find the familiar eucharistic wording:

*And they approached the village ... and they urged Him, saying, “Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.” And He went in to stay with them. And it came about that when Jesus had **reclined at table** with them, **He** (i.e., surprisingly, the guest at the table, rather than the host) **took the bread and blessed it**, and breaking it, **He began giving it to them**. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.... And they arose that very hour and returned to Jerusalem and*

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<sup>149</sup> Ex 25:23-39; 26:35; Lev 24:6

<sup>150</sup> Ex 25:30; 35:13; 39:36

<sup>151</sup> Lev 24:5-9; cf. 1 Sam 21:6

<sup>152</sup> Freeman, D. (1982). “Showbread,” *New Bible Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Tyndale House: Wheaton, IL), p. 1109.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Lk 24:27, 44-45

<sup>154</sup> Matt 26:26-28

<sup>155</sup> Jn 6:66

<sup>156</sup> Jn 6:50

<sup>157</sup> Jn 6:51

*found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, saying, “The Lord has really risen, and has appeared to Simon.” And they began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.*<sup>158</sup>

*“The breaking of the bread”* was likely a euphemism for the Eucharist or *“the Lord’s Supper.”*<sup>159</sup>

Did the burial Shroud, discovered earlier that day, come to have some kind of typological significance with the bread and the fruit of the vine of the Eucharist?

Both “the body” and “the blood” of Jesus is visibly seen on the remarkable image on the burial Shroud. The image graphically portrays Christ crucified. Therefore, the image itself is very much in congruence with the dictate of Jesus and with Paul’s teaching regarding the Lord’s Supper:

*For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, “**This is My body**, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in **My blood**; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” **For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.***<sup>160</sup>

Seeing how the image on the Shroud graphically portrays Christ crucified—featuring both a full-size “body” image and numerous stains of Christ’s actual “blood”—the Shroud certainly does fit with typology associated with the Eucharist (or *“the Lord’s table”*),<sup>161</sup> foreshadowed by *“the table and its sacred bread”* that had been placed within the first compartment of the wilderness Tabernacle, the Holy Place.

Is there any historical evidence suggesting the Holy Shroud was associated with *“the Lord’s Table”* and *“the bread”* of the Eucharist? Yes, there is!

Likely it is not an accident that a long, white linen cloth has customarily draped the Communion table or served as an “altar cloth” (Picture 8). This custom dates back many centuries.<sup>162</sup>



**Picture 8.** The High Altar at St. John the Divine, London. Source: “Altar Cloth,” *Wikipedia*

<sup>158</sup> Lk 24:28-35; cf. 22:14-20; 1 Cor 11:20-29

<sup>159</sup> 1 Cor 11:20; cf. 2:42; 20:7

<sup>160</sup> 1 Cor 11:23-26

<sup>161</sup> 1 Cor 10:21

<sup>162</sup> Dreisbach, A. (1995). “Liturgical Clues to the Shroud’s History,” <https://www.shroud.com/dreisbch.htm>.

It seems very plausible that the long, white linen burial Cloth of the Holy Shroud was the source behind the custom of a long, white tablecloth being on the altar or Communion “table”. Micro particles of wax found on the Turin Shroud might be evidence that, at some point, the Cloth had been used in this manner.<sup>163</sup> However, the wax is not dated. Similarly, the ancient burn holes found on the Holy Shroud may have been caused by candles. These burn holes were replicated in the painting found within the *Pray Manuscript* of Budapest, dated 1192-95 A.D.<sup>164</sup>

A careful analysis of how the Shroud was folded at the time these four sets of identical burn patterns were created sparked the following comment:

*This makes one imagine a minor accident when the Shroud was being used as a Byzantine altar cloth during some solemn religious ceremony, preceding or following a public exposition.*<sup>165</sup>

The Eucharist may indeed have been perceived as having a typological significance with the “table of showbread” that formerly resided within the Holy Place of the ancient Tabernacle. Alfred Adam has furnished evidence indicating how the early Church associated her acts of worship with “the tent” of the Tabernacle.<sup>166</sup>

*The Church in her cult was looked upon as being related to the Israel of the pre-Christian dispensation not through the synagogue, but through the temple, and not just through the temple itself, but through the temple as portrayed in its written Old Testament origins: Gen 14, Ex 25, and Lev 24.*<sup>167</sup>

Furthermore, we find the Eucharist often associated with *The Discipline of the Secret*, discussed earlier (section V). Did the presence of the “body” and the “blood” portrayed on the crucified “man of the cloth” have something to do with the link between the Eucharist and “*The Discipline of the Secret*”? The author suspects such an association not only is plausible but is very probable! The *Letter of Hebrews* states: **“We have an altar, from which those who serve the tabernacle (or sacred tent) (σκηνή) have no right to eat.”**<sup>168</sup>

There is another incident from history that suggests the Shroud had a typological association with the Eucharist. Although its evidence is not as strong as that of “the altar cloth” just mentioned,

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<sup>163</sup> Maloney, P. (September 1989). “The current status of pollen research and prospects for the future”, *Relazione tenuta al Simposio di Parigi*, pp. 7-8. Cited by Fanti and Marinelli, “Results of a probabilistic model applied to the research carried out on the Turin Shroud,” *Shroud.com*, <https://www.shroud.com/fanti3en.pdf>.

<sup>164</sup> Fanti, G. and Marinelli, E. (n.d.) “Results of a probabilistic model applied to the research carried out on the Turin Shroud,” *Shroud.com*, <https://www.shroud.com/fanti3en.pdf>.

<sup>165</sup> Guerrescui, A. and Salcito, M. (April 2002). “PHOTOGRAPHIC AND COMPUTER STUDIES CONCERNING THE BURN AND WATER STAINS VISIBLE ON THE SHROUD AND THEIR HISTORICAL CONSEQUENCES.” *Relation IV Symposium Scientifique Internationale Paris*, <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/aldo3.pdf>.

<sup>166</sup> Adam, A. (1963). “Ein vergessener Aspekt des frühchristlichen Herrenmahles. Eine Beitrag zur Geschichte des Abendmahlsverständnisses der Alten Kirche”, *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, **88**, cols. 9-20; cf. especially col. 14; cited by Swetnam, J. (1966). “‘The Greater and More Perfect Tent’: A Contribution to the Discussion of Heb. 9:11,” *Biblica*, **47**, pp. 95-96.

<sup>167</sup> Swetnam, J. (1966). “‘The Greater and More Perfect Tent’: A Contribution to the Discussion of Heb. 9:11,” *Biblica*, **47**, pp. 96.

<sup>168</sup> Heb 13:10

it is every bit as interesting. This other piece of evidence drawn from history involves two ancient legends.

The older of the two legends concerns an extraordinary story about Jesus that is seldom told. *The Legend of King Abgar* tells how a pagan king was both healed and converted to the Christian faith during the first century. The ancient legend of King Abgar V of Edessa has survived in two different strands. There is an Orthodox account and an Assyrian account of the story.<sup>169</sup> They differ in certain particulars.

Likely the legend took the form of an allegory and actually pertains to a later king, Abgar the Great who ruled Edessa during the late second century. He was healed of a terrible illness and converted to Christianity after seeing a mysterious image of Christ on cloth.<sup>170</sup> When King Abgar looked upon the image, he was miraculously healed of his illness. Subsequently he and many of his citizens were baptized. Thereby, Edessa became “*the world’s first, and oldest, Christian city.*”<sup>171</sup>

In one version of the legend, a painted *image* (icon) of Jesus—made with “choice paints”—was involved in the healing and conversion of the king. In another tradition, the *image* was produced from Jesus having wiped his face on a cloth. A historian in the 6<sup>th</sup> century described the *image* as being of “divine origin.”<sup>172</sup>

*In the earliest version, it was the work of the painter Hannan, in later accounts it would be painted only with the assistance of Jesus, finally it was wholly the work of Jesus himself.*<sup>173</sup>

How does that ancient legend pertain to the Shroud and the Eucharist? Well, it seems quite plausible that *The Legend of King Arthur* and his search for the Holy Grail is actually a later legend built upon the earlier *Legend of King Abgar*. **The blood-stained Holy Shroud was likely the Holy Grail that captured the shed blood of Christ.** To uphold the secret regarding the linen burial Cloth, the later legend developed whereby the chalice used at the Last Supper was associated with Joseph of Arimathea catching the blood of Jesus on the cross.<sup>174</sup>

So, in this evolution of two legends, “the blood” on the Shroud becomes associated with the cup at the Last Supper when Jesus said to His disciples, ‘*Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is to be shed on behalf of many for forgiveness of sins.*’<sup>175</sup>

But there is something else that needs to be considered regarding *The Legend of King Abgar*. An especially intriguing inscription was discovered by archeologist William Ramsay in 1883. It is engraved on a monument and known today as *The Inscription of Abercius* (Picture 9).

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<sup>169</sup> “The Legend of Abgar” is related by the early 4<sup>th</sup> century church historian, Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, I.XIII. For a brief commentary of the *Legend*, see Quasten, J. (1950) *Patrology* (Christian Classics: Westminster, Maryland), I, pp. 140-143.

<sup>170</sup> Guscini, M. (2009) *The Image of Edessa* (Brill Press: Boston, MA), p. 179.

<sup>171</sup> Wilson, I. (2010) *The Shroud: Fresh Light On the 2000-Year-Old Mystery* (Bantam Books: London), p. 160.

<sup>172</sup> Guscini, *The Image of Edessa*, op. cit., pp. 37-39.

<sup>173</sup> Segal, J. (1970) *Edessa, The Blessed City* (Oxford University Press: London), p. 77.

<sup>174</sup> Scavone, D. (1999). “Joseph of Arimathea, the Holy Grail, and the Edessa Icon.” *Arthuriana*, 9, no 4, <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/n56part3.pdf>

<sup>175</sup> Matt 26:27-28



Picture 9 Inscription of Abercius<sup>176</sup>

The monument is dateable to 192 A.D. and is attributed to Bishop Avircius<sup>177</sup> Marcellus of Phrygian Hieropolis. Today this is regarded as “the queen of all ancient Christian inscriptions”.<sup>178</sup>

The monument served as the author’s epitaph and records a metaphorical summary of his travels, “written in a mystical and symbolic style, according to the *Discipline of the Secret*, to conceal its Christian character from the uninitiated” [Ibid].

