

Although this section is not as extensive as the videos and audios section mentioned above, there are still multiple pages of links to new internet content in today's update! Of course, we can't include *everything* on this page, so we have once again created a separate pdf file that you can download and view at your convenience (see link below). Items in that file are listed in chronological order with the most recent at the top of the list.

Facebook posting by Paul Hanson – January 14, 2026: Something weird is happening: young people aren't just buying Bibles again... they're turning up at church. And one ancient artefact keeps showing up in the middle of it.

TITLE:

Is the Shroud of Turin a “common denominator” in the quiet return to church?

Over the last year the Shroud hasn't just been a niche topic for theologians or history buffs. It's kept breaking into mainstream conversation, including big podcasts and celebrity discussions. Joe Rogan has talked about it on his show, and Mel Gibson has been outspoken about it too. Whatever someone thinks of the evidence, that kind of exposure matters because it pushes the topic out of church circles and into the wider culture. When millions of people hear the same question repeatedly, it stops being a curiosity and starts becoming a seed.

SUBHEAD:

UK Bible sales hit a record high in 2025, and a major report says church attendance in England and Wales has risen since 2018 led by 18–24s. The US is seeing a similar Bible sales surge. Big shifts rarely have one cause but the Shroud going viral might be one of the sparks.

TL;DR:

UK Bible sales reported at a record high in 2025, and The Quiet Revival reports monthly church attendance rising overall from 8 percent to 12 percent with the sharpest jump among 18–24s from 4 percent to 16 percent.

US Bible sales reportedly hit a 21 year high in 2025, 19 million units via Circana BookScan, reported by Publishers Weekly and others.

The Shroud of Turin has had sustained virality across news cycles, long form podcasts, and social sharing.

We can't prove causation, but sustained reach into the millions can plant real seeds.

1) THE SIGNAL: A SHIFT YOU CAN FEEL

For years the story sounded simple: faith is fading.

Now it's more complicated.

In the UK, Bible sales were reported as reaching a record high in 2025, around £6.3m, up 134 percent since 2019, via Nielsen BookScan analysis cited in reporting.

And the Bible Society and YouGov research, The Quiet Revival, reports that church attendance in England and Wales has risen since 2018 with the biggest jump among ages 18–24, monthly attendance rising from 4 percent in 2018 to 16 percent in 2024 in their data.

In the US, Bible sales reportedly surged too, described as a 21 year high in 2025, 19 million units.

That doesn't mean every church is overflowing. It means the old one direction decline story doesn't explain everything anymore.

2) WHY NOW? THE BORING ANSWER IS PROBABLY MOSTLY TRUE

When life gets shaky, people go looking for sturdier ground: meaning, identity, hope, truth, community.

That's the backdrop: anxiety, loneliness, instability, and a deep hunger for something that isn't just curated vibes.

But there's also a very modern layer.

3) THE INTERNET CREATED “GATEWAY TOPICS”

A lot of younger people don't start with: tell me what to believe.

They start with: is any of this even real?

So they follow trails that feel investigatable:

archaeology and history

manuscripts and textual questions

first century context

debated artefacts because debate feels like thinking

This is where the Shroud of Turin sits: right on the border between faith and investigation.

And that's why it spreads.

4) THE SHROUD HAS BEEN VIRAL, AND VIRAL FOR A WHILE

When I say viral, I don't mean a one week spike. I mean sustained cultural circulation:

it keeps resurfacing in news cycles

it shows up in long form content, podcasts and YouTube, that does millions of views

it's visual, so people don't just discuss it, they share it

In my own case, Shroud content has reached huge numbers across platforms over the last year. When you're reaching millions month after month, it's bound to make an impact on some percentage of people. Not everyone. But some.

That's how seeds work.

5) THE "DR. ROBERT HARRINGTON" STORY AND WHY I'M USING IT CAREFULLY

Here's a perfect example of Shroud virality in action.

A story is circulating widely, I've now seen it copied across Facebook groups, WhatsApp posts, and even LinkedIn, about Dr. Robert Harrington, described as a former skeptic who converted to Christianity after investigating the Shroud.

And the quote being shared is this:

"I approached this study with a critical mind, ready to expose what I believed was a long standing historical fabrication," Dr. Harrington explained.

"But the evidence we uncovered was so compelling that it left no room for doubt."

"This is the burial shroud of Jesus of Nazareth."

Important note: I'm not presenting this as a verified scientific citation because I don't yet know who Dr. Harrington is, and I haven't personally located a clear primary source, interview, publication, institutional affiliation, or original recording.

I'm including it for one reason: it shows how powerfully the Shroud conversation travels.

If anyone can trace the original source of this quote or story, drop it in the comments. If it's real, it deserves to be documented properly. If it's not, it still proves the bigger point: the Shroud topic is acting like cultural tinder.

Truth doesn't need internet garnish.

6) THE “COMMON DENOMINATOR” THEORY SAID CAREFULLY

Could the Shroud be a common denominator in this wider shift?

We can't prove that without proper research. But it's not a silly idea, because the Shroud debate does something uniquely powerful:

It moves Christianity from a feeling to a historical claim.

Even if someone ends up unconvinced, they've crossed an important line: they've stopped dismissing Christianity as pure myth, and started treating it as something that can be examined.

And once people start examining, many do the simplest and most dangerous thing: they read the Gospels for themselves.

Seed → investigation → text.

7) WHY CATHOLIC AND PENTECOSTAL CONTEXTS MAY AMPLIFY THIS EVEN THOUGH I'M PROTESTANT

Even as a Protestant, I can understand why Catholic and Pentecostal circles often show up in this conversation.

Catholics tend to be comfortable with history, continuity, tangible faith, and physical devotion so a debated artefact becomes a natural conversation starter.

Pentecostals tend to be comfortable with testimony, public faith, and bold invitation so when something sparks curiosity, they're more likely to talk about it openly and use it in evangelism.

Different styles, same instinct: make faith discussable.

☀️ ONE “COINCIDENCE” WORTH CLARIFYING: THE POPE DIDN’T BUY THE SHROUD

People sometimes say the Pope bought the Shroud about 40 years ago.

It wasn't purchased. Ownership passed to the Holy See after Umberto II of Italy died in 1983, because he bequeathed it to the Holy See, with conditions about remaining in Turin.

Is it interesting timing that we're now roughly four decades on and the Shroud is back in the center of cultural attention? Sure.

Is it proof of anything by itself? No.

But it's part of the story of why this artefact keeps re entering public consciousness.

CONCLUSION:

Maybe the Shroud is a common denominator. Maybe it's just one current in a bigger river.

But here's what I know: the hunger is real, the questions are returning, and millions of people are being reintroduced to Christianity through investigation topics they don't feel pressured to pretend believe.

If you're skeptical: stay skeptical but be serious. Follow sources. Test claims. Read a Gospel.

If you're a believer: don't gloat. Be gentle. People aren't craving performance. They're craving reality.

If you're somewhere in the middle: let questions do their job. Truth can handle being examined.

Paul Hanson [paulbryhanson@gmail.com]

P.S. If you can find a solid primary source for the Dr. Robert Harrington story or quote, drop it below. If it's legitimate, I'll happily update this post so it's properly documented.

Email from Otangelo Grasso – January 6, 2025: “Hi everybody,

With Giulio Fanti's gracious permission, I have transformed the excellent **Notebook LM presentations** into video format. These videos are now **publicly available in English and Italian on my YouTube channel, *The Shroud of Turin*.**

Here are the links to the videos:

- **The Shroud of Turin: Image, Blood, and the Impossible Exit**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yB74MDQHGVo&t=201s>
- **La Sindone di Torino: Immagine, Sangue e l'Uscita Impossibile**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myoeJRcwccY>

Please feel free to share the links with anyone who may find them of interest.

