

Are There Veiled References to the Shroud of Turin In the New Testament?

(An Exegetical Summary of Select Texts)

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ABSTRACT

Critics and skeptics make a strong argument against the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin with this simple observation: The Biblical writers failed to mention such a marvelous treasure! However, due to the threat of confiscation and destruction of the Shroud by enemies, a plausible inference can be made that early Church leaders would want to keep the Shroud's existence a secret from outsiders. This paper provides brief analyses of statements from within the New Testament that might be "veiled references" to what we know today as the Shroud of Turin. Four passages are especially strong candidates in that regard. Elsewhere the author has written an extensive exegesis on each of those four passages.² This paper is intended to serve as an introduction to those four Biblical texts, while making mention of other possible textual candidates as well.

Tags: Shroud of Turin; New Testament; Church history; Galatians 3.1;
Matthew 12.38-42; Hebrews 9.11-12; John 20.1-10

1. IS THE SHROUD OF TURIN AUTHENTIC?

Over the past forty years a growing plethora of evidence strongly supports the conclusion that the Shroud of Turin—with its inexplicable, ghostly image—is the genuine burial cloth of Jesus.³ Extensive Sindonological⁴ research has been performed

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² See Larry Stalley, "The Crucified Christ Seen by the Galatians: A Literal Context for ΠΡΟΕΓΡΑΦΗ (Galatians 3.1)"; "Early Christians Identified Jesus' Shroud with His Royal & Priestly Robe!"; "The Image on the Turin shroud is 'the Sign of Jonah' for Our Generation!"; and "'He Saw and Believed!' Is the Shroud of Turin in the Background of John's Resurrection Narrative? (John 20.1-10)." These papers can be found online at www.shroud.com.

³ For an excellent overview of the evidence see Marc Borkan, "Ecce Homo? Science and the Authenticity of the Turin Shroud," *Vertices: The Duke University Magazine of Science, Technology, and Medicine* 10, no. 2 (Winter 1995) 18–51.

⁴ Σινδων (sindōn) is the Greek word found in the Synoptic Gospels for the burial cloth of Jesus. On that basis, the study of the Shroud of Turin has become known as Sindonology.

from a multidisciplinary effort, including science,⁵ medicine,⁶ forensics,⁷ history,⁸ archeology,⁹ botany,¹⁰ textiles,¹¹ photography,¹² and art.¹³ Although the author of this paper began his research as a firm skeptic, he now thinks the evidence is “beyond a reasonable doubt” for the unbiased mind.¹⁴ Many amazing pieces of scientific and historical evidence do exist! Taken together they make for a very strong case indeed! Below are several facts the inquisitive reader should consider (among many that could be cited) in arriving at a personal decision regarding the authenticity of the Shroud. This author finds the following evidence particularly interesting:

- Obviously “the man on the cloth” was a criminal found guilty of a capital offense who was unusually both scourged (a punishment for non-capital crimes) and

⁵ Robert J. Spitzer, “Science and the Shroud of Turin,” *Magis Center of Reason and Faith* (May 2015) 1–33, https://2i7i0l43ftgic4pas6ndtk6b-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Science_and_the_Shroud_of_Turin.pdf.

⁶ William D. Edwards, Wesley J. Gabel, and Floyd E. Hosmer, “On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 255, no. 11 (March 21, 1986) 1455–63; M. Bevilacqua et al., “Do we really need new medical information about the Turin Shroud?,” *Injury* 45, no. 2 (February 2014) 460–64, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.injury.2013.09.013>.

⁷ Robert Bucklin, “An Autopsy on the Man of the Shroud” (1997), <https://www.shroud.com/bucklin.htm>; Frederick T. Zugibe, *The Crucifixion of Jesus: A Forensic Inquiry* (New York, NY: M. Evans and Company, Inc., 2005); Yannick Clément, “Concerning the question of the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin: please, don’t forget the evidence of the bloodstains!” (July 26, 2012), <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/n76part5.pdf>.

⁸ Jack Markwardt, “Modern Scholarship and the History of the Turin Shroud,” *St. Louis International Shroud Conference* (October 2014), <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/stlmarkwardtpaper.pdf>; Ian Wilson, *The Blood and the Shroud* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1998) 111–75.

⁹ William Meacham, “The Authentication of the Turin Shroud: An Issue in Archaeological Epistemology,” *Current Anthropology* 24, no. 3 (June 1983), <https://www.shroud.com/meacham2.htm>; N. Haas, “Anthropological Observations on the Skeletal Remains from Giv’at ha-Mivtar,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 20, nos. 1–2 (1970) 38–59; Stevenson and Habermas, *Verdict on the Shroud* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1981) 111–29; Wilson, *The Blood and the Shroud*, 41–53.

¹⁰ Avinoam Danin, “The Origin of the Shroud of Turin from the Near East as Evidenced by Plant Images and by Pollen Grains,” (1998), <http://www.shroud.com/danin2.htm>; Avinoam Danin et al., *Flora of the Shroud of Turin* (St Louis, Missouri: Missouri Botanical Garden Press, 1999).

¹¹ John Tyrer, “Looking at the Turin Shroud as a Textile,” *Textile Horizons* (December 1981) 20–23; Ian Wilson, *The Shroud: Fresh Light On the 2000-Year-Old Mystery* (London: Bantam Books, 2010) 104–21.