The *Inscription* relates how the pope summoned the author to Rome “to see a Queen Golden-robed and Golden-sandaled.” He then relates how he traveled to Mesopotamia where he saw the cities of Syria, which would have included both Antioch and Edessa. Someone named “Paul” accompanied him on his mission. Interestingly, a man named “Palut” would become the first bishop of Edessa. Most importantly, the *Inscription* discloses that, at some point on the journey, the author was provided with “a fish of exceeding great size”<sup>179</sup> which possessed “wine of great virtue” that “was mingled with bread.”

*By this time Christians had begun to use the sign of a fish as a symbol of Christ to mark meeting places, tombs, and as code to distinguish friend from foe.*<sup>180</sup>

The word for fish in Greek is ΙΧΘΥΣ, which formed an acrostic acronym: “Jesus, Christ, God’s Son, Savior.” About the same time that this early, Christian *Inscription of Abercius* was produced, the

<sup>176</sup> Attribution: File: XV01 - Roma, Museo civiltà romana - Iscrizione di Abercio - Foto Giovanni Dall'Orto 12-Apr-2008.jpg, *Wikipedia Commons*.

<sup>177</sup> Avircius is a Latin name. “Towards the end of the second century, the Greeks began to replace the Latin V with a B, and this practice became commonplace in the third century” [311, p. 737].

<sup>178</sup> Quasten, J. (1950), *Patrology* (Christian Classics: Westminster, Maryland), 1, p. 171.

<sup>179</sup> This is the translation published in the original edition of the Catholic Encyclopedia [Leclercq, H. (1907), “Inscription of Abercius,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Robert Appleton Company: New York).]. Quasten [*Patrology*, op. cit., p. 172] employs the words “mighty and pure.”

<sup>180</sup> Leclercq, “Inscription of Abercius,” op. cit.



African theologian, Tertullian, in a commentary on baptism, wrote: “We as little fishes, in accordance with our fish (ΙΧΘΥΣ) Jesus Christ, are born in water.”<sup>181</sup>

The meaning of the *Inscription of Abercius* is commonly understood in light of the Eucharist. However, it speaks of receiving a “mighty fish,” or a fish of “exceeding great size.” In another inscription from about the same time, “*The Inscription of Pectorius*,” the ΙΧΘΥΣ acrostic is used in five lines of a beautiful poem. For our interest here, the Eucharist is described there as “holding the Fish in your hands.” It seems doubtful that “a fish of exceeding great size” should be understood as a serving of the Eucharist. Rather than a large fish, a small fish would be more in keeping with the words of that poem: “*The food as sweet as honey: Eat with joy and desire, holding the Fish in thy hands.*”<sup>182</sup> A “small fish” is what we should expect with the eating of the Eucharist.

**Might the “fish of exceeding great size” be a cryptic reference to the Holy Shroud with its full-size imprint of the body of Christ?**

*By metaphorically describing the fish which had been provided to him for his journey as being “of exceeding great size, and perfect,” Avircius is clearly alluding to a fourteen-foot-long linen cloth which bears an anatomically-perfect image of Christ’s body.*<sup>183</sup>

Furthermore, this large fish is spoken of as possessing “wine of great virtue” that “was mingled with bread.” Is that a reference to the **blood** stains on the Lord’s crucified **body**, both being quite visible on the Cloth’s image?

Did enlightened Christians read this esoteric inscription with spiritual discernment and perceive important identifying markers just beneath the surface?

Here is the intriguing question that “the queen of all ancient Christian inscriptions” should cause us to ponder:

Did this Christian Bishop, Avircius Marcellus, while on his journey to Syria—serving on that particular occasion as a missionary evangelist on behalf of the Pope in Rome (who had received a request for Christian conversion from the pagan King of Edessa)—temporarily take possession of the Shroud with its large image of Jesus (“a fish of exceeding great size”), which revealed not only the image of His crucified body (“bread”) but also his bloodstains (“wine of great virtue”)?

Shroud historian, Jack Markwardt, has put forth evidence supporting the intriguing and strong hypothesis whereby the author of the *Inscription of Abercius* took the Shroud from Antioch to Edessa in support of the conversion of King Abgar VIII (the Great). Subsequently the Shroud was returned to Antioch [254, pp. 1-50].<sup>184</sup>

Consequently—for purposes of concealment and for the King’s safety during a subsequent period of persecution—the *Legend of Abgar* was formulated as a historical allegory, whereby the actual conversion of King Abgar the Great of Edessa (near the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century) was

<sup>181</sup> Tertullian, “On Baptism” (Chap. 1). See Roberts, A. and Donaldson, J., eds. (1885), *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, 10 volumes (Hendrickson Publishers: Peabody, MA), **3**, p. 669.

<sup>182</sup> For an analysis of *The Inscription of Pectorius*, see Quasten, *Patrology*, op. cit., pp. 173-175.

<sup>183</sup> Markwardt, J. (2008), “Ancient Edessa and the Shroud, History Concealed by the Discipline of the Secret.” *Proceedings of the Columbus International Shroud Conference, Columbus, Ohio*, pp. 16-18.  
<http://www.shrouduniversity.com/osucon08/audio/jackmarkwardt.mp3>.

<sup>184</sup> Markwardt, J. (2021), *The Hidden History of the Shroud of Turin* (Orlando, FL), pp. 69-73.

substituted for the conversion of the earlier King Abgar V, who reigned from 13-50 A.D., during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry.

## VII. The Three Witnesses Kept in the Ark of the Covenant within the Holy of Holies (v. 4)

Back in verse four, the writer had made mention of (a) *“the jar of manna,”* (b) *“Aaron’s rod that budded,”* and (c) *“the stone tablets of the covenant.”* These were regarded as witnesses of God’s powerful working among the Israelites during their years in the wilderness. Similarly, the ark of the covenant was perceived as a holy repository where these miraculous artifacts were preserved, serving either as signs or as witnesses for future generations. In Exodus and Numbers, the common Deuteronomic term “Ark of the Covenant” is replaced by the term “Ark of Testimony (or witness),” or simply *“The Testimony”*<sup>185</sup> The contents bore witness to the powerful and gracious working of the Lord, in their midst, leading them on their journey to the promised land!

Even so, there is likely another way in which they functioned as a witness that is of interest to our biblical author. For, in a typological sense, each of the three special artifacts can be perceived as foreshadowing the linen burial Shroud of the Messiah, God’s Anointed.

1. For example, could *“the stone tablets of the covenant”* not be described exactly like *“the greater tent”* of verse eleven, as something *“not made by human hands, that is not of this creation (or of ordinary building)”*? If not, why not? Although earthly stones, they had been divinely engraved—not by man, but rather—by *“the finger of God.”*<sup>186</sup> *“And the tablets were God’s work, and the writing was God’s writing engraved on the tablets.”*<sup>187</sup>

Did early Christians look upon the miraculous *image* engraved upon the linen Shroud in the same manner as those stone tablets of old? In fact, does verse four not plausibly suggest that the early Church viewed those tablets as a foreshadowing “type” of the Shroud that had now appeared in their own time (with a miraculous engraving upon it), an object of “divine testimony” associated with the Messiah Himself whom Moses had prophesied would come one day?<sup>188</sup>

And did the early Christians counter accusations from Jewish opponents about the image on the Shroud being a “graven image” (and, therefore, in violation of the Second Commandment) by pointing to those two stone tablets in the biblical text which, similarly, had *“not been made by human hands”*?

2. The second artifact of testimony the writer of *Hebrews* mentions that also had been preserved in the ark was *“the jar of manna.”*

<sup>185</sup> E.g., Ex 16:34; 32:15. In particular, this “testimony” referred to the tablets of stone as being a witness to the covenant the Lord had made with the Israelites (Ex. 25:21). LXX: plural noun, τῶν μαρτυρίων (*tōn marturiōn*), Num 17:25 (17:10); singular noun, τοῦ μαρτυρίου (*tou marturion*), Num 17:19 (17:4)].

<sup>186</sup> Ex 31:18

<sup>187</sup> Ex 32:16

<sup>188</sup> Deut 18:15; cf. Jn 5:37; 1 Jn 5:9-10. See the author’s book, *Divine Testimony*, pp. 443-506

*This is what the Lord has commanded, “Let an omer of it be kept throughout your generations (i.e., as a witness), that they may see the bread that I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.”*<sup>189</sup>

Moses instructed Aaron:

*Take a jar and put an omer of manna in it, and place it before the Lord, to be kept throughout your generations.... so, Aaron placed it before the Testimony, to be kept (as a witness).*<sup>190</sup>

How might that artifact have served as a typological foreshadowing of Christ’s burial Shroud? Well, the manna was the daily food needed by the Israelites for their survival during their long and barren journey through the wilderness on their way to the promised land. As such, its appearance and availability each morning was a gracious gift from above.

Likewise, the miraculous image left behind on Christ’s burial Shroud should be regarded as a precious gift from above, bearing witness to God’s love for humanity.<sup>191</sup> The image graphically depicts how “*God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whosoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life.*”<sup>192</sup> The image depicts how great His love is for us! Similarly, the passage in *Hebrews* speaks of the “*manna*” that God had graciously supplied the Israelites with during their years in the wilderness in order that they might live and not die.

Jesus saw Himself as being “*the bread of life*” that “*he who eats this bread shall live forever.*”<sup>193</sup>

*I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.*<sup>194</sup>

The Apostle John recorded those statements uttered by Jesus and, thereby, associated Christ’s “flesh” both metaphorically and typologically with “manna” from heaven.

3. Next, we will consider the third artifact mentioned in the passage that was preserved in the ark of the covenant for future generations, namely “***the rod of Aaron that budded.***” We will reveal how it too was likely viewed as a foreshadowing type of the Holy Shroud. When all three artifacts mentioned in verse four are considered collectively (preserved within the ark to serve as witnesses for future generations), and the writer’s statement regarding secrecy in verse five is also considered, then a strong measure of textual support is given to the exegetical thesis of this paper, identifying “*the greater and more perfect tent*” of verse eleven with the Holy Shroud.

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<sup>189</sup> Ex 16:32

<sup>190</sup> Ex 16:33-34

<sup>191</sup> The image on the Shroud was understood by the Apostolic Church as being God’s powerful “witness” or “testimony” regarding His Son’s sacrificial work on the Cross. See 1 Jn 5:9-10 (cf. Jn 3:14-16; 5:37; 19:34-35) and chapter 17 of the author’s book, *Divine Witness*, pp. 443-506.