Kind regards,
Otangelo
YouTube channel: [The Shroud of Turin](#)”

Facebook posting by Otangelo Grasso – January 13, 2026 - Not Merely Strips: The Internal Case for *Othonia* as the Burial Ensemble in John's Gospel

“The Gospel of John, through precise linguistic choices and narrative architecture, provides clear

internal evidence that ὁθόνια (othónia) functions as a collective plural for the ensemble of Jesus's burial linens, not merely as "strips." This understanding is drawn philologically, contextually, and theologically from the text itself.

1. The Lexical Foundation: Beyond the Diminutive

The plural diminutive ὁθόνια derives from ὁθόνη (linen cloth). In Koine Greek, diminutives frequently shed their strict sense of "smallness" to become standard terms.

Thus, ὁθόνια inherently denotes "linen cloths" or "linen pieces" without connoting narrow bandages. Its plural form signals multiple components, establishing a categorical foundation for a burial assemblage.

2. The Decisive Narrative Contrast: ὁθόνια vs. Σουδάριον

John 20:6-7 presents a critical distinction: "He saw the ὁθόνια lying there, and the σουδάριον (face cloth)...not lying with the ὁθόνια, but rolled up in a place by itself."

This is not a casual list but a deliberate categorization. John linguistically and spatially separates the σουδάριον from the ὁθόνια. If ὁθόνια meant only "binding strips," the face cloth would logically be included among them. Its separation confirms that ὁθόνια serves as the collective term for the primary burial cloths, from which the head cloth is explicitly distinguished.

3. The Context of Custom: Jewish Burial Practice

John 19:40 grounds the description in ritual, not medical, practice: "They bound it in the ὁθόνια with the spices, according to the burial custom of the Jews (*κατὰ τὸ ἔθος τῶν Ιουδαίων*)."

Second Temple Jewish burial involved a full shroud (*σινδών/sindōn*) and additional cloths, with spices placed among the folds, and often a separate face cloth. By invoking the "custom," John signals this recognized practice. The plural ὁθόνια naturally encompasses this customary kit of linens. The absence of detailed wrapping instructions further argues against a novel, mummification-like procedure.

4. Synoptic Harmonization: Expansion, Not Contradiction

The Synoptics (e.g., Mark 15:46) mention the singular *σινδών* (shroud). John's account does not contradict this but expands the picture. Where Mark names the primary cloth, John uses the collective plural ὁθόνια—a term that includes the *σινδών* by implication while also acknowledging the additional linens involved in a full burial. This is a difference of focal length, not of fact.

5. The Theological Logic of the Empty Tomb

The resurrection scene's power depends on this collective meaning. The ὁθόνια are described as "lying" (*κείμενα*) in place, with the σουδάριον neatly folded aside. This visual tableau only makes sense if multiple cloths retained the hollow shape of the body, collapsed but undisturbed. A single set of binding strips would appear as a disordered pile, undermining the testimony of orderly, voluntary departure. The symbolic contrast between the discarded grave clothes and the resurrected body requires a *plurality* of cloths left intact.

6. Literary and Theological Intent: A Signal of Order and Victory

John crafts this detail to preclude explanations of theft or chaos. The orderly state of the ὁθόνια (collective cloths) and the carefully placed σουδάριον are forensic clues pointing to a transcendent event. For this symbolism to cohere, ὁθόνια must represent the entire burial ensemble, vacated and left behind.

Conclusion

The inference that *ōθóvia* refers to the collective burial cloths is not extrapolated from external tradition but demanded by John's internal narrative design. It is anchored in:

- The semantic range of the Greek term,
- The grammatical contrast with *σουδάριον*,
- Explicit reference to Jewish burial custom,
- Harmonious alignment with Synoptic terminology,
- And the essential logic of the empty tomb narrative.

The text itself, therefore, guides us to understand *ōθóvia* as the full assemblage of linen cloths, signifying the complete and orderly victory over death.

Deeper Theological Meaning of the *Othonia* as a Collective Burial Ensemble

Understanding *othonia* as the complete burial linens—the shroud and related cloths—transforms the empty tomb from a vacant space into a profound theological statement. It becomes a silent witness to the nature of the resurrection itself. The theological implications are multi-layered:

1. The Defeat of Death as an Orderly, Sovereign Act

The primary theological claim is **victory over death as a deliberate, non-chaotic event**. A stolen body implies violence, haste, and disorder—cloths torn, spices spilled, evidence of struggle. The *othonia* “lying” (κείμενα) in place, with the *soudarion* neatly separated, presents the opposite forensic picture. This orderly scene precludes human theft and testifies to a transcendent cause. The Resurrection is thus portrayed not as a chaotic miracle but as the **sovereign, purposeful work of God**, bringing a divine order that supersedes the chaos of death. It is the culmination of Jesus's declaration, “It is finished” (John 19:30)—the work is so complete that even its aftermath is marked by perfect, calm authority.

2. The Incarnation Completed and Transcended

The burial cloths are the **ultimate symbol of Jesus's full, mortal humanity**. They touched and conformed to his crucified, dead body. That they are left behind, vacated but intact, is a powerful paradox. It signifies that the mortal condition of the Incarnate Word—his subjection to death—has been utterly overcome, yet **his humanity has not been abandoned**. The empty *othonia* demonstrates that the resurrection is **physical** (a body is gone) yet **transfigured** (it passed through its material confines). The Incarnation is not reversed; its mortal limitation is conquered from within.

3. The Artifacts of Ritual, Rendered Obsolete

John notes the burial was done “according to the custom of the Jews” (John 19:40). The *othonia* and spices represent the full, traditional response to death: preparation, anointing, and binding. By leaving this complete kit undisturbed and empty, the narrative shows that **the entire ritual apparatus for managing death has been vacated and rendered functionally obsolete**. The custom, designed for decay, is encountered by the power of life. The linens become not a sign of pious observance, but a relic of a defeated enemy.

4. A Symbol of the New Creation

The orderly, vacant linens in the tomb mirror the formless void awaiting God's creative word in Genesis. The resurrection is presented as **the inaugural act of the New Creation**. Just as the Spirit brought order from chaos "in the beginning," the same Spirit (John 20:22) has now brought life from death, leaving behind the "old order" of death as a collapsed shell. The tomb becomes a chrysalis from which the new, glorified humanity has emerged.

5. The Empty Tomb as Personal Testimony, Not Mere Absence

The specific, collective state of the *othonia* provides **evidence for the how**, not just the *that*, of the empty tomb. A body simply revived would struggle free, leaving disordered cloths. A body stolen would be hastily unwrapped. The collapsed, undisturbed ensemble suggests **a transformation so total that the physical body was translated from one state of being to another**, leaving its mortal "container" behind intact. This points to a resurrection that is uniquely **physical yet glorified, continuous yet discontinuous**. The linens are the first witness to this mystery, testifying that the Lord of life operates beyond the laws of entropy and decay.

Conclusion: The Theological Message of the Vacated Ensemble

Therefore, the collective *othonia* is John's masterful theological icon. It proclaims:

- **The completeness of Christ's victory** (the entire burial kit is defeated).
- **The sovereignty of God's power** (the event is orderly and purposeful).
- **The transformed nature of resurrected life** (physical yet unfettered by mortality).
- **The obsolescence of death's rituals** (the custom is fulfilled and left behind).

The message is not merely "He is not here," but "**See how He is not here.**" The vacated burial ensemble is the first and most eloquent testimony to the nature of the Resurrection: a definitive, creative act of God that has conquered death from the inside out, leaving only the empty garments of mortality as its eternal trophy.

— with [Andrew Dalton](#) and [Paulo Ubalde](#)."

Facebook posting by Otangelo Grasso – January 11, 2026 - Shroud Academy

Faith Woven with Truth, Resurrection Affirmed

Vision Statement for Shroud Academy

Shroud Academy exists to unveil the profound gift of the Shroud of Turin to the world, especially in regions where it remains unknown. We believe this silent witness, bearing the image of a crucified man, is a divine provision for our time—a bridge between empirical inquiry and faith, and a powerful testament to the historical truth of the Gospel.

Our mission is to make the Shroud's reality, its intricate details, and its profound implications accessible to every seeking mind and heart. We are driven by the conviction that this artifact is not for worship, but for witness: to strengthen the faith of believers, to challenge the skepticism of seekers, and to equip those who proclaim the message of Christ.