¹² V. D. Miller and S. F. Pellicori, “Ultraviolet Fluorescence Photography of the Shroud of Turin,” *Journal of Biological Photography* 49, no. 3 (July 1981), <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/UV%20Fluorescence%20Miller%20Pellicori%201981%20OCRsm.pdf>.

¹³ Wilson, *The Blood and the Shroud*, 141–60.

¹⁴ For a comparison, Scott Peterson was convicted by a jury of murdering his pregnant wife, Laci, on the sole forensic evidence of two strands of hair collected from a pair of pliers on her husband’s boat. (“Detectives testified that they took one hair from the pliers, but months later discovered two strands inside the envelope.”) The rest of the verdict was based on circumstantial evidence. This author believes there is substantially more physical and scientific evidence for building a case that the Shroud is the genuine burial cloth that covered the corpse of Jesus. “Hair Strands A Key In Laci Trial, *CBS News* (September 9, 2004), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hair-strands-a-key-in-laci-trial/>.

crucified. Under Jewish law¹⁵ the body should have been buried before sundown, probably in one of the two plots specifically reserved for criminals.¹⁶

- As a criminal, this man had been buried making use of a very rare and expensive cloth of fine linen with a unique, herringbone weave—a type of cloth not manufactured during the Middle Ages. The cloth fits the Biblical description of a high-priestly robe.¹⁷
- The image is of a real man who had undergone a unique crucifixion, matching the crucifixion of Jesus in the Biblical record. Yet, the emperor Constantine outlawed crucifixion in the early fourth century!
- Pollen found on the cloth provides forensic evidence for a Jerusalem¹⁸ presence and for some key locations on what was likely the historical trail the Shroud traveled before residing in Turin, Italy over the past several centuries.¹⁹
- The depiction of a Jewish burial and a Roman crucifixion found on this image is *“not what any forger with medieval or modern presuppositions would have thought of; but it makes complete sense of the texts and comforts with the other ancient evidence.”*²⁰
- The incredible, faint, full-body image of a crucified man on the cloth was *not* the work of an artist.²¹
- Furthermore, no one has been able to explain how the image could have been formed by natural causes, nor has anyone been able to fully replicate it! The image has inexplicable properties associated with being a three-dimensional,

¹⁵ Deut 21.23

¹⁶ See Herbert Danby, trans., “Sanhedrin,” in *The Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933) 6.4-5: 390-91.

¹⁷ Was this shroud a type of the priestly tunic that Aaron wore as high priest (cf. Heb 9.11)? Aaron’s robe was to be made of fine linen, to be sanctified by being sprinkled with sacrificial blood, and have a special “checker work” weave! See Exod 28.4, 39; 29.21.

¹⁸ “Four of the greatest number of pollen grains found on the cloth are unique to Judea.” Maggie Ciskanik, “5 Key Pieces of Evidence on the Shroud of Turin,” *Magis Center of Reason and Faith* (August 7, 2018), <https://magiscenter.com/5-key-pieces-of-evidence-on-the-shroud-of-turin/>

¹⁹ Max Frei, “Nine Years of Palynological Studies on the Shroud,” *Shroud spectrum International* (1982) 1(3):3-7.

²⁰ This fact is discussed by John A. T. Robinson, “The Shroud of Turin and the Grave-Clothes of the Gospels,” *Proceedings of the United States Conference of Research on the Shroud of Turin* (Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1977) 23-30. The quote is taken from page 25.

²¹ This was a strong conclusion stated by the team of scientists who were invited to study the cloth up close in 1978. See “A Summary of STURP’s Conclusions,” <https://www.shroud.com/78conclu.htm>. The problems associated with proposed hypotheses as to how the image might have formed naturally are discussed in this author’s paper, “*The Sign of Jonah*,” op. cit.

high-definition, photographic negative!²² How is that possible? It also shows evidence of x-ray²³ and holographic properties! Why, if a forgery, is the image a negative? Why would a medieval forger produce such an image when none of his contemporaries could see the details? Those details were first made visible with the work of a photographer in the year 1898.

“A good question to ask is: How could a medieval ‘artist’ make or take a photo negative when photography was not introduced to the world until 500 years later in 1839?”²⁴

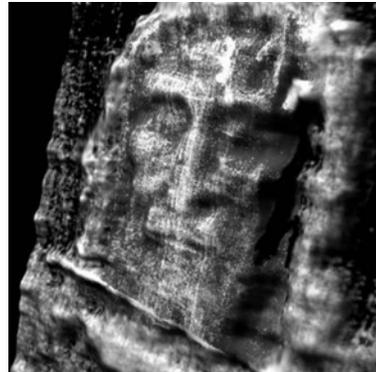
Either the image is “*the riddle of the ages*”²⁵ or it is the Father’s witness to the Gospel story and His *miraculous*, gracious gift to every doubting Thomas.²⁶



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²² Barrie Schwartz is an original member of the scientific team (STURP) that traveled to Turin to study the Shroud in 1978. He has been studying the Shroud for over 40 years and is founder of the popular website, www.shroud.com. During a phone conversation with Barrie—who is a professional photographer by trade—he told me: The Shroud of Turin “has one property like a photographic negative and that’s that the lights and darks of the image are reversed or inverted.... But then there are other properties of that image that no other photographic negative in history has ever been able to include, and that’s depth information or spatial information based on the distance between the cloth and the body when the image formed” (June 19, 2019).

²³ This is apparent from the bones being seen in the fingers.

²⁴ “Shroud of Turin Facts,” https://www.signfromgod.org/shroud_of_turin_facts.