<sup>192</sup> Jn 3:16

<sup>193</sup> Jn 6:35, 58

<sup>194</sup> Jn 6:48-51

## VIII. Aaron's Rod as a Foreshadowing Type of Christ's Burial Shroud

The intriguing story behind Aaron's rod is recorded in the book of Numbers. His walking staff played a significant role in the aftermath of Korah's rebellion when a number of prominent men had rejected both the authority and choice of Aaron (the brother of Moses) to serve as their high priest. As a result, those objectors were struck dead by God, and Aaron's rod miraculously budded overnight with blossoms and almonds. **The miracle was God's testimony that Aaron was indeed His chosen high priest!**

How might Aaron's rod have been perceived as a "type" (8:5) of the Holy Shroud to come (cf. Lk 24:27, 44-45)? **What would the writer of *Hebrews* have said if he had been free to say more (v. 5)?** Consider the following typological truths regarding Aaron's rod that budded:

- After being left overnight within the Sacred Tent (lined with fine linen), Aaron's rod was discovered in the morning to have sprouted back to life with blossoms and almonds!
- The stick belonging to Aaron had undergone a rebirth from death back to life!
- Imagine the stunned surprise of those who saw and made that discovery in the morning!
- This miracle of rebirth was **God's divine testimony** to the people that Aaron was His High Priest.
- Moses was instructed to keep this stick (or staff) belonging to Aaron and to place it within the inner chamber of the grand Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, inside the Ark of the Covenant. That rectangular box, made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold, was also known as the box "(of) *the testimonies*" or "(of) *the witnesses*."<sup>195</sup> The lid on the box was known as "the mercy seat" and was guarded by two golden cherubs with outspread wings.<sup>196</sup>
- Aaron's rod was spoken of as being a "witness."<sup>197</sup>
- **Moses was instructed by God to preserve Aaron's rod for future generations as "a sign (σημεῖον) against the rebels."**<sup>198</sup>
- Likely, this was the same staff or rod belonging to Aaron that had formerly been used by God to work miracles of harm (or plagues) before Pharaoh in Egypt so that he would let God's people leave their bondage behind in Egypt.<sup>199</sup>

So, how exactly did Aaron's rod foreshadow, typologically, the burial Shroud of Christ? Several points of congruence can readily be discerned:

- Aaron and Christ both served as the Lord's chosen High Priest!
- Their ministries were both rejected by the people!
- The covering and abode of the Tabernacle played a role in each story!

<sup>195</sup> LXX: τῶν μαρτυρίων (*tōn marturiōn*), Num 17:25 (17:10); singular noun, τοῦ μαρτυρίου (*tou marturion*), Num 17:19 (17:4)].

<sup>196</sup> Heb 9:5; cf. Jn 20:12

<sup>197</sup> Ex 25:16, 21; cf. Jn 5:37, 1 Jn 5:9-10. On those last two passages within the Johannine corpus, see Stalley, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit., chapter 17.

<sup>198</sup> Num 17:10; cf. 16:38, 40

<sup>199</sup> See Ex 7:9-10; 8:16-17.

- Aaron's rod had spent the night inside the Tabernacle. Similarly, the body of Jesus had spent the night inside the Holy Shroud that was typologically, at the time, the Holy Place of the Messianic Tabernacle.
- In each case, a surprising and miraculous discovery was found in the morning!
- **The find constituted a divine testimony bearing witness to God's chosen one!**
- Each became an abiding witness!
- Each object offered miraculous evidence for the engendering and/or strengthening of faith!<sup>200</sup>
- Aaron's rod was preserved as "*a sign against the rebels*"? Should the Holy Shroud be viewed in the same manner?<sup>201</sup>
- Both Aaron's rod and the Shroud (with its miraculous image) were divine signs!
  - "Sign" of God at work, as an aid for faith!
  - "Sign" of God at work, as a warning of judgment and punishment!
- The question of miracles?<sup>202</sup> Aaron's rod was used by God to work miracles.<sup>203</sup> Similarly, we might ask if the Shroud was possibly used by the Apostles in healings?<sup>204</sup>

Should we conclude these many points of similarities were accidental and merely coincidences? Either they were coincidental, or they were divinely intentional! It is one or the other! The number of parallels is so many that, surely, the writer was familiar with these similarities and perceived them as being the work of God, being providentially intended. We should note that he wrote specifically about typology, not coincidences. For the Law was "*only a shadow of the good things*

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<sup>200</sup> After studying the Shroud of Turin up close with their scientific instruments and conducting numerous experiments, the team of scientists associated with The Shroud of Turin Research Project (STuRP) in 1978 concluded that the Cloth "*was not the product of an artist*" and that an explanation for how the image might have originally formed (by some natural means) "*is an ongoing mystery and ... the problem remains unsolved*" [Heller, J. (1981) *A Summary of STuRP's Conclusions*. <https://www.shroud.com/78conclu.htm>]. Still today the image on the Shroud is, apart from God, both inexplicable and irreproducible. As the writer of *Hebrews* stated, it is "*not by human hands, that is not of ordinary building*" (Heb 9:11)]. It is "the Father's witness" (see Jn 8:37 and 1 Jn 5:9-10)!

<sup>201</sup> Consider the warning and language of judgment spoken in the passage concerning the promised "sign of Jonah" (Matt 12:38-45), as well as the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem that took place in 70 A.D. The current author has written an extensive exegesis regarding "the sign of Jonah," postulating that the image on the Shroud is indeed that promised "sign." See Stalley, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit., chapter 20.

<sup>202</sup> This canonical writer mentions how miracles had accompanied the preaching of the Apostles (Heb 2:3-4). It has been argued that Peter used Antioch of Syria as the base for his missionary activities between 47-54 A.D. [Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1961), pp. 281-82.] The book of Acts informs us how Antioch also became a home base for Paul's missionary activities. Perhaps Antioch became the home for the Shroud during that time. Perhaps that is where it was kept and shown to trusted and informed believers who traveled to that city. One piece of evidence supporting the thesis of the Shroud being used as an aid in evangelism is the cryptic message found on the late second-century *Inscription of Abercius*, "the queen of all ancient Christian inscriptions" [Quasten, J. *Patrology* (Christian Classics: Westminster, MD), 1:171]. For more about this early and intriguing *Inscription*, see chapter 4 the author's book, *Divine Testimony*.

<sup>203</sup> Apparently, this was the same rod used later to strike the rock in Kadesh (Num 20:7-11; cf. Ex 7:9-10; 8:16-17). Similarly, Moses made use of "*the staff of God*" in performing signs and miracles before the Israelites and Pharaoh (Ex 4:2-5, 17, **20**; 9:23; 10:13; 14:16; 17:5-6, **9**).

<sup>204</sup> See Heb 2:3-4; Gal 3:1, 5; Acts 19:12; Matt 14:36; and consider the *early Legend of King Abgar*. Regarding that *Legend*, see Stalley, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit., chapter 4.

to come”<sup>205</sup> and “of these things we cannot now speak in detail.”<sup>206</sup> He was aware of much more “about these things” than he was willing to disclose.

## IX. Holy Fire and the Holy of Holies

Two additional pieces of evidence support the thesis of this paper. Each is quite fascinating!

Shortly before his statement about “the greater and more perfect tent” (9:11), the biblical author made mention of the earthly sanctuary (v. 1) and how:

*... behind the second (i.e., the inner) curtain there was a tabernacle (i.e., sacred tent) (σκηνη) (skēnēs) which is called the Holy of Holies, having ... the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold.... And above it was the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.*<sup>207</sup>

The book of Exodus informs us that inside this second compartment, the Holy of Holies, was the place where the Lord promised to dwell among the Israelites as they journeyed through the wilderness.<sup>208</sup> In particular, this is where the High Priest would enter on the Day of Atonement to “meet with the Lord”<sup>209</sup> and offer an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the people. The holy presence of the Lord was signaled by “a cloud over the mercy seat.”

*And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the curtain, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.’*<sup>210</sup>

Furthermore, the Lord gave the following instructions regarding the golden cherubim:

*And you shall make a mercy seat of pure gold... and two cherubim of gold ... at the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at its two ends. And the cherubim shall have their wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be turned toward the mercy seat. And you shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark, you shall put the testimony which I shall give to you. **And there I will meet with you...***<sup>211</sup>

It is especially interesting to ponder these Scriptures with the account of the Resurrection found in the *Fourth Gospel*. John, in his *Gospel*, helps us to complete the typological picture that we have

<sup>205</sup> Heb 10:1; cf. 8:5; 9:23; 13:10; 9:1 & 24

<sup>206</sup> Heb 9:5

<sup>207</sup> Heb 9:3-5

<sup>208</sup> Ex 25:8

<sup>209</sup> See Ex 25:22; 29:42-43.

<sup>210</sup> Lev 16:2

<sup>211</sup> Ex 25:17-22a

suggested so far regarding the Holy Shroud. It served as the first compartment of the Messianic Tabernacle, the Holy Place, as well as the inner curtain that separated the two compartments. Now when we add John's account to our construct, a more complete picture comes into focus.

John informs us that when Mary returned to the tomb later that day, the day of the Resurrection, she *"stooped and looked into the tomb, and she beheld **two angels** clothed in white robes sitting, **one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.**"*<sup>212</sup>

In John's eyes, these "two angels dressed in white" are surely intended to represent the two *"cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat"* who guarded the ark of the covenant inside the Holy of Holies and of which the writer of *Hebrews* stated, *"but of these things we cannot now speak in detail."*<sup>213</sup> In this paper we have been seeking to understand the typology that he was concealing because he was not at liberty to write openly about such matters.

Recently, scientists exposed the stone slab in the tomb of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on which the body of Jesus had likely been laid.<sup>214</sup>

A very intriguing picture comes into focus when we mesh John's account of the tomb with the Scriptures just cited from the Pentateuch, along with the thesis explained in this paper based on the Letter to the *Hebrews*.

- The linen burial Shroud of Christ served as the first compartment of the Messianic Tabernacle, the Holy Place. As *"the greater and more perfect tent,"* it provided both a covering and a place of dwelling for the Son of God while His body laid on a stone slab inside the tomb.
- Due to John's added information, we learn that the stone slab also played a role in the unfolding typology. That stone bench was viewed as being the ark of the covenant, and the slab on top was perceived as being the mercy seat within the Holy of Holies.<sup>215</sup>
- What's more, the tomb itself was viewed as an earthly type of the second compartment of the Messianic Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies. In keeping with the command given to Moses to make an exact copy of the heavenly tabernacle,<sup>216</sup> and also being in alignment with the

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<sup>212</sup> Jn 20:11-12

<sup>213</sup> Heb 9:5; see fn. 102.