To accomplish this, we employ a dual strategy of digital reach and personal presence:

- Globally, Online: We disseminate knowledge through a dynamic digital academy—hosting live Zoom meetings, maintaining active forums on platforms like Facebook, publishing in-depth content on our YouTube channel, and sharing rigorous scientific and theological papers on Academia.edu and other scholarly platforms. We meet people where they are, speaking the language of both science and faith.
- Locally, In-Person: We will travel to nations and communities, organizing physical Shroud expositions with detailed panels and replicas, delivering compelling lectures, and fostering direct, transformative encounters with this evidence. Our goal is to place the Shroud directly before the eyes of those who have never seen it.

Central to our vision is equipping. We empower pastors, evangelists, apologists, and lay leaders with the knowledge and tools to integrate the Shroud into their ministry—using it as a God-given instrument for apologetics, evangelism, and deepening the contemplation of Christ's Passion and Resurrection.

We operate from a posture of grace, recognizing that God uses diverse means to reach diverse hearts. Whether through a personal miracle, the written Word, or the investigable evidence of the Shroud, our ultimate purpose is singular: to see individuals drawn to seriously consider the claims of Jesus Christ and to find salvation in Him.

Shroud Academy is more than an educational initiative; it is a global mobilization to share a divine sign for our generation. We proclaim, through this linen cloth, the same eternal message: God so loved the world that He gave His only Son.

The Shroud of Turin: Christ's Evidence of the Resurrection

<https://reasonandscience.catsboard.com/t1688-the-shroud-of-turin-christ-s-evidence-of-the-resurrection>

The Shroud of Turin

<https://www.youtube.com/@shroudofturin-888>

Shroud Academy on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61554932893751>

Join on Facebook: The Shroud of Turin Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1251518529110294>

Join our Shroud Academy Whatsapp Group:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/KOFv8cYfu6zB0kYr6qcjHR>

Academia.edu scientific papers on the Shroud

<https://unit.academia.edu/OtangeloGrasso>

Books on Amazon about the Shroud:

<https://www.amazon.com/stores/Otangelo->

[Grasso/author/B0BJHHNBBY?ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1&qid=1736786317&sr=1-1&isDramIntegrated=true&shoppingPortalEnabled=true&ccs_id=f4c30884-203b-4074-a4f0-196b39dcd0a”](https://www.academia.edu/1736786317/Grasso/author/B0BJHHNBBY?ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1&qid=1736786317&sr=1-1&isDramIntegrated=true&shoppingPortalEnabled=true&ccs_id=f4c30884-203b-4074-a4f0-196b39dcd0a)

Blog Posting: [Three Wise Men](#) – The Medieval Shroud – January 4, 2026.

[A Formal Rebuttal of Andrea Nicolotti's Medieval-Icon Thesis in Light of Interdisciplinary Evidence on the Shroud of Turin](#) by **Otangelo Grasso / academia.edu** – December 2025 – [Italian version](#).

Facebook posting by Otangelo Grasso - December 2025

1. The Geometry Problem

Claim: The image on the Shroud is too proportionally accurate for a cloth that was wrapped around a 3D body. It resembles a flat portrait rather than a distorted wrapping.

Rebuttal:

The image is not a simple contact imprint. Advanced studies have confirmed it contains encoded three-dimensional information. When the intensity of the image is read as a distance code, a precise 3D relief of a human body can be reconstructed—a feat impossible for any painting or known medieval technique.

This 3D data is consistent with a vertical projection from a body lying horizontally beneath the cloth, not with direct contact alone.

Crucially, the image resides only on the outermost microfibrils of the linen threads, penetrating less than 0.7 microns (the width of a single bacterium). It is a surface phenomenon with no capillary flow of pigments, dyes, or stains into the threads. This is why the image is a perfect negative: it was only discovered to be photographically readable when first photographed in 1898. No artist would or could paint a perfect, undetectable negative image on a microscopic level.

The "Mercator effect" analogy fails because the image formation was not a simple mechanical transfer but a precise, distance-dependent process that recorded contours without the gross distortions of cloth stretching.

2. The Blocking Paradox (Face Cloth)

Claim: The Gospel of John mentions a separate face cloth (sudarium), which would have prevented the facial image from forming on the Shroud.

Rebuttal:

The Sudarium of Oviedo, widely associated with the biblical face cloth, has been forensically linked to the Shroud. Its bloodstains match the blood type (AB) and facial geometry of the Shroud image, strongly suggesting they covered the same head.

Given that the Shroud's image is a superficial, non-contact phenomenon, a separate cloth placed over or under the main shroud would not necessarily have "blocked" it if the image-forming mechanism was radiative or energetic in nature.

The Shroud's facial image shows no discontinuities that would indicate a blocking object, which is consistent with an image-forming event that could transcend minor physical layers.

3. The Hair Issue

Claim: The long hair style contradicts 1st-century Jewish norms, and the hair should have fallen back due to gravity if the body was supine.

Rebuttal:

Historical depictions are not definitive. The Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:5) involved uncut hair, and some traditions hold Jesus as a Nazirite. Early 2nd-century depictions (like the Alexamenos graffito) show Jesus with long hair.

The hair's position can be explained if the head was slightly elevated on a head rest (stone, or the burial spices themselves), or if the hair was matted with blood, sweat, and burial ointments, causing it to adhere to the cloth.

The image's 3D encoding shows the hair as a distinct contour from the head, consistent with it being slightly separated from the scalp by clotting or residue.

4. The Timeline Problem

Claim: The body shows early rigor mortis, not the bloating or decomposition expected after 72 hours in a warm tomb.

Rebuttal:

The tomb, hewn from rock, would have maintained a cool, stable temperature, drastically slowing decomposition.

The massive quantity of dry, powdered spices (myrrh and aloes) mentioned in John 19:39-40 are highly antibacterial and desiccating. They would have drawn moisture from tissues, mummifying the surface and preventing the bloating caused by bacterial gases.

The Shroud image captures the body in a state of primary rigidity (rigor mortis), which is entirely plausible in a cool, spice-filled environment over 72 hours. The absence of decompositional bloating is explained by the inhibitory action of the spices.

5. The Chemistry of Burial Spices

Claim: The 100 pounds of spices would have hardened into a resinous shell, preventing image formation and leaving traces not found on the Shroud.

Rebuttal:

"A hundred pounds" (Greek litras hekaton) is likely a symbolic term for "a very large amount," not a precise modern weight. The spices were likely a dry powder or a crumbled resin mix, not a liquid slurry that would saturate and uniformly harden.

Chemical analyses (e.g., pyrolysis-mass-spectrometry) have detected traces of aloe and myrrh on Shroud samples. They were present but not in a monolithic, crust-forming layer.

The image's existence only on the topmost fibers means it could have formed even if the cloth was in contact with spices; the hypothesized image-forming mechanism (a short, intense burst of radiant energy) would not have been impeded by a dry, particulate layer.

The Greek word entetuligmenon (John 20:7) means "rolled up" or "wrapped up," not necessarily "folded neatly." The face cloth could have been set aside, still in a bunched or rolled state from being unwrapped from the head.

Overall Scientific Anomalies & The Modern Irreproducibility Argument

The most compelling evidence for the Shroud's authenticity lies in its scientifically anomalous properties, which remain irreproducible today:

Superficial, Negative Image with 3D Encoding: The image is a perfect, high-resolution photographic negative residing only on the very surface of the fibers. It encodes accurate 3D spatial data, a property unknown in any form of art and only comparable to modern technologies like 3D laser scanning or radiography. No hypothesized medieval technique (painting, rubbing, acid staining, etc.) can account for all these properties simultaneously.

No Pigments or Medium: Extensive testing by the 1978 Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) found no evidence of paints, dyes, stains, or any artistic medium forming the image. The coloration is the result of a dehydration and oxidation of the cellulose fibers, akin to accelerated aging, but confined to an infinitesimally thin layer.