²⁵ David Van Biema, “The Shroud of Turin,” *Time Magazine*, April 20, 1998.

²⁶ See the author’s paper, “*Sign of Jonah*,” op. cit.

²⁷ This is how the face on the cloth appears to the natural eye, the status of which resembles a photographic negative. © Vernon Miller, 1978. 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.

²⁸ This is how the face looks when a photograph is taken and the negative is then developed, its properties now resembling a normal (positive) photograph. © Vernon Miller, 1978.

²⁹ 3-D enhanced image. © 2003 Mário Azevedo.



2. THE RADIO-CARBON DATING EXPERIMENT?

In 1988 a single sample taken from the cloth was dated by means of radiocarbon dating and assigned a medieval date (1260-1390 AD). However, since then a number of peer-reviewed articles have been published in scientific journals seriously challenging the conclusion of that experiment.³¹ Not only were long-established protocols violated during that experiment,³² but these subsequent studies seriously called into question the purity and the quality of the sample tested.^{33, 34} Professor Harry Gove, the very inventor of the radiocarbon dating method utilized on the Shroud sample, characterized the experiment as “a rather shoddy enterprise.”³⁵

³⁰ This is a full-body, 3-D, holographic, computer generated image. © Castex 3D Processing 2011.

³¹ Raymond N. Rogers, “Studies on the Radiocarbon Sample from the Shroud of Turin,” *Thermochimica Acta* 425, no. 1-2 (January 20, 2005) 189–94; Tristan Casabianca et al., “Radiocarbon Dating of the Turin Shroud: New Evidence from Raw Data,” *Archaeometry* (March 22, 2019), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/arcm.12467>.

³² Vittorio Guerrera, *The Shroud of Turin: A Case for Authenticity* (Charlotte, North Carolina: Tan Books, 2001) 112–39.

³³ “The dating which comes from a piece at the top edge [of an uncut sample] is very different from the date which comes from a piece taken from the bottom edge,” stated Dr. Marco Riani of the University of Parma in Italy, as quoted by Frank Viviano, “Why Shroud of Turin's Secrets Continue to Elude Science,” *National Geographic* (April 17, 2015), <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/04/150417-shroud-turin-relics-jesus-catholic-church-religion-science.html>. See also the discovery of a “bioplastic coating of bacteria and fungus” on the linen fibers that has been growing for centuries, reported by Jim Barrett, “Science and the Shroud Microbiology Meets Archaeology in a Renewed Quest for Answers’ in *The Mission* (A Journal of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio) (Spring 1996).

³⁴ One carbon-dating expert (who is also an archaeologist) has stated: “Over the years a whole host of difficulties have come to light with C14, e.g. modern living samples which give ages of hundreds or thousands of years, or centuries-old samples which give dates in the future. The causes of these phenomena are known, but in many other cases anomalous dates have not been satisfactorily explained.” “As an archaeologist with 25 years of experience using C14 for the dating of excavated samples, I know what most archaeologists do when C14 produces a date which conflicts strongly with other evidence from a site: 1) run more dates on different samples from the same context, and then 2) put the aberrant dates down to some unidentified problem (usually in a footnote to the site report if mentioned at all)... This happens often in archaeology, even on sites and samples which were thought to be ideal for C14 dating. Very rarely is the problem of these individual aberrant dates ever resolved or even addressed.” William Meacham, “C-14 Debate from the Shroud Newsgroup: alt.turin-shroud” (1998), <http://www.shroud.com/c14debat.htm>.

³⁵ Harry E. Gove, *Relic, Icon or Hoax? Carbon dating the Turin Shroud* (London: The Institute of Physics Publishing, 1996) 242.

A science editor for Nature.com wrote this comment in 2008, twenty years after the infamous experiment:

*“It’s fair to say that, despite the seemingly definitive tests in 1988, the status of the Shroud of Turin is murkier than ever. Not least, the nature of the image and how it was fixed on the cloth remain deeply puzzling.”*³⁶

If a natural explanation for the formation of the image is possible then why hasn’t someone successfully stated it and proven it by replicating the image?³⁷ After years of trying, seeking a natural explanation profoundly leaves one with *“a mystery wrapped in an enigma.”*³⁸

When every *known* natural cause for the formation of the image is eliminated shouldn’t an open-minded person consider the possibility of a supernatural explanation?

3. VEILED REFERENCES TO THE SHROUD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

A primary reason why John Calvin and many Bible scholars rejected the Turin Shroud as being authentic is due to the lack of any references to it in the New Testament.

*“How is it possible that those sacred historians, who carefully related all the miracles that took place at Christ’s death, should have omitted to mention one so remarkable as the likeness of the body of our Lord remaining on its wrapping sheet? This fact undoubtedly deserved to be recorded.”*³⁹

However, if we keep in mind the backdrop of persecution occurring during the period when the New Testament documents were being written, it should not surprise us that the writers would not want to make clear references to the miraculous image lest it be hunted down, confiscated, and destroyed by either religious opponents or by hostile, political authorities. As Jesus himself both warned and commanded: *“Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”*⁴⁰ And, shortly after the Sign of Jonah

³⁶Philip Ball, “Shrouded in mystery,” *Nature Materials* 7, no. 5 (May 1, 2008) 349, <https://www.nature.com/articles/nmat2170>.

³⁷In a summary of the STURP conclusions there is this statement: *“The dilemma is ... that no technologically-credible process has been postulated that satisfies all the characteristics of the existing image.”* L. A. Schwalbe and R. N. Rogers, “Physics and Chemistry of the Shroud of Turin,” *Analytica Chimica Acta*, 135 (1982) 45.