<sup>214</sup> Romey, K. (October 26, 2016) "Exclusive: Christ's Burial Place Exposed for First Time in Centuries" in *National Geographic*, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/jesus-tomb-opened-church-holy-sepulchre>.

<sup>215</sup> In a similar manner, the early Church likely perceived the linen Shroud as a type of the curtain in the heavenly Tabernacle. Once Jesus went through the linen burial Shroud, at the moment of the Resurrection, typologically he went through the linen curtain and, thereby, entered into the presence of God to offer His superior sacrifice. Such an understanding aligns with the biblical writer's statement found in chapter six: *"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the curtain, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek"* (6:19-20).

<sup>216</sup> Ex 25:40; cf. Heb 8:5



prayer of Jesus Himself regarding the coming of God's Kingdom,<sup>217</sup> the early Church perceived the Shroud and the tomb to have symbolized the two compartments of the Messianic tabernacle where Christ had offered His atoning sacrifice, the antitype to the wilderness Sanctuary: *"on earth as in heaven."*

- And the "two angels, *one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying,*" symbolized the cherubim on the mercy seat that rested upon the ark of the covenant.

So, we are beginning to see what the writer of *Hebrews* was apparently hiding when he said, *"but of these things we cannot now speak in detail."* What we just detailed above is, apparently, several of the most significant details.

When the resurrected body of Jesus went through the linen Shroud, He was also going through "the curtain," thereby leaving the Holy Place and entering the second compartment, as stated in our main passage:

*When Jesus appeared as a high priest, through the greater and more perfect tent, ... and with His own blood, He entered into the Holy of Holies.*<sup>218</sup>

The linen Shroud not only served as "The Holy Place" of the Messianic Tabernacle, but it was also viewed as being "the inner curtain"—a common linen wall shared by both compartments but, at the same time, a barrier separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

When Jesus was resurrected—and "*His flesh*" went "*through the curtain*"<sup>219</sup>—He entered the second compartment, the (heavenly) Holy of Holies, to offer His blood as a once-for-all sin offering to God. **The tomb and the stone slab within it, on which "*His body had been lying,*"**<sup>220</sup> **symbolized, on earth, the Holy of Holies and its mercy seat within the heavenly Tabernacle.**

And the "*two angels*" at the two ends of that stone slab symbolized the two cherubim associated with the mercy seat. **John envisioned a typology where what took place in heaven was symbolized on earth.**

**John associated the tomb with the second or back compartment of the tabernacle, that is the Holy of Holies. If the tomb symbolized the second compartment, then we must ask ourselves: what was the first or front compartment wherein Jesus had to be prior to "passing through" it into the second compartment? *The Letter to the Hebrews* and the thesis of this paper provides us with that answer: The burial Shroud wherein Jesus had dwelt, which also had served as a tent covering or "tabernacle," served as that first compartment, namely "the Holy Place."**

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<sup>217</sup> Matt 6:10; cf. Lk 24:25-27; Mt 26:24. The current author is *not* suggesting that the original context for these words from the Lord's Prayer concerned tabernacle theology. No! The plea concerns the ethics that will characterize the Kingdom of God, as expounded extensively upon in the *Sermon of the Mount*. Nonetheless, the words themselves do fittingly express the perception the early Church had regarding the typology governing the Messianic Tabernacle: "*Thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven.*"

<sup>218</sup> Heb 9:11-12; cf. 6:19-20; 10:20; 9:24

<sup>219</sup> Heb 10:20. See fn. 47.

<sup>220</sup> John 20:12

So, *Hebrews* reveals how the Holy Shroud was associated with the first compartment of the Messianic Tabernacle, the Holy Place, while John's *Gospel* portrays the tomb as corresponding to the second compartment, the Holy of Holies. Picture 2 might assist the reader in perceiving these typological truths. The typology of these two canonical writers meshes together perfectly!

But there is more! An additional piece of important evidence should be considered by the reader, adding support to both the thesis set forth in this paper and what we should discern from John's *Gospel*.

A phenomenon known as "the Holy Fire" (Picture 10) miraculously appears each year within the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem on Holy Saturday. Although this event is not common knowledge, the phenomenon has been taking place within the traditional tomb of Christ for centuries.

The Lord promised to meet with Aaron, the high priest, within the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement.<sup>221</sup> His "**glory**" (Ex 29:42-43) would "**consecrate**" the tent. And, on that Day, the Lord stated: "**I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat**" (Lev 16:2).

The following is how the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Diodorus, explained the Holy Fire phenomenon in an interview back in 1998:

*He stated that in the darkness in the inner room of the tomb where Christ was buried, he knelt, said certain prayers and waited. Almost immediately, **an indefinable light rose from the stone on which Jesus lay.** This non-burning light at one point rose to form like a pillar so that he could light his candles from it. So, he went out and set fire to all the (candles of the) people in the Basilica.*<sup>222, 223</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Ex 25:22; 29:43; 30:6

<sup>222</sup> Fanti, G. (2019). "Is the 'Holy Fire' Related to the Turin Shroud?" *Global Journal of Archaeology & Anthropology*, **10** (2): 555782. DOI: 10.19080/GJAA.2019.10.555782 (emphasis of bold font has been added).

<sup>223</sup> For more details concerning the Holy Fire, see the companion volume to the author's book, Fanti, G. and Siefker, R. (2023) *The Holy Fire and the Divine Photography: The Image of the Holy Shroud of Christ* (Jenny Stanford Publishing: Singapore).



**Picture 10.** Giulio Fanti holding a candle lit with the mysterious and amazing, non-burning *Holy Fire* during the special service on Holy Saturday at the Holy Sepulcher in 2019. Professor Fanti is a prolific writer regarding the burial Shroud and is a co-author of the book, *The Holy Fire and the Divine Photography: The Image of the Holy Shroud of Christ*. Fanti is also the general editor for the companion volume, *Divine Testimony for the Resurrection: Hidden References to the Holy Shroud in the Bible*, written by Larry Stalley, the author of this academic paper. Photo courtesy of Giulio Fanti.

Regarding the mercy seat, in Exodus 25, the Lord had stated the following about the golden cherubim and the mercy seat:

*“And there I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.”*

Not only did the Lord promise “to meet” with the High Priest within the Holy of Holies on that special day of the year, only on that one day was he permitted entrance into that inner Sanctuary:

*Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the curtain, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; **for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.***<sup>224</sup>

In another passage, Lord promised to “consecrate” the tent by His glory.<sup>225</sup>

The biblical narrative associated a “pillar of cloud” and a “pillar of fire” with the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Many interpret this as being two pillars, but others understand it to be a single pillar

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<sup>224</sup> Lev 16:2 (emphasis of bold font added)

<sup>225</sup> Ex 29:42-46

that changed its appearance by day or by night.<sup>226</sup> The narrative states that a cloud went ahead of the Israelites by day to guide their way, and the pillar of fire led the people by night and gave them light. The dual theophany (manifestation of God) symbolized God's presence and guidance.

The thesis of this paper equates the time Jesus spent within the burial Shroud with His presence within the Holy Place of the Tabernacle in which He ministered (9:11). Then, once "*His flesh*" went "*through the curtain*" (10:20; cf. 6:20) of the Shroud, He "*entered into the (heavenly) Holy of Holies*" (9:12), offering His atoning sacrifice to God.<sup>227</sup>

This miraculous fire occurring each year within the tomb on Holy Saturday is a significant and additional piece of affirming evidence that the tomb itself was indeed linked, typologically, with being an earthly type of the *Holy of Holies*. And it is important to note that before the high priest could enter the "second compartment" (cf. v. 3) of the Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, he first had to pass through the outer or "first compartment," namely the *Holy Place*. So, what was that "first tent" with regards to the Messianic Tabernacle? And when did Christ "pass through" that "first tent" (cf. vv. 2, 2, 6, and 8)? The correct answer: when Christ passed through the burial Shroud!

In the current section of the paper, it has been revealed how John associated the tomb, typologically, with the Holy of Holies and the stone slab on which the body of Jesus had laid with being the mercy seat. These typological truths certainly add insight and awe to the Holy Fire that occurs within the tomb annually on Holy Saturday above that stone slab: "*...for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.*"<sup>228</sup>

Furthermore, it is certainly worth noting the fact that this Holy Fire is something "***not made by human hands, that is not of this creation.***" It is of (or belongs to) a different realm. The same can be said about *the image* on the Shroud.

## X. Objections to the Thesis

Some objections might be raised regarding "the tent" of Hebrews 9:11 being associated with the burial Shroud, either as "the holy place" of the Messianic Tabernacle or possibly as Christ's high-priestly garment. Two objections are anticipated.

1. First, while contextually it seems best for "the greater tent" of the writer's Messianic temple typology to be understood as a place (such as the first compartment or holy place), what evidence supports "the tent" being plausibly linked to a priestly garment? That is, some might object to the hypothesis that **the Shroud served typologically as a high-priestly garment** for Jesus. They might say this association is untenable since no specific mentioning of a high-priestly garment is found in the Letter itself. "*This association of the two is simply a matter of eisegesis!*" What might the author say in response to such criticism? This objection was

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<sup>226</sup> See "Pillars of fire and cloud," *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pillars\\_of\\_fire\\_and\\_cloud](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pillars_of_fire_and_cloud).

<sup>227</sup> Note fn. 189.

<sup>228</sup> Ex 25:22

addressed earlier. So, the reader is directed to section IV where the author's response is presented with a dozen reasons in support of the hypothesis.

2. A second objection that might be raised against any association existing between "the greater tabernacle" of Hebrews 9:11 and the burial Shroud of Jesus concerns **the two descriptive explanations** provided by the biblical author in the verse. *"The linen cloth of the burial Shroud was handmade by someone—and the text specifically states how 'the tent' was 'not made by human hands, that is not of this creation.'"*

That is a fair and, seemingly, formidable objection. However, this opposition to the thesis is not so formidable when the following responses are pondered and weighed. The author will now respond to each of the two textual explanations individually.

- 2.1. The first explanation given by the writer for "the greater tabernacle" is that it was something **"not made by human hands."**

- a. Is there something about the Shroud of Turin that might be described as *"not made by human hands"*?