Presence of Human Blood: The bloodstains have been repeatedly confirmed as human blood (type AB). They show detailed forensic properties, including serum halos, and are chemically distinct from the image-forming process, indicating they were on the cloth before the image formed.

Questions on Radiocarbon Dating: The 1988 radiocarbon test dated the Shroud to 1260-1390 AD. However, critics note the sample was taken from a highly handled, edge area that may have been chemically contaminated or part of a medieval repair. Studies on vanillin content and cotton contamination support the possibility of a flawed date.

Conclusion

The forensic critique presented in the text applies a strictly naturalistic, post-mortem model to an artifact that, if authentic, is the centerpiece of a claimed supernatural event—the Resurrection. The Shroud's unique and unexplainable image properties—a superficial, negative, 3D-encoded photograph of a crucified man, formed by an unknown mechanism without pigments—stand as a monumental scientific challenge.

While debates on history and interpretation continue, the core physical evidence of the cloth itself resists explanation as a medieval forgery. No combination of 14th-century knowledge and materials can account for its characteristics, which were only discoverable with 20th-century technology. Therefore, the Shroud remains an unsolved enigma: a relic that sits precisely at the intersection of faith, history, and empirical science, defying conclusive categorization.”

Facebook posting by Otangelo Grasso – December 30, 2025 - From Faint Linen Trace to Living Image: How Science and Technology Have Unveiled the Man of the Shroud

What this sequence powerfully illustrates is not a change in the Shroud itself, but the steady expansion of human scientific vision.

For centuries, the image on the Shroud of Turin was barely perceptible. To the naked eye it appears as a faint, almost ghostlike discoloration on linen—so subtle that it is best recognized only from several feet away. Up close, the image dissolves into stains and fibers, offering no obvious portrait. For most of history, observers could sense that a human form was present, yet they could not truly *see* it. The Shroud remained an enigma: present, real, but visually inaccessible.

A decisive leap occurred in 1898, when Secondo Pia photographed the Shroud for the first time. With that single technological act, something unprecedented happened: the photographic negative revealed a detailed, lifelike human image. Light and dark reversed, and suddenly the face, body proportions, wounds, and anatomical realism emerged with startling clarity. What the human eye alone could not decode, photography uncovered instantly. This moment marked a turning point—not by altering the Shroud, but by revealing that the image itself already contained an extraordinary amount of encoded information.

In the decades that followed, scientific tools continued to refine our understanding. Advances in chemistry, physics, forensic medicine, image processing, and digital analysis demonstrated that the Shroud image behaves unlike paint, pigment, or scorch marks. Its superficiality, its three-dimensional encoding of body-to-cloth distance, and its consistency with known patterns of trauma from scourging and crucifixion all deepened appreciation of what is actually present on the linen. Yet even then, the image remained incomplete—fragmentary, inverted, and constrained by the limits of interpretation.

Today, with the advent of high-resolution digital imaging, computational modeling, and artificial intelligence, we have entered a new phase. AI-assisted reconstruction does not invent a face; it integrates anatomical data, forensic wound patterns, cloth-image geometry, and historical context to translate the Shroud's faint signal into a coherent human form. For the first time, we can visualize—front and back—the battered body that corresponds to the Shroud image with unprecedented realism. This is not a replacement of the Shroud, but a decoding of it, made possible only by cumulative scientific progress.

And yet, a profound paradox remains. After nearly 2,000 years, we still cannot claim absolute certainty about exactly how Jesus looked. The Shroud gives us constraints, not a modern photograph. What it does offer—now more clearly than ever—is a tangible window into what He endured: the scourging, the wounds, the exhaustion, the brutality written into the body itself. Technology has not diminished mystery; it has sharpened it.

In this sense, we truly live in a privileged time. As Christians, we are able to witness layers of meaning being unveiled that previous generations could scarcely imagine. The faint image seen dimly by medieval eyes, the shocking negative revealed in 1898, and the lifelike reconstructions possible today together testify to a remarkable convergence: an ancient cloth and modern science meeting across millennia. We are not merely seeing more—we are understanding more, and doing so at a moment in history when tools exist to explore the Shroud with a depth and rigor never before possible.”

Facebook posting by Otangelo Grasso – December 28, 2025 - The Divine Purpose of the Shroud of Turin

“If the Lord left us the Shroud of Turin, bearing the mysterious image of a crucified man, He did so with profound and deliberate purpose. To the sincere questioner who asks, “What is the purpose of this cloth?” the answer unfolds not as a single point, but as a multi-faceted testament to divine wisdom, addressing the deepest needs of the human heart and mind across generations.

Foremost, the Shroud stands as the most powerful empirical link between the Gospel accounts and historical reality. In an age of profound skepticism - where some claim Jesus was a myth, a Roman invention, or, as in other faiths, a prophet who never died on the cross - the Shroud provides tangible, investigable evidence. It is an artifact that can be touched, measured, and subjected to scientific scrutiny. This physicality matters. Without it, the challenge of countering the assertion that the Gospels are elaborate fiction would be significantly harder. The Shroud

answers this by presenting a concrete object whose details correspond with astonishing precision to the biblical narrative: the scourge marks of a Roman flagrum, the puncture wounds of a crown of thorns, the nail wounds in the wrists and feet, the post-mortem spear thrust, and the blood flows consistent with crucifixion and burial. The correlations are so extensive that the Shroud has earned the name "the fifth Gospel," not replacing Scripture but visually confirming and complementing its testimony with forensic detail.

Yet, the purpose of promoting the Shroud is categorically not to foster worship of a relic - true worship belongs to the risen Lord alone. Rather, it serves as a formidable tool for apologetics, masterfully bridging the gap between faith and the modern demand for evidence. This function is underscored by the testimony of those like John D. German, an agnostic member of the scientific research team (STURP), who candidly admitted that while strong Christians might not need such evidence, analytical minds like his did. For skeptics whose intellects create barriers to their hearts, the Shroud acts as a divinely provided bridge. It speaks in the language of empirical inquiry, inviting investigation and removing unnecessary obstacles to considering the Gospel seriously.

This leads to a tremendous pastoral insight into God's accommodating grace. A poignant story illustrates this well: a believer, certain in his faith due to a powerful personal encounter with Christ, was challenged by a wise counselor. The counselor affirmed that just as God does not mind if some dismiss a personal testimony as "crazy," He does not mind if the Shroud of Turin convinces others of Jesus Christ. Why? Because for a soul to believe and be saved is infinitely more important than any debate over an artifact's authenticity. This reframes the discussion from academic argument to soteriological outcome. God, in His economy of grace, employs diverse means—a personal miracle, the written Word, or a mysterious linen cloth—to reach diverse hearts. Any conduit that genuinely leads a person to Christ fulfills the divine desire for salvation.

Theologically, the Shroud functions as an enduring sign for future generations, echoing the "sign of Jonah" that Jesus promised - His death and resurrection. While Christ's resurrection is the ultimate, supernatural sign, the Shroud serves as a physical trace pointing to it. The image itself, formed by processes science cannot replicate, and the absence of bodily decomposition, silently testify to the moment between death and new life. It is a sign left not for the first disciples, but for a "Thomas generation" that longs for tangible evidence. Like the Apostle Thomas, many are invited through the Shroud to "touch" the wounds and move from doubt to belief.

For the faithful, the Shroud enriches contemplation of the Paschal Mystery, making Christ's suffering and sacrifice vividly immediate. For the unbeliever or the indifferent, it poses an unavoidable question and serves as a jolt to complacency. And even for those who dispute its authenticity, it retains a formidable power: it remains the most accurate visual representation of the Passion ever known, a stark and moving depiction of what Christ endured for the sins of the world. Whether viewed as a first-century relic or a later representation, it proclaims the depth of divine love more powerfully than any man-made image.