³⁸Viviano, “Why Shroud of Turin’s Secrets Continue to Elude Science,” *National Geographic*, April 17, 2015, <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/04/150417-shroud-turin-relics-jesus-catholic-church-religion-science.html>

³⁹John Calvin, *Treatise on Relics* (1543) 238, https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/treatise_relics.v.html.

⁴⁰Matthew 7.6

prediction, we read in Matthew's Gospel: "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted."^{41, 42}

So, a plausible inference can be made that, due to the threat of persecution and confiscation, any reference to the Shroud in the New Testament itself would be veiled.⁴³ Such secrecy would be in keeping with what would become known as "The Discipline of the Secret."⁴⁴

William Ramsey, the renowned archaeologist who focused his efforts on early Christianity, wrote: "it was the recognized duty of a Christian to use carefully veiled language."⁴⁵

In the remainder of this paper I will briefly present several excellent candidates from within the New Testament which should be looked upon as possible "veiled references" to the Shroud of Turin. Some of these statements are stronger candidates than others. There are four primary passages or texts within the New Testament which serve as excellent candidates. Elsewhere, the current author has written an extensive exegetical paper on each of these texts.⁴⁶ This paper is intended to simply introduce the reader to these texts and to provide a summary of the author's conclusions. In addition, five minor texts or statements within the New Testament will be briefly analyzed. Three of

⁴¹ Matt 13.11

⁴² A Syrian document known as "The Teaching of Addai" dates from the end of the third century. It tells of a wonderful "vision seen by (King) Abgar in the face of Addai." In Eastern Orthodox tradition this vision became identified with a renowned icon, the image of Jesus' face on linen cloth, known as "The Image of Edessa."⁴² Interestingly, we find this statement: "Do not ask concerning **hidden things written in the sacred books which you possess.... unbelievers ... lack the concealed eye of the hidden mind.**" [George Howard (translator), *The Teaching of Addai* (Ann Arbor, MI: Scholars Press, 1981) 89. Bold emphasis added by the current author.]

⁴³ There is an interesting incident from the fourth century that helps us to appreciate the potential danger that existed. When the emperor, "Julian the Apostate," visited Antioch in Syria during October of 362 a fire damaged the Temple of Apollo and destroyed the statue of Apollo. He blamed the fire on the Christians and ordered the Great Cathedral closed and its treasures confiscated. However, when the church presbyter, Theodorus, refused to hand over a certain object that he had hidden, "he suffered torture and final execution rather than reveal some important secret. What that secret was is not known, but we may conclude that it referred to the treasure which he had hidden and whose hiding place he refused to divulge." [Gustavus A. Eisen, *The Great Chalice of Antioch* (New York: Kouchakji Freres, 1923) 5.] Interestingly, approximately 175 years later, during a rebuilding project of the city's walls, near the Gate of the Cherubim, "an awesome image of Christ which was an object of particular veneration" was discovered! [Downey, *A History of Antioch*, 544; John Moschos, trans., *The Spiritual Meadow (Pratum Spirituale)*, John Eviratus, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008) 212; John Jackson, *The Shroud of Turin: A Critical Summary of Observations, Data, and Hypotheses* (The Turin Shroud Center of Colorado: www.shroudofturin.com, 2017) 14-16.]

⁴⁴ See Jack Markwardt, "Ancient Edessa and the Shroud, History Concealed by the Discipline of the Secret," *Proceedings of the Columbus International Shroud Conference, Columbus, Ohio* (2008) 16-18.

⁴⁵ W. M. Ramsay, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897) 789.

⁴⁶ See footnote 2 above.

these minor texts were suggested by attendees at the 2019 International Conference on the Shroud where this paper was presented.

Because the burial Shroud had been defiled by blood and had been in contact with a corpse, the first Jewish Christians could have looked upon it as an unclean garment that needed to be disposed of and buried. Why wasn't that done? The statements cited in this paper bear witness that the early Christians treasured the Shroud. They viewed His burial garment as having been sanctified by His sacrificial blood and identified it (typologically) with His priestly-kingly robe!⁴⁷ These "veiled references" from the New Testament provide the reader with supporting evidence for the thesis that the Turin Shroud should be regarded as a spectacular *Sign* from heaven, bearing witness to God's signature miracle of the death, burial, and Resurrection of Jesus.⁴⁸

3-1. "...BEFORE YOUR OWN EYES CHRIST WAS VIVIDLY DEPICTED AS CRUCIFIED!"

(Galatians 3.1)

The earliest evidence we likely have of Jesus' burial cloth being treasured—and used as an aid in evangelism, bearing witness to the gospel—is the Apostle Paul's amazing statement to his recent converts in the Roman province of Galatia. Their faith has been shaken by heretical missionaries. These missionaries have accused Paul of preaching a false Gospel and have insisted his converts must submit to circumcision and to keeping the Mosaic Law if they genuinely want to follow Christ. In response, Paul wrote:

"You foolish Galatians! Who could have succeeded in bringing you under the spell of an evil eye, when directly before your own eyes the lasting effects of the crucified Christ were vividly depicted (or posted up)?"⁴⁹

Elsewhere the current author has written a detailed exegesis of this passage.⁵⁰ The following is a brief summary of that paper.