It has been reported that the Shroud of Turin is the most studied object in the world.<sup>229</sup> In 1978, a team of more than thirty scientists from the United States—with several tons of sophisticated instruments having been exported to Italy for the task—examined the Cloth and scrutinized over the data they collected. Yet, after countless hours of analysis and reflection, they were unable to explain how the mysterious image might have formed naturally. The image is both inexplicable and irreproducible (Picture 11). The STuRP team concluded **the image was "not the work of an artist."**<sup>230</sup> It seems the physics defy the chemistry, and the chemistry defies the physics! *"The basic problem from a scientific point of view is that some explanations which might be tenable from a chemical point of view, are precluded by physics. Contrariwise, certain physical explanations which may be attractive are completely precluded by the chemistry."*<sup>231</sup>

Likely early Christians looked upon **the image as something miraculous**, something *"not made by human hands."* That is the simplest and likely the correct way to understand this explanatory remark concerning "the tent" by the canonical author. By associating *"the image"* on the Cloth as being the work of God, this second objection to the thesis is dismantled and resolved by this simple explanation. The image was understood to be the product of a miracle, something neither painted nor made by the hands of man.

- b. As mentioned earlier, John Chrysostom defended the "flesh" of Christ as being "not of this creation" due to the angel having told Joseph, *"That which has been conceived in her (Mary) is of the Holy Spirit"* (Matt 1:20). The same argument can be stated regarding

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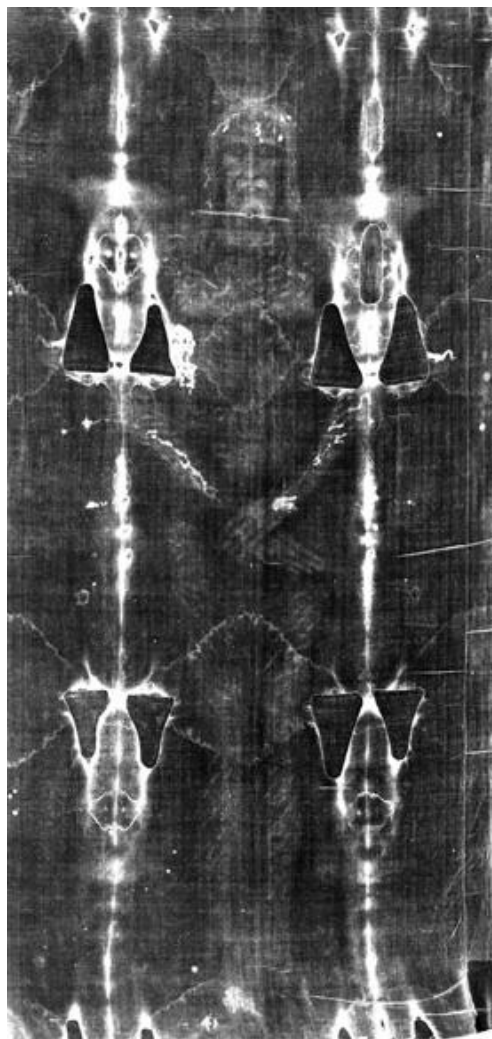
<sup>229</sup> Fanti, G. and Malfi, P. (2020). *The Shroud of Turin: First Century After Christ*, 2nd Ed. (Jenny Stanford Publishing: Singapore), p. 3.

<sup>230</sup> Heller, J. (1981), *A Summary of STURP's Conclusions*, <https://www.shroud.com/78conclu.htm>.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

the image on the Shroud: ***“It is of the Holy Spirit!”***<sup>232</sup> The image is not the product of human hands.<sup>233</sup>

- c. That the image on the Shroud was the work of God, not man, is analogous and similar to the two ***“tablets of the covenant”*** that had been kept in the Ark of the Covenant. Those tablets are mentioned in the broader context of our passage in Hebrews (v. 4). These stone tablets were made of an earthly material, similar in a sense to linen made from flax, but the engraving of the Ten Commandments had been ***“God’s work”*** (Ex 32:16), ***written “by the finger of God”*** (Ex 31:18). Due to the divine engraving upon these “tablets of stone,” it seems very appropriate to refer to them as having been ***“not made by human hands, that is not of this creation.”*** Similarly, it seems quite appropriate to describe the linen burial Shroud—featuring a miraculous image—by such language as well.



**Picture 11.** Positive 3-D image (produced by taking a photographic negative of the frontal image). Used with permission. © 1978 Barrie M. Schwartz Collection, STERA, Inc.

<sup>232</sup> Cf. 1 Jn 5:7

<sup>233</sup> See fn. 36.

- d. The Greek word, **ἀχειροποίητα** (*acheiropoiēta*), “*not made by human hands*,”<sup>234</sup> is found describing an image of Jesus on linen cloth no later than 554 A.D.<sup>235</sup> At that time, this word was used for “*The Image of God Incarnate*” when a group of orthodox priests publicly paraded an image of Jesus on linen throughout the regions of Cilicia and Cappadocia.<sup>236</sup> The Greek word pronounced *icon* means *image*. The original icon of the Christian Church was an image of Jesus on a linen cloth.

This Greek word (ἀχειροποίητα) (*acheiropoiēta*)—literally meaning “*not made by (human) hands*”—would be another way of saying *the image* was “*from heaven*”<sup>237</sup> and “*not a product of human creation*.”<sup>238</sup> What inspired these priests in the sixth century to describe the image of Jesus on linen in this manner? Did they find a biblical precedent for this description in *The Letter to the Hebrews*? Did they share the very thesis of this paper? **It does seem likely that such an early association of an image on linen being described as “not made by human hands” adds a strong measure of validation to our thesis that “the greater tent” of Hebrews 9:11 was indeed the burial Shroud of Jesus!**

This word, *acheiropoiēta*, is strikingly like the wording we find the author of *Hebrews* using in his literary sermon centuries earlier during the period of the Apostolic Church: οὐ χειροποιήτου (*ou cheiropoiētou*),<sup>239</sup> meaning “*not made by (human) hand*” (i.e., of divine origin). Both terms make use of the word χειροποίητος (*cheiropoiētos*), “*manufactured*,” commonly used for human construction.<sup>240</sup>

The difference between how Christians were describing their image of Jesus on linen cloth in the sixth century and how the writer of *Hebrews* describes “*the greater sacred tent*” (9:11) could be likened to the difference between “*atheist*” and “*not a theist*.” The word ἀχειροποίητα (*acheiropoiēta*) makes use of an “*alpha- privative*” to negate the word, while the term in *Hebrews* uses the negative particle “*not*.” In addition, the writer of *Hebrews* uses the singular “*hand*,” whereas the sixth-century word is plural, “*hands*.”<sup>241</sup>

<sup>234</sup> Bauer, w., trans. Arndt, W. and Gingrich, F. (1957). *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL), p. 127.

<sup>235</sup> Markwardt, J. (October 2014). “Modern Scholarship and the History of the Turin Shroud,” *St. Louis International Shroud Conference*, <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/stlmarkwardtpaper.pdf>, pp. 21-23.

<sup>236</sup> Approximately twenty years earlier (528-538) an “*awesome*” image of Christ— “*an object of particular veneration*”—had been discovered hidden away within a niche, above a gate, of the city wall for Antioch during a reconstruction project. It has been hypothesized that the linen object found had been hidden there in 362 when Theodorus, an Arian presbyter, hid the church’s treasures from the visiting Emperor Julian and suffered execution rather than reveal the location where he had hidden the treasure. One and a half centuries later, in the year 540, just prior to Antioch being destroyed by the Persians, the patriarch of Antioch, Ephraemius, left the city in haste and went into Cilicia. He died in 545. Nine years later (554) an image of Christ, described as “***not made by human hands***” (ἀχειροποίητα) (*acheiropoiēta*), was publicly paraded throughout Cilicia and called “*The Image of God Incarnate*.” See Jackson, J. (2017), *The Shroud of Turin: A Critical Summary of Observations, Data, and Hypotheses* (The Turin Shroud Center of Colorado), pp. 15-17.

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Matt 16:1

<sup>238</sup> Cf. Heb 9:1, 11

<sup>239</sup> Heb 9:11

<sup>240</sup> Lohse, ed. Kittel, G., trans. Bromiley, G. (1974). “χείρ” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing: Grand Rapids, MI), IX, p. 424.

<sup>241</sup> This fact is insignificant. The writer of *Hebrews* uses the plural noun later in verse 24.



“The image of God incarnate” paraded through Anatolia in the sixth century was described as an “unpainted painting”.<sup>242</sup> When the processions concluded in 560 A.D., the image-bearing linen cloth was taken by the Byzantine Emperor to the capital city of Constantinople.<sup>243</sup>

As a historical anecdote, crucifixes and crucifixion portrayals were invented just after the arrival of this image-bearing cloth in Constantinople (Picture 12).<sup>244</sup>



**Picture 12.** This illustration of the crucifixion is found in the Rabula Gospels dating from the late 6<sup>th</sup> century (586 A.D.). Public Domain: Wikipedia Commons.

In the era of the painting above, it would have been considered inappropriate to illustrate Jesus stripped of all his garments.<sup>245</sup> Is it not interesting, though, how the two thieves are girded only around their loins while, in contrast, Jesus is depicted clothed in a full-length garment or robe? Does this show an awareness of the Shroud’s existence at that time and place in history? Perhaps!

- e. **Two other cryptic references to the Shroud** (in the canonical record itself) **are spoken with the spotlight being on the image rather than upon the Cloth itself.** In the Johannine corpus we find the *image* on the Shroud spoken of as “*the testimony of the*

<sup>242</sup> Belting, H., (1998), “In Search of Christ’s Body. Image or Imprint?”, in *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, eds. Kessler, Herbert L. and Wolf, G., Villa Spelman Colloquia, Nuova Alfa Editoriale (Bologna), vol. 6, p. 8. Cited by Markwardt, J. (2021), *The Hidden History of the Shroud of Turin* (Orlando, FL), p. 91.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., p. 87

<sup>244</sup> Schacher, A. (2003). “Crucifixion (in Art),” *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Gale: Farmington Hills, MI), vol. 4, pp. 391-93.

<sup>245</sup> Marucchi, (1908). “Archaeology of the Cross and Crucifix,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Robert Appleton Co.: New York), vol. 4, p. 529.