Ultimately, the Shroud of Turin embodies divine accommodation. God, understanding our nature as physical, historical, and often skeptical creatures, has provided not only spiritual revelation through Scripture and the Holy Spirit but also this physical evidence. It does not replace faith -

which rests on the living witness of the Spirit - nor does it make faith merely rational assent. Instead, it complements faith, corroborates Scripture, and provides an additional avenue for the Spirit to work. Its ultimate purpose is evangelistic: to cause someone to pause, to investigate the claims of Christ, and to come to a saving knowledge of Him. In this, the Shroud is a gift of grace, a silent witness proclaiming the same message as the Gospel: that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

[A Quick Bible Study Vol. 300: Praise God for 300! It Began Because of Him and His Burial Shroud](#) by Myra Kahn Adams / townhall.com – December 28, 2025.

What's App postings by Otangelo Grasso – December 28, 2025 - Ethnically, Jesus was a Jew. Most likely, he had dark hair, Jews living 2,000 years ago were Levantine peoples, indigenous to the Near East. Ethnically and biologically, they belonged to the Eastern Mediterranean-West Asian population continuum. They were not Europeans, and they were not Africans. Their ancestry, culture, and physical characteristics were rooted in Judea and the surrounding Levant.

In terms of appearance, they typically had light olive to medium brown skin, dark hair, and dark eyes, with facial features common to Near Eastern populations. While individual variation existed—especially in cities like Jerusalem—there is no historical, archaeological, or genetic evidence that Jews of the Second Temple period were sub-Saharan African in origin.

Accordingly, Jesus' physical appearance would have been that of a normal Jewish man of his time and place. As a Galilean Jew, He would have shared the common Levantine features of his contemporaries, blending into the local population rather than standing out by unusual skin tone, hair color, or facial traits.

Modern racial categories such as “Caucasian” or “African” are anachronistic when applied to antiquity. Using modern geographical language only for clarity, Jews of the 1st century—including Jesus—are best described as Near Eastern (Levantine) in appearance and origin.

Otangelo: The Divine Purpose of the Shroud of Turin

If the Lord left us the Shroud of Turin, bearing the mysterious image of a crucified man, He did so with profound and deliberate purpose. To the sincere questioner who asks, "What is the purpose of this cloth?" the answer unfolds not as a single point, but as a multi-faceted testament to divine wisdom, addressing the deepest needs of the human heart and mind across generations.

Foremost, the Shroud stands as the most powerful empirical link between the Gospel accounts and historical reality. In an age of profound skepticism - where some claim Jesus was a myth, a Roman invention, or, as in other faiths, a prophet who never died on the cross - the Shroud provides tangible, investigable evidence. It is an artifact that can be touched, measured, and subjected to scientific scrutiny. This physicality matters. Without it, the challenge of countering the assertion that the Gospels are elaborate fiction would be significantly harder. The Shroud answers this by presenting a concrete object whose details correspond with astonishing precision

to the biblical narrative: the scourge marks of a Roman flagrum, the puncture wounds of a crown of thorns, the nail wounds in the wrists and feet, the post-mortem spear thrust, and the blood flows consistent with crucifixion and burial. The correlations are so extensive that the Shroud has earned the name "the fifth Gospel," not replacing Scripture but visually confirming and complementing its testimony with forensic detail.

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Instead, it complements faith, corroborates Scripture, and provides an additional avenue for the Spirit to work. Its ultimate purpose is evangelistic: to cause someone to pause, to investigate the claims of Christ, and to come to a saving knowledge of Him. In this, the Shroud is a gift of grace, a silent witness proclaiming the same message as the Gospel: that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Blog posting: - [The Holy Shroud on Trial](#) - **The Medieval Shroud** – December 27, 2025.

Facebook posting by Otangelo Grasso – December 24, 2025: The Scourging of Christ: A Forensic Reconstruction from the Shroud of Turin

Introduction

This image represents a forensic-historical reconstruction of the scourging of Jesus Christ, meticulously derived from physical evidence preserved on the Shroud of Turin. Rather than relying solely on artistic imagination or devotional tradition, the scene integrates anatomical data, Roman historical practices, early Christian tradition, and scholarly research—particularly the pioneering work of Giulio Ricci—to create a scientifically grounded and historically plausible depiction.

1. Scourge Marks: Evidence of Multiple Executioners

The Shroud preserves hundreds of distinct, dumbbell-shaped wounds consistent with the Roman *flagrum*—a whip with multiple leather thongs tipped with metal or bone. The distribution and angles of these marks indicate repeated strikes from multiple directions, strongly suggesting the involvement of more than one executioner. The reconstruction incorporates this forensic data by depicting extensive lacerations across Jesus' back, shoulders, and legs, with two Roman soldiers positioned to reflect the alternating strike patterns evident on the Shroud.

2. Body Position and Restraint

Blood flow patterns on the Shroud demonstrate that Jesus was upright during the scourging and very likely bound to prevent collapse or movement. The reconstruction shows Jesus bent forward and restrained against a column, exposing his back and sides in a manner that corresponds closely to the trauma distribution visible on the cloth. This posture maximizes the surface area available for scourging while maintaining anatomical realism.

3. Blood Flow Realism

Unlike symbolic or decorative representations, the Shroud contains actual bloodstains formed under the influence of gravity. In the reconstruction, blood flows naturally downward along muscle contours and limbs, mirroring the gravity-driven bleeding patterns preserved on the cloth. This attention to biological detail reinforces the forensic authenticity of the scene.

4. Anatomical Accuracy

Muscle tension, skeletal alignment, and trauma response in the image reflect modern anatomical understanding informed by decades of Shroud research. The weakened posture and physical collapse depicted are consistent with severe blood loss, pain, and exhaustion as documented by forensic pathologists who have analyzed the cloth. The reconstruction avoids theatrical exaggeration in favor of clinical precision.

5. Absence of Idealization

The Shroud presents an unembellished, wounded body rather than a heroic or beautified figure. The reconstruction follows this restraint by avoiding idealized features or dramatic gestures, focusing instead on the raw physical reality of suffering as recorded on the linen. This approach honors the evidentiary nature of the Shroud itself.

6. Roman Execution Practice

Historical analysis of the Shroud confirms Roman scourging methods designed to inflict severe trauma while avoiding immediate death. The soldiers, whip design, stance, and controlled brutality shown in the reconstruction align with these historically documented practices, grounding the scene in the military and judicial context of first-century Judea under Roman occupation.

7. The Column Tradition

The column depicted in the reconstruction is based on early Christian tradition identifying it as the Column of the Scourging, believed to have been discovered in Jerusalem by Saint Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, during her pilgrimage in the early fourth century. According to tradition, Helena brought the column to Italy, where it has been preserved and venerated since late antiquity. Its inclusion reflects this longstanding historical and devotional association, bridging archaeological tradition with forensic reconstruction.

8. Influence of Giulio Ricci's Research

The reconstruction is significantly informed by the research and paintings of Giulio Ricci, whose life's work sought to depict the Passion of Christ strictly according to the forensic data of the Shroud. Ricci's compositions—particularly his treatment of posture, restraint, and wound distribution—provided a visual framework that helped translate two-dimensional Shroud data into coherent three-dimensional scenes. The present image builds upon this scholarly-artistic tradition, refining it with contemporary photorealistic techniques and enhanced anatomical precision.

9. Methodological Summary

Rather than beginning with a purely narrative or devotional approach, this reconstruction was

built from evidence outward. Forensic data from the Shroud, historical Roman execution practices, early Christian tradition regarding the column, and Ricci's Shroud-based visual studies were systematically integrated into a single, cohesive, and photorealistic visualization. Every element—from wound placement to body mechanics—was chosen for its correspondence to verifiable historical or forensic information.

Conclusion

This image stands as a forensic-historical visualization grounded in the evidence of the Shroud of Turin, enriched by early Christian tradition and informed by decades of scholarly research. It seeks not to sensationalize suffering, but to honor the historical and physical reality of an event central to Christian faith—rendered with scientific rigor, historical fidelity, and artistic integrity.

[The Symbolic Restraint](#) by **Paul Bishop / shroudofturinuk.com** – December 24, 2025.

[Pierre Barbet and the Medical Study of the Shroud of Turin](#) by **Otangelo Grasso / academia.edu** – December 23, 2025.