Paul is not stating that his converts had witnessed the actual crucifixion of Jesus approximately twenty years earlier and hundreds of miles away in Jerusalem. Rather,

⁴⁷ I develop this thesis in depth in my paper, "*Jesus' Priestly & Royal Robe!*" op. cit.

⁴⁸ For more on this thesis, see the author's paper: "*The Sign of Jonah*" for Our Generation!" op. cit.

⁴⁹ Gal 3.1. This translation is the author's suggested rendering of the Greek text.

⁵⁰ See the author's paper, "*The Crucified Christ Seen by the Galatians,*" op. cit. The thesis for the Shroud being behind Galatians 3.1 was first initiated with a brief paper by Frederick W. Baltz, "*A Galatian Sojourn of the Shroud of Turin? Pollen, Paul, and a Public Portrayal of Christ,*" at the St. Louis Shroud Conference in 2014, <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/stlbaltzpaper.pdf>. When I first heard Gal 3.1 might be a reference to the Turin Shroud, I opened my Greek New Testament and discerned what someone else had earlier perceived. It led me to question whether there might be other texts in the NT also hinting at the Shroud. It would be some time before I would discover and read Dr. Baltz' little known paper. But, if he had not first opened the door, I might never have written the current paper. So, thank you Dr. Baltz! In my Galatians paper I attempt to move his thesis forward with an extensive historical-grammatical analysis.

the perfect tense of the Greek participle for the verb σταυρώω (“to crucify”) puts the focus on their eyes having seen the “lasting results” or “enduring effects” of Jesus’ crucifixion.

Also, the verb translated “*vividly depicted (or posted up)*” is in the past, aorist tense⁵¹ from προγράφω. In this context, the verb carries the idea “to show forth” or “to portray publicly.”⁵² Προγράφω was used by Greek writers for posting an “official notice,” an “edict,” or a “warrant,” such as in the public square.⁵³

- “*This was the common word for the posting of public notices.*”⁵⁴
- F.F. Bruce comments: “*...display before (one’s audience),’ as on a public placard—a thoroughly classical usage.*”⁵⁵

Due to a failure of Bible scholars understanding how this statement from Paul in Galatians could have happened literally, commentators have chosen to interpret Paul’s visual language metaphorically.

- “*Paul is referring to his own preaching, arguing that the gospel had been made as clear by him as if he had posted it on a public bulletin board.*”⁵⁶
- “*Paul acted as an ancient orator when he came to Galatia and delivered his speech with such vivid language that the audience imagined that ‘we were there when they crucified the Lord.’*”⁵⁷

So, commentators equate Paul’s statement with his preaching because they have failed to find a literal object that would have made it possible for the Galatians to have seen what Paul said they had seen with their own eyes. However, the Turin Shroud certainly does provide a literal object—with its stunning visual wound marks—whereby the Galatians could literally have seen the “lasting results” or “enduring effects” of Christ having been crucified!

⁵¹ The aorist tense implies a completed action had taken place sometime in the past.

⁵² W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957) 771.

⁵³ See Schrenk, “Προγράφω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) I.771.

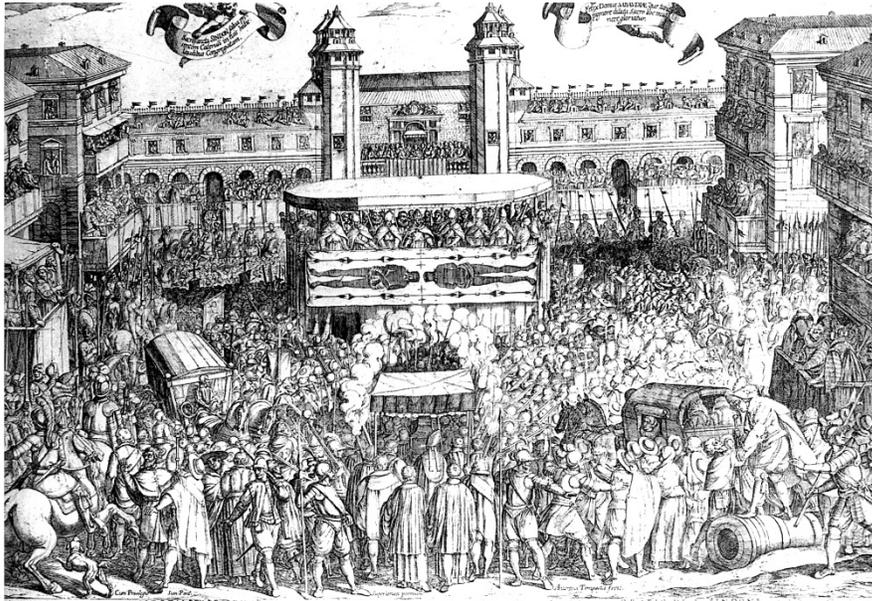
⁵⁴ Gordon D. Fee, *Galatians: Pentecostal Commentary Series* (United Kingdom: Deo Publishing, 2007) 104.

⁵⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 148.

⁵⁶ James Montgomery Boice, *Galatians: The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* 10 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) 453.

⁵⁷ Ben Witherington III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 205. See also Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979) 131.

Centuries later, in Europe, on special occasions the Turin Shroud would be brought out and publicly displayed before the people. Several cardinals would stand on a raised stage and, grasping the edge of one side with their hands, they would hold the Shroud up for the people to see. The canvas itself served as a placard or signboard for displaying the image.