*Father that He testified concerning His Son.*"<sup>246</sup> In that cryptic passage (which likely also concerns *the image* on the Holy Shroud)<sup>247</sup> the Apostle John specifically states: "*It is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth.*" The essence of this statement is the same that we are pondering in Hebrews, namely the image on the Shroud was "*not made by human hands.*"

Similarly, when the Bible speaks yet again—regarding yet a third cryptic, canonical description for the Shroud—namely "the sign of Jonah" that would come forth "from heaven," that special *sign* is likewise focused on the *image* of the Cloth.<sup>248</sup> The graphic image is "the sign." The same is true for the explanatory phrases concerning the "greater tent" in Hebrews. The spotlight is on the miraculous image that is visibly seen on the Cloth.

- 2.2.** The second clue or explanation provided in verse eleven for "the greater tent" of the Messiah states, "***that is, not of this creation.***" Four understandings for this phrase merit consideration.

**a. *The image on the Shroud is the result of a miracle; it is "not of this creation."***

This second explanation of the "tent" (i.e., "*not of this creation*") is intended as an elucidation of the first phrase (i.e., "*not made by human hands*"). Why is that so? It is due to the textual construct of τοῦτ' ἔστιν, "*That is (to say),*" found at the beginning of the phrase. This informs us that this second explanation points back to what had just been stated (i.e., "*not made by human hands*"). Therefore, if the first explicative clause is in reference to *the image* on the Shroud (rather than to *the linen* Cloth itself), this second explicative clause can also (and plausibly should) be understood in the same manner. Both phrases then relate to the tent's "construction."<sup>249</sup> Both Lane and Zerwick suggest the meaning of this second phrase is "*not of ordinary building.*"<sup>250</sup> That is, "*the phrase mans that it was not of the same order as the earthly tabernacle specified in 9:1.*"<sup>251</sup>

Like the Holy Fire miraculously appearing and seen on Holy Saturday each year in the tomb within the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the miraculous image on the Holy Shroud can be perceived as being something "*not made by human hands, that is to say, not of this creation.*"

If the biblical author intended more by this second explanation, one of the following two understandings might be helpful in that regard.

**b. This "*greater tabernacle*" belonged to "*the time of reformation*" spoken of in the previous verse (10). A new age/order of creation was inaugurated with Christ's priestly offering and His Resurrection.**

<sup>246</sup> 1 Jn 5:9-10; cf. Jn 5:37. See fn. 36.

<sup>247</sup> See chapter 17 of the author's book, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit.

<sup>248</sup> Matt 12:38-45; 16:1-4. See chapter 20 of the author's book, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit.

<sup>249</sup> The Greek term for "*made by hand*" χειροποίητος (*cheiropoiētos*) pertains to "manufactured" and was commonly used for human construction. Lohse, ed. Kittel, G., trans. Bromiley, G. (1974). "χείρ" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing: Grand Rapids, MI), IX, p. 424.

<sup>250</sup> Lane, W. (1991) *Word Biblical Commentary: Hebrews* (Thomas Nelson: Nashville, TN), **47b**, pp. 228-230.

<sup>251</sup> Lane, op. cit., p. 230, fn. E.

Associating the burial Shroud with a “tabernacle” means we are certainly not speaking of a traditional “tabernacle,” but rather about something out of the ordinary. In contrast to the earthly tabernacle associated with Moses, this tabernacle associated with the Messiah was something neither “*made by human hands*,” nor “*of this creation*.” It is of another order. This greater tent had been “*pitched by God*.”<sup>252</sup> It belonged to “***the time of reformation***” spoken of in the previous verse (v. 10) and “*the new covenant*” mentioned several verses later (v. 15). The “greater tent” belonged to a new era, to “*the last days*”<sup>253</sup> and “*the age to come*.”<sup>254</sup> Such a time is “*the heavenly age to come*.”<sup>255</sup>

Remarks found earlier in the *Letter* assist us in understanding what the writer meant by “*not of this creation*.” When Christ took on flesh and entered this world, He became a part of the terrestrial realm: “*Thou hast made Him for a little while lower than the angels*.”<sup>256</sup> The governing of this terrestrial realm or created order had been entrusted by God to the angels.<sup>257</sup> However, with Christ’s Resurrection and exaltation, the “last days” began<sup>258</sup> and Christ was “brought into the heavenly realm as the superior-in-rank “firstborn.”<sup>259</sup> With this exaltation in rank, the angels were commanded to worship Him.<sup>260</sup>

So, following His sacrificial death, Christ was resurrected and entered the heavenly realm. Therefore, this first compartment of the Messianic Tabernacle (i.e., what the writer spoke of as “*the greater and more perfect tabernacle*”) should be identified with a different realm than the earlier, earthly tent erected by Moses in the wilderness (9:1). This truth of “the greater tabernacle (or sacred tent)” being associated with a different realm of creation is **evident by the miraculous image** found imprinted upon the linen Shroud. Although the linen cloth was hand-spun by man, the image entails that the Shroud be associated with the heavenly realm ushered in with the Resurrection. The image was “*not of human construction, that is not of this creation*.” Thereby, it is evident this “*true tabernacle*” associated with the Messiah’s high-priestly ministry was “*pitched by God, not man*.”<sup>261</sup> Or, in the words of the Apostle John, it is “*the testimony that God testified concerning His Son*.”<sup>262</sup>

Earlier in the *Letter* we were told that believers have been “*enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit*.”<sup>263</sup> They

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<sup>252</sup> Heb 8:2

<sup>253</sup> Heb 1:2

<sup>254</sup> Heb 6:5

<sup>255</sup> Heb 2:5

<sup>256</sup> Heb 2:7, quoting Ps 8:5 (LXX).

<sup>257</sup> See Deut 32:8 and Lane, *Hebrews*, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>258</sup> Cf. Heb 1:2

<sup>259</sup> Heb 1:6a

<sup>260</sup> Heb 1:6b

<sup>261</sup> Heb 8:2

<sup>262</sup> 1 Jn 5:9-10; cf. Jn 5:37 and fn. 53.

<sup>263</sup> Heb 6:4

have already begun to taste (past tense) this heavenly realm, **“the good word of God and the powers of the age to come.”**<sup>264</sup>

So, a new age of creation was inaugurated with Christ’s priestly offering and His Resurrection. Note the explanatory remarks by the writer in the immediate passage:

***The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the Holy of Holies has not yet been disclosed***<sup>265</sup> *while the outer tabernacle is still standing, <sup>9</sup> which is **a symbol** (or parable) for the present time. Accordingly, both gifts and sacrifices are offered, ... imposed **until a time of reformation** (i.e., a new order).<sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of **the good things that have now come**, passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation..., He entered the (heavenly) Sanctuary.*”<sup>266</sup>

After first predicting a new order of creation (or “time of reformation”) that would appear, the writer immediately thereafter spoke of **“the good things that have now come”** when **“Christ appeared”** and offered His supreme offering. Everything associated with that better offering—particularly the writer notes **“the greater and more perfect tent”**—was not of the old order, “not of this created order.” The **“time of reformation”** (v. 10) had dawned!

Similarly, this motif is found again in the subsequent chapter in a statement related to our primary passage:

*... we have confidence to enter the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus, **by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the curtain**, that is by means of His flesh....*”<sup>267</sup>

Associated with the theology of a new age coming into existence (due to the sin offering of Christ and His Resurrection) is the writer’s comments about a **“new covenant”** now in place. Both immediately prior (8:6-13) and after (9:15) our passage (9:1-14), the biblical writer mentions the “new covenant” that believers in Christ are aligned with. In chapter eight he cites a long quotation from the prophet Jeremiah (31:31-34). In part, the prophet had foretold:

*Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel ...; not like the covenant which I made with their fathers.... I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their Hearts....*”<sup>268</sup>

Then the writer of Hebrews states a logical conclusion:

*When He (i.e., the Lord) said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.”*”<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Heb 6:6

<sup>265</sup> Cf. Heb 10:10-20, “... we have confidence to enter the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the curtain, that is by means of His flesh....”

<sup>266</sup> Heb 9:8-12

<sup>267</sup> Heb 10:19-20

<sup>268</sup> Heb 8:8-9a, 10b

We also find this theme about a new age of creation in the Pauline corpus:

*He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.... He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.*<sup>270</sup>

*If any person is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*<sup>271</sup>

*For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.*<sup>272</sup>

This motif—of there being a new age of creation and a new covenant due to the ministry of Christ and His Resurrection—might be the intent the writer’s explanation of “the greater tent” being “*not of this creation*.” The Messiah’s Resurrection from death brought “*the last days*”<sup>273</sup> into existence, resulting in a new and better age for the people of God. Entrance into the heavenly realm and access to God’s presence became possible:

*... we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, **by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the curtain**, that is by means of His flesh....*<sup>274</sup>

“**The Holy Fire**” also supports the motif of a new order of creation having come into existence with the Resurrection! The Holy Fire (Picture 10) phenomenon was discussed earlier. This mysterious, cold flame—a fire that does not burn<sup>275</sup>—appears annually in Jerusalem on Holy Saturday within the traditional site of the tomb of Jesus. And like the image on the Holy Shroud, this fire can, plausibly, be understood as having an association with the Resurrection that took place centuries ago in that same tomb and on that same weekend of the year. Both objects are signs of divine testimony regarding the Resurrection and God’s Gospel!<sup>276</sup> And like that miraculous image on the Shroud, and like the “tablets of the covenant” previously mentioned, this mysterious pillar of fire appearing each year can truthfully be described as something “*not made by human hands, that is not of this creation*.” Like the image on the Shroud, the Holy Fire also belongs to the new age of creation that was ushered into existence with the Resurrection.

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<sup>269</sup> Heb 8:13

<sup>270</sup> Col 1:15, 18; cf. Heb 1:6; 12:23. See fn. 37.

<sup>271</sup> 2 Cor 5:17

<sup>272</sup> Gal 6:15

<sup>273</sup> Heb 1:2

<sup>274</sup> Heb 10:19-20

<sup>275</sup> This fire is plausibly like the “*blazing fire from the midst of a bush*” that Moses beheld: “... and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So, Moses said, ‘I must turn aside now, and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.’ When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush, and said, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ Then He said, ‘Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground’” (Ex 3:2-5).