Blog posting: [Ne sutor ultra crepidam](#) – **The Medieval Shroud** – December 9, 2025.

Blog posting: [Teeth Revisited](#) – **The Medieval Shroud** – December 7, 2025.

[Museum offers an immersive, evidence-based experience of the Shroud of Turin](#) by **Jim Graves / catholicworldreport.com** – December 5, 2025.

Blog posting: [SEEC and ye shall find – Review Part Two](#) – **The Medieval Shroud** -November 28, 2025.

Blog posting: [The Ahmadiyya Position](#) – **The Medieval Shroud** – November 27, 2025.

Blog posting: [When the Heat Cools](#) – **Shroud of Turin Blog** – November 25, 2025.

Blog posting: [12 Reasons to Disbelieve](#) – **The Medieval Shroud** – November 20, 2025.

[Study of the Shroud of Turin: From the 3D Effect to the Cryptogram of the Bifurcation, the Revelation of A VÍA SATI DA The Logic of the Study: From Physical Proof to the Cryptogram](#)
by Eliana P . Gómez / academia.edu – November 20, 2025.

[Sindone, possibile prodigo da una relíquia / iltimone.org](#) -“A concentrated thermal radiation”: account of what occurred on November 16 during a conference at the Church of Maria SS. della Presentazione in Montebello Jonico, Reggio Calabria by **Giulio Fanti** – November 20, 2025 – Translation: “On the morning of November 16, after Sunday Mass in Montebello Jonico (RC), I gave a conference titled “Holy Shroud – The Mystery that can illuminate the heart” and brought with me a reliquary about 12 cm tall containing two fragments of Shroud threads. At the end of the conference, several people from the audience approached me both to ask personal questions and to see the reliquary up close. At a certain point, one person stopped the conversation, exclaiming that the Relic was giving off heat.

Out of reverence, she did not dare touch the glass of the reliquary, but held the palm of her hand a few centimeters away, perceiving a clear sensation of warmth. Everyone present then tried to draw near to the reliquary without touching it, confirming for themselves the thermal radiation emitted by the threads of the Holy Shroud through the glass. Since this was not the first extraordinary event I have witnessed, I did not immediately feel an urgent interest in confirming the occurrence, but after a few minutes I too asked those present to let me check the presumed miracle for about thirty seconds.

Without touching the glass of the Relic, I positioned the palm of my hand about 3–5 cm away, and I too felt heat radiating from it: my skin perceived what seemed like an increase of 2–5 °C, localized in an area of a few square centimeters right at the center of the glass of the reliquary.

I immediately made sure that there were no nearby heat sources that could influence the phenomenon, and I also verified that the metal of the reliquary was not warm.

I recall having felt a strange effect when bringing my hand toward the glass of the reliquary: it was the sensation of a concentrated thermal radiation, roughly 2–3 cm in diameter, striking the center of the palm of my hand. To explain this effect, I am inclined to compare that moderate sensation of heat to what I felt when I placed, a few centimeters under my chin, a bundle of 33 lit candles with the Holy Fire of Jerusalem on Holy Saturday of the Orthodox Easter in 2019, obviously without suffering any pain or physical harm. It is also worth noting that after about ten minutes from the event, I tested again my ability to perceive the thermal radiation: no heat was emitted.

After returning home in the evening, I checked again and no longer perceived any heat emission. At this point, although I did not bring with me any suitable instruments to measure temperature — because I never imagined such a thing — after having ruled out any general bias capable of altering the perception of the group, and after having excluded the influence of nearby heat sources on the reliquary, and having verified that numerous people verbally stated they had confirmed the fact, I ask myself whether we may speak of a presumed miracle.

I add that after a previous conference on the topic, a physical therapist informed me that he faintly perceived the same phenomenon of thermal emission. Even more importantly, I finally

ask myself — assuming we may speak of a miraculous event — what its meaning may have been and why it happened. Did Jesus of the Holy Shroud perhaps wish to make the title of the conference concrete by “illuminating the hearts” of those present?

Given that the Relic consists of two fragments of thread from the Holy Shroud, more than speaking of a possible prodigy, I would prefer to speak of a presumed miracle.

WhatsApp posting by Otangelo Grasso – November 2025: “Crucifixion and the Median Nerve: Anatomical Precision, Engineered Agony”

Crucifixion, as practiced by Roman executioners, was a calculated punishment engineered for maximum physical torment, psychological humiliation, and public deterrence. It was not chaotic brutality, but a standardized method of state terror—precise in its anatomical targeting, and consistent in its theatrical message: this is what happens to enemies of Rome.

One critical aspect of this procedure was the nailing of the condemned to the horizontal beam, or patibulum. Contrary to centuries of artistic tradition that depicted nails through the palms, both forensic evidence (notably from the Shroud of Turin and skeletal finds like the Jehohanan remains) and biomechanical studies confirm the nails were driven through the wrist, not the palm. The Greek and Latin terms for “hand” used in ancient texts were anatomically inclusive of the wrist area, and this method was far more structurally sound. A nail through the palm would tear under body weight; the wrist, however, could support the full mass during suspension.

The nail was likely placed in a small anatomical zone known as Destot’s space, nestled between the capitate and lunate carpal bones. This narrow corridor allowed the nail to pass through the wrist without shattering bone, which was essential for securely anchoring the victim without prematurely severing tissue. However, the cruel brilliance of this site lies in its proximity to the median nerve—a thick, sensitive trunk that passes through the carpal tunnel.

When pierced or compressed, the median nerve sends a cascade of neuropathic pain through the wrist, forearm, and into the shoulder and chest. The agony is not a sharp surface wound, but a searing, electric-like, deep visceral pain—comparable to having one’s arm set on fire from the inside. Victims would often experience involuntary contraction of the thumb (due to nerve disruption), and intense paresthesia (burning, tingling, or numbness) radiating through the first three fingers. This matches the forensic detail from the Shroud, where the thumbs are absent—not because they were severed, but because they retracted due to median nerve trauma.

The nails themselves were not slender or surgical, but iron spikes 5–7 inches long, with square shafts that crushed and tore through soft tissue, not slicing cleanly. The executioner—trained to deliver a single, accurate, and permanent strike—would hammer with deliberate force. The first wrist would be nailed while the condemned was supine; the other arm forcibly extended to reach the second fixed point on the beam, often resulting in shoulder dislocation or cartilage tearing.

This method was not incidental. The nail’s path was chosen not only for physical support but for maximum sensory violation. The goal was not simply immobilization—it was to ignite suffering

from within the nervous system, triggering a continuous loop of pain with every shift in weight or breath.

The Message in the Method

In Roman thought, crucifixion was not merely execution—it was demonstration. Every detail had meaning: stripped naked, displayed high, beaten into a bloodied shell, then nailed in ways that turned the body's own nerves against itself. The precision of the pain—the nerve struck, the bone spared, the breath strangled—was part of the empire's power.

Jesus, according to the Gospel narratives, endured this procedure in full: the nail through Destot's space, the nerve rupture, the asphyxiation posture. The Gospel writers do not describe the mechanics, but forensic studies of the Shroud and skeletal remains have made the invisible anatomy plain. What was once thought symbolic is now recognizable as clinical.

Thus, the nail at the wrist is not just a historical correction to centuries of artwork—it is a brutal anatomical truth, an act of engineered agony that fulfills both the political intent of Rome and, as Christians believe, the prophetic descriptions of suffering in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53.

Blog posting: [My critique \(2\) of Sarzeaud, N., 2025, “Further evidence suggests Jesus was not wrapped in ‘Shroud of Turin’,” Scimex, 29 Aug 2025](#) – The Shroud of Turin (Stephen Jones) – November 12, 2025.

[Dental surgeon spots rare anatomical detail in Shroud of Turin](#) by **Karie Neeley Anderson / drbicuspid.com** – November 10, 2025.

[Scientists Say New Shroud of Turin Analysis May Reveal Crucial Evidence About Jesus’ Crown of Thorns – Spirit Science – spiritsciencecentral.com](#) – November 10, 2025.