May 4th each year became known as “The Feast Day of the Shroud.” This was an annual festival when pilgrims traveled to see the Shroud “with their own eyes” and, thereby, be blessed. Medieval engravings exist depicting such a scene.⁵⁸ If we attempted to

describe the occasion, we would be pressed to do better than “*before your very eyes the lasting effects of the crucified Christ were vividly/publicly depicted (or posted up)!*”

Is it possible that Jesus’ apostles in the early Church made use of the Shroud as an aid in telling and providing evidence for the Gospel story? Was it used as an aid in evangelism?⁵⁹

The early Church historian, Eusebius, penned a very interesting statement in the late 3rd or early 4th century. In discussing the apostle Peter making his way to Rome, Eusebius wrote:

“He (Peter) ... bore ***the precious merchandize of the revealed light*** from the east to those in the west, announcing the light itself...”⁶⁰

What exactly did Eusebius mean by “*the precious merchandize of the revealed light*”?

⁵⁸ This engraving by [Antonio Tempesta](#) (1555–1630) depicts the feast day in 1613 and illustrates the popularity of the Shroud. The picture is from an article by Charles Freeman, “*The Origins of the Shroud of Turin*” (2014) at Medievalist.net. <https://www.medievalists.net/2014/10/origins-shroud-turin/>

⁵⁹ An additional piece of evidence to what I write here (in support of the thesis that the Shroud was used as an aid in evangelism) is the cryptic message found on the late 2nd-century “Inscription of Abercius.” See Jackson, *Shroud of Turin*, 12.

⁶⁰ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1955) II.XIV: 64.

Was the Shroud put to evangelistic use “announcing the light itself”?

Peter is the best candidate for being the first custodian of the Shroud.⁶¹ Some believe he made his way to the capital city of Rome as early as 42 A.D.,⁶² after James was martyred and Peter escaped from prison.

It has been argued that Peter used Antioch of Syria as the base for his missionary activities between 47 and 54 A.D.⁶³ During those very years Paul and Barnabas, having been called out by the Holy Spirit, were formally sent out by the church at Antioch on their first missionary journey. They found themselves on that journey preaching the Gospel in the province of Galatia. So, a pertinent question to ask is: were Paul and Barnabas given the Shroud to be used as an evangelistic aid during their travels?⁶⁴

A real historical context is very possible for the Shroud being behind Paul’s statement in Galatians 3.1. Therefore, a literal interpretation of Paul’s statement in that intriguing verse should be preferred over the unnecessary and, therefore, questionable metaphorical interpretation!

3-2. “HE SAW AND BELIEVED!”

(John 20.1-10)

What is so important about the “grave clothes” in John’s Gospel that *they* become the focal point of the empty tomb on the morning of the Resurrection? Specifically, four verses (vv. 5-8) are focused on the “linen wrappings” (τὰ ὀθόνια)⁶⁵ and the “face cloth” (σουδάριον).

⁶¹ Peter was ordained as the chief of the Apostles (Matt 16.18-19), was the first to enter the empty tomb where the Shroud was discovered (John 20.1-10), reportedly traveled extensively preaching the Gospel (Acts 12.17; Gal 2.11; 1 Cor 1.12; 1 Pet 1.1; 5.12-13), and is commonly thought to have been “the servant of the Priest” who was given the Shroud after the Resurrection, as related by Jerome in the lost “Gospel according to the Hebrews.” [Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* 2. Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, 1992) 1:111.] Furthermore, as discussed above, “(Peter) bore *the precious merchandize of the revealed light* from the east to those in the west, announcing the light itself” (Eusebius). Peter is likely, therefore, the best candidate for being the first custodian of the Shroud.

⁶² John Wehnam, “Did Peter Go to Rome in 42?” *Tyndale Bulletin* (1972) 23:94–102, https://legacy.tyndalehouse.com/tynbul/Library/TynBull_1972_23_04_Wenham_PeterInRome.pdf.

⁶³ Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961) 281-82.

⁶⁴ Acts 13-14; cf. Gal 3.1

⁶⁵ Due to the plural noun, “linen wrappings,” found here in the account of the Fourth Gospel, John Calvin rejected the idea that the Shroud of Turin might actually be the authentic burial “cloth” of Jesus. But the plural noun here should not cause a problem because (1) all three synoptic Gospels mention the single cloth (σινδών); (2) the plural noun could simply be referring to other “funeral linens” that were involved in the burial process—such as a head band, a face cloth, and thin strips used to wrap the feet and upper body once the corpse had been placed inside the long, single cloth (σινδών); and (3) Luke uses the same

Of note, it was something about the burial linens that gave birth to faith in the Resurrection for “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (the likely author of that Gospel)! Whereas Paul wrote that “faith comes by hearing,”⁶⁶ for that disciple faith came by seeing: “*He saw and believed*” (v. 8). [Traditionally that disciple has been identified with being the apostle John. So, we will go with that understanding hereafter.]

Elsewhere I have written in greater detail about this passage.⁶⁷ What follows is a summary of my conclusions.

There is a progression of intensity that builds regarding the funeral linens. This is evidenced in the original Greek by four different words the writer uses for “*looking*” and “*seeing*.” Emphasis should be placed on the verb “*lying*” (κείμενα), as it occurs three times in verses 5-7. In addition, how one interprets the perfect tense of the verb “*rolled up*” or “*folded up*” (ἐντετυλιγμένον) in verse 7 will be critical to one’s conclusion about the passage. Furthermore, the reader is teased by the lack of an object for the verb (εἶδεν) in verse 8: “*He saw and believed!*” What exactly did John see?⁶⁸ All we are told is that it had to do with how the linens were “*lying*” and the “*face cloth*” folded up apart from the other linens.