<sup>276</sup> Cf. Rom 1:1-4; 1 Cor 15:1-7ff.; Jn 3:14-21; 5:37; 1 Jn 5:4-13

- c. There is yet a third way to understand the second explanatory phrase in verse 11b, “*not of this creation.*” This paper has demonstrated how Christ’s Shroud was typologically associated with a “*greater (Messianic) tabernacle.*” Specifically, the linen Shroud was seen by early Christians as types of both “the curtain” of the tabernacle and “the tunic” of the high priest. Philo’s tabernacle theology regarded both the inner “curtain” of the tabernacle and the white linen “garment” of the high priest as being very special. They were looked upon as being holy and were associated with heaven. Therefore, **because the Shroud had “gone through the curtain” (10:19-20), it thereby became a garment associated with the heavenly realm.**

- 1) Philo stated that when the high priest enters the innermost parts of the holy temple, he:

*... assumes a **linen robe**, made of the very finest flax. And this is an emblem of vigor, and incorruptibility, and the most brilliant light. For such a veil is a thing very difficult to be broken, and **it is made of nothing mortal**, and when it is properly and carefully purified it has a most clear and brilliant appearance.*<sup>277</sup>

Ben Sira—author of the deuterocanonical *Book of Sirach* (between 196 and 175 BCE)—described this vestment worn by the high priest as a “**robe of glory.**”<sup>278</sup> Such a robe was commonly associated with heaven.<sup>279</sup> Philo remarked that this tunic “**represented the universal heaven.**”<sup>280</sup>

The motif of those entering heaven being given a white, glorious robe is found in the biblical canon. It is also frequent in extracanonical Jewish and Christian literature.<sup>281</sup> For example, in the pseudepigraphal book of *3 Enoch*, the patriarch Enoch ascends into heaven and is transformed into an angel.<sup>282</sup> The Holy One wrapped him in a shining robe, and his material body was burned up by the power of the divine light.

*He made me a garment of glory on which were fixed all kinds of lights, and He clad me in it. And He made me a robe of honor on which were fixed all kinds of beauty, splendor, brilliance and majesty.*<sup>283</sup>

The high priest wore only the white tunic on the Day of Atonement—when passing through the curtain into the inner compartment of the Most Holy Place—because

<sup>277</sup> Philo, *On Dreams*, 1.XXXVII (1.216-217). <https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/yonge/book21.html>.

<sup>278</sup> *Sirach*, 50.11

<sup>279</sup> See comments above under section IV.10.

<sup>280</sup> Philo, *On Dreams*, 1.XXXVII (1.215).

<sup>281</sup> See Barker, M. (2009), *On Earth as it is in Heaven* (Sheffield Phoenix Press: Sheffield, England), pp. 61-72.

<sup>282</sup> In his book to the Colossians, Paul mentions the heresy regarding “*the worship of angels*” (Col 2:18). Texts such as *3 Enoch* may have contributed to a belief that Jesus, when leaving the material world and entering heaven, became the supreme angel. However, the Christology of *Hebrews* places Jesus above the angels as God’s unique Son who is worthy of worship (see Heb 1:4-14).

<sup>283</sup> *3 Enoch*, 12; [https://archive.org/stream/HebrewBookOfEnochenoch3/BookOfEnoch3\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/HebrewBookOfEnochenoch3/BookOfEnoch3_djvu.txt). See also chapter 15 where Enoch’s “flesh was changed into flames.” His material body is described as having been taken up in the fiery chariot and transformed into a heavenly being by the splendor of the Shekinah glory.

white linen garments were the dress of angels while in the presence of God. The other pieces of his priestly vestments symbolized the earth rather than heaven.

- 2) Philo also perceived **the curtain** of the tabernacle as the boundary or dividing wall between the heavenly realm and the physical world.

*By the curtain, the inside (of the tabernacle) is set off and separated from the things outside, for the inside is holy and truly divine, while the outside, though it is also holy does not attain the same nature or a similar one.*<sup>284</sup>

He wrote how the furniture within the Tabernacle signified this distinction made by the curtain. Regarding the Table of Showbread and the Lampstand that were placed within the first compartment, that is the Holy Place, Philo commented:

*I have shown earlier that by the table He indicates sense-perceptible substance, and by the lampstand, the sense-perceptible heaven. And they are placed outside the curtain because the things in the inner recess are invisible and intelligible, whereas those which are more external are visible and sense perceptible.*<sup>285</sup>

Josephus commented that the curtain had “its mystical interpretation.” It joined heaven and earth. Its four colors symbolized the material God used in creating the earth, and the cherubim of heaven were also embroidered upon it.

*It was a kind of image of the universe.... This curtain had also embroidered upon it all that was mystical in the heavens, excepting that of the (twelve) signs (i.e., the signs of the zodiac).*<sup>286</sup>

In the Jewish pseudepigraphal book of 3 *Enoch*, the high priest, Rabbi Ishmael passed beyond the curtain and found himself outside of time. When he looked back, he saw the past, present, and the future depicted upon the curtain: “All generations to the end of time were printed on the curtain of the Omnipresent One. I saw them all with my own eyes.”<sup>287</sup>

In Isaiah 40, the canonical prophet was anxious about the future of his people in exile. The Lord then reminded him of what he had learned when he had stood in the inner sanctuary of the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies:

*Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He who sits above the circle of the earth ... who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them like a*

<sup>284</sup> Philo, *Questions on Exodus*, II.91.

<sup>285</sup> Philo, *Questions on Exodus*, II.95.

<sup>286</sup> Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, V.V.4; cf. Philo, *On Flight*, 110 and *On Dreams* I.216.

<sup>287</sup> 3 *Enoch* 45.6; translation in Charlesworth, J. (1983-85), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols, (Darton, Longman & Todd: London), vol 1. Note also how the patriarch, Abraham, after ascending into the heavens, looked down and saw all creation foreshadowed in the firmament. The *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 21.1, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol, 1, *ibid*.



*tent to dwell in, who brings princes to nought, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.*<sup>288</sup>

These Jewish texts assist us in understanding the role and importance of “the curtain” in tabernacle theology. And “the curtain” of the Messianic tabernacle is present in two of the four segments that make up the grand chiasmas of *Hebrews*. The fourth and final part (A') of the chiasmas was just quoted above (Heb 10:19-20). The other statement is found as the first segment (A) of the grand chiasmas. It states:

*This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which **enters within (or inside) the curtain, where Jesus has entered** as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*<sup>289</sup>

The linen burial Shroud could be spoken of as being “*not of this creation*” because (1) it was identified with being a type of the holy “curtain” of the tabernacle, the barrier separating the invisible domain of heaven from the material creation of earth. In addition, (2) the Shroud was likely perceived as a type of the white holy tunic worn by Jesus “*when He appeared as a high priest*” (Heb 9:11). Philo stated that such a tunic was “*the representation of the universal heaven.*” And such a “*robe of glory,*” as noted by Ben Sira, was associated with the clothing of heaven.<sup>290</sup> Furthermore, (3) the early Church understood that “*through that tabernacle (tent)*” (Heb 9:11) and “*through the curtain*” (10:20), Christ departed this earthly creation and entered the heavenly Sanctuary (Heb 9:12). Finally, but certainly not least in significance, (4) this linen Cloth had a miraculous image imprinted upon it of the Son of God, an image “*not made by human hands.*” Therefore, this very special and greater “tent” and “curtain” of the Messianic tabernacle could be appropriately described as something “*not of this creation.*”

What more might be said? The broader context can assist us in attempting to clarify what the Biblical author intended. Exactly which of the following explanations best fits with his intent is not clarified any further for us. Each of the following is contextually appropriate and assists in illuminating the meaning of the phrase. Likely no single or simple explanation fully expounds upon the truth that the author is asserting.

1. The image on the Holy Shroud is “*not of ordinary building.*”<sup>291</sup> It is the result of a miracle, God’s intervention.
2. The Shroud is not a traditional or ordinary “tabernacle.” It is, rather, something entirely different from what might be expected when describing a sacred tent or “tabernacle” of God’s presence on earth.

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<sup>288</sup> Isa 40:21-22

<sup>289</sup> Heb 6:19-20

<sup>290</sup> In that regard, consider how the clothing of Jesus is described in the story of the Transfiguration: “*He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light*” (Matt 17:2).

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

3. As the antitype of the wilderness tabernacle (cf. 8:5), this rear wall of the “tent,” namely the inner “curtain” that the Messianic High Priest “*passed through*,” was more than an earthly curtain; it belonged to a different order and realm. This tent was the true portal whereby Christ entered heaven. It was “*the true tabernacle that the Lord pitched, not man*” (8:2).
4. This tent is linked to “*the new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the curtain*” to have access to approach heaven’s throne room now (10:19-22; 6:19-20).
5. It belongs to “*the good things that have now come*” (9:11) and “the enlightenment” believers have “*tasted*” concerning “*the powers of the age to come*” (6:4-5).
6. Our passage falls within the broader context of the “*new covenant*” promised by God long ago through the prophet Jeremiah. The contrast of this new and better covenant mediated by Christ has been contrasted with the inferior covenant mediated by Moses since the early verses of the previous chapter, and this “*new covenant*” is explicitly mentioned again only three verses after this explanatory phrase (v. 15). A new era began, and the old era came to an end, with the installation of Christ as high priest and the superior sacrificial offering of “His own blood.” This “*greater and more perfect tent*” therefore belongs with this new era, not the old creative order. “*The time of correction*” (v. 10) has begun and “*Christ appeared at the climax of the ages*” (v. 26).
7. As the antitype of the “white linen tunic” worn by the High Priest when entering the heavenly realm (cf. Lev 16:4, 23; Ex 28:39), the Shroud with its miraculous image—like the Holy Fire—can be understood as something “*not of (or belonging to) this creation.*”

**Summary:** The Holy Shroud, with its miraculous image (an image “*not made by human hands and not of ordinary building*”), is the most plausible solution for the cryptic “*greater and more perfect tabernacle (or sacred tent)*,” as well as for its inner “*curtain.*”

In essence, the Holy Shroud was perceived by the canonical writer as being the first compartment (i.e., the Holy Place) of the Messianic Tabernacle. Once He passed “*through*” that first chamber (9:11), that is, “*through the curtain*” (10:20), He “*entered*” into the second chamber (9:12), the heavenly Most Holy Place (or the Holy of Holies).<sup>292</sup>

If the reader is still unconvinced, then the following obstacles call for a resolution. What is the reader’s solution?

- Is the image on the Shroud manmade? If it is, why did the STuRP team of scientists conclude otherwise, stating it was “*not the work of an artist*”?
- If not *the image* on the Shroud, what exactly was the writer referring to when he stated that the tent was “*not made by human hands*”?
- Your answer needs to be something that could be (1) described as a “tent” (serving both as a covering and a place of abode, i.e., a sanctuary), (2) had an association with Christ’s sacrificial “blood,” (3) be something that, subsequent to Jesus’ death, He “passed through”

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<sup>292</sup> The use of the preposition διὰ (*dia*) with “tent” (9.11) requires it to be understood as different from the “sanctuary” (9.12). “*The syntax of vv. 11-12 demands that a distinction be made between the σκηνή, ‘front compartment,’ through which Christ passed and τὰ ἁγία, ‘the sanctuary,’ into which he entered*” [Lane, *Hebrews*, op. cit, p. 238].