[The Shroud as an Object of Intelligent Custody: Double Validation of the Unified Code](#) by **Eliana P . Gómez / academia.edu** – November 7, 2025.

Press Release: [Groundbreaking Shroud of Turin Museum to Open at Christ Cathedral Campus – PRNewswire](#) – November 7, 2025.

[Proof!](#) by **Paul Bishop / British Society for the Turin Shroud** – October 25, 2025.

[Pre-1350 Shroud Trajectories: Wilson vs. Markwardt - A Comparative Historical Analysis](#) by **Otangelo Grasso / academia.edu** – October 10, 2025. [Italian version](#).

New Shroud website: <https://www.theshroudexperience.com/> [“The Shroud of Turin: an Immersive Experience;” opening November 2025]. See also: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkZyYDRzMEQ>.

[The Shroud of Turin in the Coptic Gospel of Thomas](#) by **Edwin Stok / academia.edu** – October 28, 2025.

[Researchers believe chilling new Shroud of Turin discovery proves one major Jesus theory](#) by **Kit Roberts / unilad.com** – October 27, 2025

[The Shroud of Turin Hidden Evidence and Historical Contradiction](#) by **Eliana P . Gómez / academia.edu** – October 27, 2025. [Spanish version](#). See also (Spanish): https://www.academia.edu/144656475/Rese%C3%B1a_Cronolog%C3%ADa_Sencilla_de_la_S%C3%A1bana_Santa_de_Tur%C3%ADn?source=swp_share

[The Message of the Shroud](#) by **Ed Mullen – lewrockwell.com** – October 25, 2025.

Facebook posting by Otangelo Grasso – October 24, 2025 – “The Shroud of Turin, with its stark imprint of a crucified man, is more than a relic; it is a visual echo of one deep truth: Jesus bore our sins. “He was pierced for our transgressions... the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:4–6). From the cross he prayed the sentence that defines the Christian heart: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). They condemned him for blasphemy, blind to the Messiah before them. Yet their blindness could not silence his mercy. In extreme agony, he did not merely teach - he embodied it: “Love your enemies... pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). There, he showed love’s measure: “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

Therefore, the bloodstains on the linen are not a cry for vengeance but the witness of a life offered “as a guilt-offering” (Isaiah 53:10). This is where justice and mercy meet in the crucified one. “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree... by his wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:24). The Shroud points beyond suffering to the reconciliation God initiated.

To study the Shroud is to move beyond historical curiosity into imitation. “Forgive each other as the Lord forgave you” (Colossians 3:13). The early church lived this - Stephen, as he was stoned,

prayed, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:60). The image is static, but its message is active, pressing the question: If this is how the Messiah loved those who wronged him, how should his followers treat theirs?

Forgiveness here is not denial of evil but the costly path that breaks its cycle. The Shroud gathers memory, Scripture, and ethics into one line: forgiven people are called to become forgiving people. It keeps Christ’s intercession before our eyes, summoning us to extend to others the grace that flowed from his cross.”

Facebook posting by British Society for the Turin Shroud Newsletter – October 23, 2025:
“Strips of Linen”

A common misunderstanding

(<https://shroudofturin.uk>)

One of the most common objections to the Shroud of Turin being authentic is that John’s gospel says in 19:40 “Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs” (NIV).

Jesus’ burial was portrayed by the Victorian artist T. Noyes-Lewis as being buried according to this perception, Egyptian mummy style.

This misconception is still widely believed today by many people who use it to proclaim the Shroud’s inauthenticity.

So where does this interpretation come from? John uses the plural Greek word ‘Othonia’ to describe the cloths being seen by the apostles and it is this plurality which leads to the confusion.

Here is what Father Kim Dreisbach says on the subject:-

...’the Bible - when read in Greek - uses a variety of terms to describe the burial cloth or cloths.

The Synoptic Gospels use the word sindon in the singular to designate the Shroud (Matt. 27:59; Mk. 15:46 (twice); Lk. 23:53). Sindon appears only six times in all of the New Testament. In an anecdote unique to Mark, it is used twice in 14: 51-52 to describe the linen cloth left by an unnamed young man when he fled naked from the Garden of Gethsemane.

In Jn. 19:40, the Fourth Gospeller uses the word othonia [Gk.] (plural) to describe the linen cloths used in the Burial. Othonia, a word of uncertain meaning, but probably best translated as a generic plural for grave clothes. The same word is used by Luke or his scribe in Lk. 24:12 what had previously been described as the sindon in Lk. 23:53. Note: vs. 12 (But Peter rose and ran to the tomb, stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths (plural) by themselves; and he went home wondering what happened.) does not appear in the most ancient manuscripts, but is added by later ancient authorities.

Next we discover (keirias) [Gk.] translated by the RSV as bandages in Jn. 11:44's description of the raising of Lazarus. In actuality, linen strips used to bind the wrists and ankles and probably also used on the outside at the neck, waist and ankles to secure the Shroud to the body.

Finally we come to the word sudarion [Gk.] which is found in the canonical texts solely in John (11:44. 20:7) and Luke (19:20; Acts 19:12). It is translated by the RSV as "the napkin which had been on his head" (Jn. 20:7) and earlier in 11:44 as the cloth with which Lazarus' face was wrapped. Scholars like the late Dr. John A.T Robinson ("The Shroud of Turin and the Grave Cloths of the Gospels") and J.N. Sanders regard it as a chin band going around the face/head for the purpose of keeping the corpse's jaws closed. Certainly this appears to be the intent of the artist who drew the manuscript illustration for the Hungarian Pray mss, Fol. 27v, Budapest of 1192-95 which clearly illustrates that the Shroud's full length image(s) were known in the 12th century. (See Ian Wilson, 1986, *The Mysterious Shroud*, Garden City, NY; Doubleday & Company, p.115. See also Bercovits, I. 1969, Dublin: Irish University Press. *Illuminated Manuscripts in Hungary*, pl. III.) .

Rev. Albert "Kim" Dreisbach

It is clear that various multiple strips of linen may have been used in the preparation of the body of Jesus, hands, feet, head all may have had binding strips. There is also a side strip on the Shroud which has been subsequently sewn back on. Dr. John Jackson showed how this may have been used to secure the cloth to the body.

Of course as in most historical documents the main pertinent details are written about, leaving out minor details.

Shroud scholar Pam Moon has in the past highlighted The Holy Blood of Brugge. Small strips of linen in a Byzantine reliquary which still bear the red blood stains, supposedly linked to Joseph of Arimathea. Of course it cannot be said definitively that these strips were used in the burial, but it is a possibility.

Looking at the events of Good Friday, what do we actually know. The first being the death of Jesus being at 3pm in the afternoon or thereabouts according to Mark 27, the same time the Passover lambs were being slaughtered . There had been darkness for the three preceding hours which may have been caused by a khamsin dust storm, not uncommon in the Middle East at this time of year . Humphreys cites an account by Sir Robert Hanbury Brown who was caught up in one...."in a few minutes we were in actual pitch darkness....so intense was the darkness that we tried to distinguish our hands placed close before our eyes. Not even an outline could be seen". (see *The Mystery of The Last Supper*. Colin J.Humphreys). There was also an earthquake recorded which has been substantiated by modern geology (C.Migowsky et al Earth and planetary science letters 222). There is even some evidence by Williams of dust layers on the varves in question (Also Williams, Brauer and Schwab . International Geology review 2012).

Migowsky cites the earthquake to 5:5 whereas Williams says 8:8 , but both quote AD33 as the date.

So the whole scene was not a calm or still one. It was full of intense drama, fear and intensity.

Marks gospel says that evening was then approaching. The special Sabbath as it was appropriated in Johns gospel, we know started at 6pm.

The soldiers were therefore asked to break the men's legs in preparation so they could be taken down, but it was found that Jesus was already dead, which was when the spear was thrust into his side to make sure. The blood and the water, as John states. Proof that Jesus was dead.