Clues for what John is saying are found both before and after this passage. This story should be understood within the larger context of John’s Gospel, especially with regards to the stories that immediately follow in chapter twenty.

First, we are intended to understand that, contrary to what Mary had concluded from her initial visit to the empty tomb, the corpse of Jesus had not been stolen!

Second, John is telling us that no one had unwrapped the linens to set Jesus free!⁶⁹ His glorious, resurrected body miraculously dematerialized and passed right through the

plural noun (τὰ ὀθόνια), “funeral linens,” in his account of the Resurrection (24.12) after earlier speaking of the singular burial cloth (σινδών) or shroud (23.53). One theory is that τὰ ὀθόνια refers to all the funeral linens minus the Shroud. The majority view, though, is that this plural noun in Luke 23.53 is intended to include all the funeral or “linen wrappings” used in the burial process. Apparently τὰ ὀθόνια refers collectively to several cloths of various sizes. John uses a different word, κειρία, in describing the grave clothes of Lazarus (11.44). Carson describes that earlier burial in this manner: “*The corpse was customarily laid on a sheet of linen, wide enough to envelop the body completely and more than twice the length of the corpse. The body was so placed on the sheet that the feet were at one end, and then the sheet was drawn over the head and back down to the feet. The feet were bound at the ankles, and the arms were tied to the body with linen strips.... Jesus’ body was apparently prepared for burial in the same way (cf. 19.40; 20.5, 7).*” D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*. Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991) 418-19.

⁶⁶ Rom 10.17

⁶⁷ See the author’s paper, “*He Saw and Believed!*” op. cit.

⁶⁸ It is unlikely he saw the image on what we know as the Shroud of Turin since it exists on the *inside* of the cloth.

⁶⁹ Contrast this statement with what had been said about Lazarus (John 11.44).

burial garment, leaving it intact but without a corpse. It is interesting how this understanding of the passage is supported both by the *Letter of Hebrews*⁷⁰ and by the one unconventional, scientific explanation for how the image was formed on the cloth!⁷¹



Finally, the Shroud—with its miraculous image of Jesus’ wounds of crucifixion—is in the background to the subsequent story regarding “Doubting Thomas.” But one should not think that viewing the image will grant some special blessing beyond a stronger faith. Jesus informs us that faith apart from seeing is blessed (20.29).

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“Reach here with your finger and see My hands; reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving but believing!”⁷³

3-3. “NO SIGN WILL BE GIVEN EXCEPT THE SIGN OF JONAH!”

(Matthew 12.38-42)

What specifically was “the sign of Jonah” that we find Jesus promising His opponents in two of the Four Gospels? The interpretation and identification of that Sign has been debated and has been somewhat of a riddle. Elsewhere this author has analyzed this text at length and discussed the likelihood of the Shroud having been used as an aid in evangelism during the early Church.⁷⁴ Here is a brief summary of my findings.

One undeniable and intriguing truth underlies the three passages⁷⁵ where this *Sign* is mentioned: Jesus *did* promise *one* good, visible sign! When those texts are carefully

⁷⁰ Hebrews 10.19-20. See the author’s paper, “*Jesus’ Priestly & Royal Robe!*” op. cit.

⁷¹ See the author’s paper, “*The Sign of Jonah,*” op. cit.

⁷² “The Incredulity of Saint Thomas” is an oil painting on canvas by the Italian Baroque master Caravaggio, c. 1601–1602. It is housed in a museum, in Potsdam, Germany. This picture shows an ingenious, computer retouching of that painting. The portrait of Jesus has been replaced with the image on the Shroud. St. Thomas is depicted inspecting the wounds of Jesus found on His Shroud. © 2003 Rev. Albert R. Dreisbach Jr. Collection, STERA, Inc.

⁷³ John 20.27

⁷⁴ See the author’s paper “*The Sign of Jonah,*” op. cit.

⁷⁵ Matt 12.38-42; 16.1-4; Luke 11.29-32

analyzed, several *identifying markers* emerge. These markers enable us to identify and distinguish the genuine *Sign of Jonah* from false contenders.

- It should be a sign that will be able “to be seen” by Jesus’ opponents!
- It should be a sign “from heaven”!
- It should reveal visible evidence of Jesus being dead for a short period of time—for “three days and three nights”!
- It should witness and parallel Jonah’s deliverance of being set free from the captivity of the prophet’s entombment in the belly of the sea monster!
- It will function as a warning of “Judgment” to come upon an “evil and adulterous generation”!

Only in the miraculous image on what we know today as *The Shroud of Turin* do all the identifying markers come together as required by both the request made to Jesus from his opponents, as well as by the markers necessary from Jesus’ response to them!

The live appearances Jesus made (in His glorified body) after the Resurrection could be viewed as the extraordinary visible *Sign of Jonah to His disciples*—testifying that the Father had worked His signature miracle affirming Jesus identify as the Christ, Daniel’s “Son of Man.”⁷⁶ However, a visible *Sign* was both requested by Jesus opponents and was stated by Jesus Himself to be the one *Sign* for “an evil and adulterous generation.” Furthermore, the *Sign* was to function as a warning of judgment upon that generation. Therefore, the live appearances made only to His disciples do not satisfy all the criteria. Fortunately, following the Ascension, God graciously provided a surrogate *Sign* for that evil generation and for future generations: Jesus’ burial cloth—bearing its incredible miraculous image—was the Father’s witness to the Gospel and the *Sign of Jonah* for every ensuing generation!