(4) before entering the heavenly “Sanctuary” (i.e., the Holy of Holies), and (5) be something that could be described, in some sense, as “*not made by human hands, that is not of this creation (or not of ordinary building)*.”

- What better solution or thesis does the reader have for this cryptic “*greater and more perfect tent, not made by human hands*”?

If the reader has no better solution than “the image” on the Holy Shroud, why is that the case? Some of the initial recipients who first heard this literary sermon read to them would have been informed about the identity of “*the greater and more perfect tent*.” Some of the recipients were “mature” and had nourished on “solid food.”<sup>293</sup> They had gone beyond “*the elementary teaching about the Christ*.”<sup>294</sup>

*The identity of the tent has been a constant puzzle to exegetes past and present. It is a tent well known to the addressees of the epistle.*<sup>295</sup>

If the current reader is unable to arrive at a satisfactory solution to this cryptic puzzle, is the failure due, perhaps, more to the condition of one’s heart rather than to the failure of the evidence or the reluctance of one’s mind? Do the words of Jesus speak to the matter?

*To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.... In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says,*

*“You will keep on hearing, but will not understand;  
You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive;  
For the heart of this people has become dull,  
With their ears they scarcely hear,  
And they have closed their eyes,  
Otherwise they would see with their eyes,  
Hear with their ears,  
And understand with their heart and return,  
And I would heal them.”*

*But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.*<sup>296</sup>

## XI. Conclusion

The textual evidence is quite strong that the burial Shroud of Christ was perceived in the early Church as being (1) **the Holy Place** and (2) **the inner curtain** of the Messianic Tabernacle, and

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<sup>293</sup> See Heb 5:11-6:3.

<sup>294</sup> Heb 6:1

<sup>295</sup> Swetnam, ‘The Greater and More Perfect Tent,’ op. cit.

<sup>296</sup> Matt 13:11, 14-17

plausibly also understood as having served, typologically, as (3) **the linen tunic** worn by the High Priest when he entered the sacred tent on the Day of Atonement.

The Tabernacle furniture of “*the lampstand*” and “*the table with its sacred bread*,” both found within the Holy Place, were each shown to have typological relevance to Christ who claimed to be “*the light of the world*” and “*the bread of life*.”

In addition, contextually, the three witnesses mentioned in verse four of the passage—kept in the Ark of the Covenant as testimony and witnesses for future generations—bear typological significance for understanding the burial Shroud of Christ with its miraculous image. Especially is this evident when it comes to the sign and witness of Aaron’s rod. Strong reasons were presented for viewing “*Aaron’s rod that budded*” as a foreshadowing type of the burial Shroud of Christ.

Furthermore, evidence from another canonical author, the Apostle John in his *Gospel*, adds support for a typological understanding of the tomb with its resting place for the body. It is apparent that **John equated the tomb with an earthly type of the Holy of Holies and its mercy seat**. That typology meshes nicely with the thesis set forth in this paper, whereby the covering of the Shroud was identified with the first compartment of the Messianic Tabernacle, namely the Holy Place. The typological motif about the tomb, cryptically hidden in John’s *Gospel*, contributes a strong measure of validation for the thesis of this paper. Furthermore, **before the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, he first had to be inside the Holy Place and then pass through the curtain. So, when was Christ Jesus in that first compartment (or front room) if it wasn’t when He was inside His burial Shroud that was within the tomb?**

But that is not all! The typology suggested here is also affirmed by the mysterious presence of the inexplicable, non-burning “Holy Fire” that appears every year on Holy Saturday within the Jerusalem tomb.

What *Hebrews* offers the Church today (with its fourfold cryptic, chiastic referencing of the Holy Shroud) is nothing less than **persuasive proof that the Apostolic Church was quite aware of the burial Shroud known today as the Shroud of Turin**. That is, *Hebrews* informs us that Christians living in the mid first century knew of the Shroud’s existence!<sup>297</sup> The testimony associated with the burial Cloth is a game changer in “the quest for the historical Jesus”!

We can be assured it was the same burial Cloth due to the descriptive explanations the writer provided. He certainly was not speaking about just any burial cloth. No! He esteemed it as a (1) “*tent pitched by God, not man*”<sup>298</sup> that was (2) “*greater and more perfect*”<sup>299</sup> than the tent pitched by Moses, and (3) was something (i.e., speaking now of the image) that was “*not made by human hands*”<sup>300</sup> and something that also, at the same time, was (4) associated with Christ’s own sacrificial “*blood*.”<sup>301</sup> Those descriptions assure us that the writer was describing the same

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<sup>297</sup> In the opinion of the author, the thesis put forward in this paper is solid. It remains irrefutable unless or until someone explains why the thesis is defective and, at the same time, offers a better solution to the cryptic riddle regarding the identity of “*the greater and more perfect tent*” that Christ both passed “*through*” and, at the same time, had an association with His actual sacrificial “*blood*.”

<sup>298</sup> Heb 8:2b

<sup>299</sup> Heb 9:11

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Heb 9:12

preserved Shroud we associate today as having once covered (like a tent) the body of Christ Jesus and that inexplicably (humanly speaking regarding the image's formation)—but graphically—depicts “Christ crucified,”<sup>302</sup> along with the linen Cloth being visibly stained with Christ's superior, sacrificial “blood”!<sup>303</sup> The image on the Shroud of Turin depicts a unique crucifixion that only one man in history is known to have suffered (Picture 7). Furthermore, the scientific team of STuRP concluded that the image was “*not the work of an artist*” and that an explanation for how the image was formed remains a mystery (Picture 11).<sup>304</sup> And this particular Jewish burial Shroud never would have been kept in the first place, and then preserved over the centuries, if it wasn't known initially to be the burial Shroud of Christ Jesus.

In the opinion of this author, the thesis of this paper is monumental! There are three other passages elsewhere in the New Testament that the author has demonstrated, exegetically, are each best understood as being a veiled reference to the image on the Turin Shroud.<sup>305</sup> Together with this text in Hebrews, they deliver a checkmate for those denying the authenticity of the Holy Shroud. Now we have convincing proof in the biblical record itself that the Apostolic Church was familiar with the Holy Shroud and its miraculous image!

To refute the thesis of this exegetical paper, one must explain why the thesis is defective. This would require one to clearly answer two questions. First, how does the thesis fail to meet the criteria outlined earlier in the paper so that it fails to resolve the cryptic riddle that was formulated?

**When Christ came and ministered as the superior High Priest, what could be described as being (1) a “*sacred tent*” (tabernacle) (σκήνη) (*skēnē*) that Jesus (2) passed “*through*,” that was (3) “*not made with human hands, that is to say, not of ordinary building*,” yet was (4) associated with His actual “*blood*” and (5) His “*entry*” into the heavenly “*Holy of Holies*”?**

- Christ's burial Shroud satisfies the Messianic tabernacle typology associated with “*the greater and more perfect tabernacle (i.e., sacred tent)*” set forth by the biblical author.
- Christ's burial Shroud provides a solution for both the locative and instrumental understandings of the syntax regarding the διά (*dia*) (“*through*”) preposition of verse 11.
- The miraculous image on Christ's burial Shroud meets the descriptive criteria for “*the greater tent*” having “*not (been) made by human hands, that is not of this creation.*”

Second, to refute the thesis of the current white paper, one should also clearly explain why it fails to answer the following important question that was asked earlier and answered:

Before Christ “*entered the Sanctuary*” (i.e., the heavenly Holy of Holies) (v. 12), He had to first be present within the first compartment, the Holy Place (cf. vv. 1-3; see fn. 27). “*The*

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<sup>302</sup> Cf. Gal 3:1, “*You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? Before your eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.*” This statement is likely another veiled reference in the Bible to the Holy Shroud. It is also earlier than Hebrews 9:11-12. Although the evidence associating it with the Holy Shroud is quite strong, in the opinion of this author it is not as solid as the fourfold references found in *Hebrews*. For a thorough exegesis of this verse in Paul's *Letter to the Galatians*, see Stalley, *Divine Testimony*, chapter 9.

<sup>303</sup> Heb 9:12; 10:19

<sup>304</sup> See fn. 35, 200.

<sup>305</sup> Matt 12:38-45 (cf. 16:1-4); Gal 3:1; 1 John 5:5-13 (cf. John 19:34; 20:1-8ff.; and 5:37). See the author's book, *Divine Testimony*, op. cit.

*greater and more perfect tent*” was that first compartment. So, **when** was Christ in that first compartment “*with His own blood*” (v. 11)? And **where** was He when that took place? The most plausible answer is during the time His body was within the burial Shroud inside the tomb!

- The burial Shroud also fits the necessary timeline associated with the two compartments of the writer’s Messianic tabernacle typology! The tomb narrative of the *Fourth Gospel*—where the tomb is associated with being a type of the Holy of Holies—supports this timeline found in the *Letter to the Hebrews*.

Ideally, if one desires to refute the thesis of this paper, that person should not only answer the two questions above but also offer a more plausible thesis that both addresses and answers those two questions.

But the author is not saying every denier will be persuaded by the evidence presented in this paper. Not everyone will change his or her mind on the Shroud. Although the author believes the evidence is quite convincing, as Mark Twain once stated, “*No amount of evidence will persuade an idiot!*”

Disbelief is often a matter of the heart more than of the mind.

*To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,  
but to them it has not been granted....*<sup>306</sup>

The burial Shroud is a gracious gift for the engendering and strengthening of faith! It is “*the testimony of God that He gave concerning His Son*”<sup>307</sup> in order that believers might have “*the assurance of eternal life.*”<sup>308</sup> The Holy Shroud provided “*... a hope that served as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the curtain, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us...*”<sup>309</sup>

Praise be to Him forever and ever! Amen!

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<sup>306</sup> Matt 13:11

<sup>307</sup> 1 Jn 5:9-10. See (cf. Jn 3:14-16; 5:37; 19:34-35) and chapter 17 of the author’s book, *Divine Witness*.

<sup>308</sup> 1 Jn 5:13

<sup>309</sup> Heb 6:19b-20a