Joseph of Arimathea then went to the Praetorium to ask Pilates permission to take the body for burial. Pilate being surprised that Jesus was dead then sent for the centurion, who was at the crucifixion site to come and confirm this, which he did and Joseph was given permission.

The praetorium being about half a mile from Golgotha.

In real terms, the time between all this happening was less than three hours as everything had to be completed before, not at 6pm. The taking down of the body and removal of the nails. The journey of Joseph to Pilate. The journey of a messenger back to the site, the journey of the centurion back to Pilate and the journey of Joseph back to the site.

Evidence from the bloodstains on the Sudarium of Oviedo shows both post mortem blood on the cloth which dried and further staining whilst the body was on the ground, Dr. Villalain has calculated this time span, from the staining on the Sudarium to be about one hour from the body being taken down to Joseph returning with permission. (Mark Guscini. BSTS newsletter 43).

The distance from the cross to the tomb was not far.

Was the naked body of Jesus covered or carried this short way in some other cloth? we do not know. If it was this other cloth would have been kept in the tomb as it would have contained blood too. They would certainly not have carried Jesus in a clean linen cloth, a very expensive clean linen cloth.

As we can see by the very nature of the timing of events, the window of time and preparation must have been extremely short.

In the light of what is not mentioned but is extremely likely, there were indeed more than one piece of linen.

Apart from all of this however, Jewish burial practices have always involved shrouds and mummy style burials have never been used. There is a Jewish Kabbalistic website called chabad.org. I would like to quote from a recent article by Yehuda Shurpin who is definitely not Christian and has no interest in the The Shroud of Turin.

'The burial traditions of the Jewish people are still intimately linked to linen to this very day.

Yehuda Shurpin on chabad.org asks the question 'Why are Jews buried in white linen shrouds ?'

He says that the time honoured Jewish custom is to bury our departed in (inexpensive) linen shrouds and says that this dates back two millennia to the time of Rabban Gamaliel the Elder in the early first century.

The Talmud relates that at this time there was such social pressure to procure expensive shrouds that the strain it placed on families was even more painful than the death itself.

Things got so bad that families would sometimes abandon the corpse rather than to try and provide the deceased with socially acceptable shrouds.

Rabban Gamaliel (the same who appears in Acts 5) asked that he be buried in simple linen (again the implication that expensive 3 over 1 herringbone weaves may have been an alternative).

In later generations this example was followed, it even becoming acceptable to bury the dead in plain hemp garments.

Shurpin also writes that ‘it is customary that not only the shroud but even the threads used to sew the pieces together, should be made of white linen. He says that mystics explain that “ there is a great secret” behind this custom.

As the soul embarks on the journey heavenward, being dressed in pure white linen, with nothing else mixed in, it serves as protection against any impurity or evil forces....when a person passes away and their soul ascends heavenward, he or she is compared to a priest entering Gods sacred abode’.

When Jewish people were buried in shrouds, after decomposition the bones were eventually taken and placed in an ossuary (usually about a year later), so by the very nature of the burial practices, intact archaeological finds of shrouds are extremely rare, however, fragments have been found that give confirmation to shrouds being used. Mummification and Egyptian style burials were the exact opposite in that decomposition was to be avoided.

Here are some observations by Jenny Hawkins:-

‘South of the Old City of Jerusalem, located on the periphery of the village of Silwan, is one of Jerusalem’s richest concentrations of rock-hewn tombs. It was one of the main burial Necropolis during the Second Temple period, (538 BC until 70 AD) and as such, gives us knowledge of the Jewish burial customs during the time of Jesus.

Tombs at Silwan [13]

Linen shrouds have been discovered there at burials sites dating from the Roman period. They have also been found at ‘En Gedi, Gesher Haziv, and Jericho. Imprints of textiles were found on bones and skulls; the material used was identified as linen because of an equal number of threads in the warp and the weft.

Other types of fabric were also found—the most common being wool—but linen was found more in Israel than in other Roman areas.

Shrouds were specially-prepared or freshly laundered cloths made for the purpose of wrapping a corpse. The Hebrew word for these burial shrouds, takrikim, connotes wrapping and binding more than dressing. This is also indicated by Tractate Semahot: “Man may wrap and bind men but not women, but women may wrap and bind both men and women”. [14](In preparation for burial, the corpse was also ‘dressed’ with spices and incense placed underneath or upon the shroud. Under normal conditions, a year after burial, the bones were removed to an ossuary.)

Burial clothes at the time of Jesus consisted of at least three parts; a head cloth, the long rectangular shroud itself, and however many strips of cloth were needed to bind them in place. These pieces were arranged in layers (when the body was wrapped). They have been found stuck together by body fluids and decay so that it is impossible to separate them without causing damage, but there is no doubt about their composition.

Shrouds and their accompanying burial cloths were found at Nahal David and Ze'elim. The best preserved shrouds are from Roman-period 'En Gedi (2nd-1st centuries BC). They were found in eight Jewish tombs on the southern bank of Nahal 'Arugot and in one tomb on the northern bank of Nahal David. Over 70 fragments assumed to be shroud remnants have also been found at En Gedi.

There is no doubt the funerary wrappings that were customary to the time of Jesus were shrouds.

Exactly how many linen wrappings did John and Peter see?

Of what shape and size?

Can you tell from this?

Of course not. No one can. It's not precise or specific or detailed in any way. True biblical scholars are exceedingly careful not to add to what is actually there in the biblical record beyond the needs of translation.'

Here is another article from Chabad regarding Jewish burial practices.

The Tachrichim◆Shrouds and Dressing

Unlike in other religions and practices, a Jewish person is not buried in his or her usual clothing. Similarly, jewellery or other adornments are not worn.

As discussed earlier, one's soul and its spiritual rectification is far more important following death than any honour he could possibly get from his association with earthly possessions. Thus, the Jewish funeral emphasises the spiritual and sublime over the physical and material.

According to Jewish tradition, a deceased's body is dressed in plain white Tachrichim (traditional shrouds). These garments are hand-made from linen or muslin and are considered fitting for someone who is about to stand before G-d in judgment.

Another reason given is that using simple shrouds ensures that those who cannot afford fancy clothing are not "embarrassed" that they do not have any.

The late and great Barrie Schwortz who was Jewish, regularly confirmed in his many talks that Jews were and are still buried in shrouds.

Of course many of the details as previously mentioned have not been inserted in the gospel accounts. The use and placing of myrrh and aloes? The washing of the body? The separate use of linen strips for binding? Was a linen binding placed over the head to keep the jaw in place? and was this cloth the folded cloth placed separately after the resurrection? We just don't know these details and probably never will.

We do know that it was an incredibly small window of time and intensely dramatic and emotional. Gospels accounts around the time do vary and the variations have been left in and not edited. The main points however are all in one accord. This accords with genuine eye witness accounts and is to be expected and indeed is common with modern reporting from differing sources.

*the tendency of modern languages to use «bands» or similar words to render othònia is anyway relatively recent (less than two centuries), whereas, in the past, the sensible and cautious idea of generic linen cloths used to prevailAs for the possibility that a burial shroud could actually be a single, large sheet, it's interesting to quote an episode dating back to the beginning of 3rd century A.D., where we find the last will of Rabbi Jehuda the Patriarch (Jehudah HaNasi, the Prince)

. In addition to Jehudah's requests for his own burial, in fact, R. Hizqjah specifies «do not overdo the funerary garments» (Bereshit Rabbah 100:2) ; in TY Kilayim 6, another text dealing with R. Jehudah's requests for his own burial , as well as in TY

Kilayim 9:32b, it is made clear that the «Rabbi was buried in one linen shroud (without any other garments)»: the Hebrew goes sadin ehad , with that unmistakable ehad meaning «one» (the very same ehad contained in the Shema: «Adonai Elohenu, Adonai ehad», the Lord is our God, the Lord is One).

...Is the soudarion part of the othònia or not? This question, which gave rise to endless disputations, might be perhaps put back in the right perspective, if we consider that the very idea of traditional Jewish burial shrouds is far from being something precise, determined or specific.

(Ada Grossi Jewish Shrouds and Funerary Customs : Academia).”