Is there *one* piece of objective, visual evidence that offers strong evidence for the death, burial, and Resurrection of Jesus? The answer is, yes! There is *one*! One *Sign*! The miraculous image left on the burial cloth of Jesus is the *one* tangible *Sign* that bridges the gap of history with the Gospel story of Jesus! In that regard, the Shroud of Turin is a game-changer for the theologian in search of the historical Jesus!^{77, 78}

⁷⁶ Dan 7.9-14; cf. 12.1; Rev 20.11-15

⁷⁷ Secular agnostic and textual scholar, Bart Ehrman, wrote in 2011 that there is no physical or archaeological evidence for Jesus. [Bart Ehrman, *Forged: Writing in the Name of God—Why the Bible’s Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2011) 43.] Either Ehrman (1) overlooked the Turin shroud, or (2) he is bias against the Shroud, or (3) he hasn’t kept up with the scientific, archaeological, and historical research that has been done on it! For indeed the Turin Shroud “is an authentic archaeological artifact.” Furthermore, the weight of the multidisciplinary evidence concerning the Shroud in recent years is such that, “according to high probability, the man buried in the Shroud is none other than Jesus.” [Stevenson and Habermas, *Verdict on the Shroud*, 118, 129.]

⁷⁸ Unfortunately, most bible scholars have not kept up with the scientific research related to the Shroud and have dismissed it as either unimportant or as unauthentic. However, the Turin Shroud has the potential to greatly impact the theologian’s search for the historical Jesus! Since the Enlightenment there

Whether or not earlier generations perceived this image as the promised *Sign of Jonah*, science has enabled today's generation to both see and perceive this incredible image better than any previous generation ever could! Today the Shroud of Turin is where science touches faith! The Christian community should embrace the Turin Shroud as God's powerful witness to the Gospel message and as His gracious gift to every doubter!

The incredible image on the Shroud of Turin is the miraculous *Sign of Jonah* for today's evil and adulterous generation! Next to love, it is the supreme apologetic for the Church today; it is where science touches faith!

**3-4. "CHRIST ... AS HIGH PRIEST ... BY MEANS OF THE GREATER ... SACRED TENT,
(NOT MADE BY HUMAN HANDS) ... ENTERED THE (HEAVENLY) SANCTUARY"**

(Hebrews 9.11-12; cf. 10.19-20)

The writer of Hebrews made use of typology in discerning spiritual truths. He asserted that what we see on earth is sometimes merely a "copy (or type) and shadow" of the unseen reality of the heavenly.⁷⁹

He informs us that Jesus was a priest after the order of Melchizedek, who was both "king of Salem and priest of the Most High God."⁸⁰ The current author is proposing the thesis that early Christians viewed Jesus' burial shroud typologically, identifying it with His priestly-kingly robe!⁸¹ That identification is witnessed elsewhere in the early Church,^{82, 83, 84} but the priestly aspect is especially present in the *Letter of Hebrews*! In this current paper I am only able to present a brief summary of that evidence.

has been a tendency to demythologize the New Testament and to view the resurrection as something that existed only in the minds of Jesus' followers. Consequently, the Christ of history is blurred and the Christian's assurance of hope beyond the grave is attacked. In both of those matters, the Shroud of Turin is a game changer!

⁷⁹ Heb 8.2, 5; 9.23-24

⁸⁰ Heb 7.1

⁸¹ See the author's paper, "*Jesus' Priestly & Royal Robe!*" op. cit.

⁸² Regarding Jesus' royal robe in the New Testament, see Rev 1.13; 19.16; cf. Dan 7.13; 10.5. Also, see the analysis concerning *The Hymn of the Pearl* found in the paper cited in the previous footnote.

⁸³ Regarding Jesus' priestly robe, in addition to Hebrews 7.1, 9.11-12, and Revelation 7.9-17, consider the likely implications behind the interesting statement found in the lost "*Gospel According to the Hebrews*" (which is likely the oldest clear reference to Jesus' Shroud outside the New Testament): "...Now the Lord, when he had given the linen cloth to the servant of the priest, went to James and appeared to him." [Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, 2.] In that very early statement, do we have Jesus' burial cloth being mentioned in the same sentence with the Lord being a priest?

⁸⁴ One early Christian beautifully described our priesthood this way: "Jesus, the crucified high priest, by grace stripped us (i.e., Christians) of our filthy garments, polluted by sins, and will invest us with prepared garments and will provide an eternal kingdom because "we are the true high-priestly people of God." [Justin Martyr, "Dialogue with Trypho, A Jew," *The Apostolic Fathers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004) 1:257.] Now if we will be given priestly vestments, it only stands to reason that we are correct in making

3-4a. JESUS AS HIGH PRIEST AND THE TYPOLOGY OF THE TABERNACLE

The author of Hebrews presents the reader with a typological riddle in 9.11-12:

When Christ came⁸⁵ and ministered as the superior High Priest, what could be (1) described as a “sacred tent” that is “*not of this creation*,” that was (2) associated with both the actual *blood* of Jesus and the heavenly *Sanctuary*, but (at the same time) was (3) distinct⁸⁶ from both?

It is not difficult to perceive how early, Jewish Christians could have perceived the Shroud as being associated, typologically, with the covering of a “sacred tent” (σκηνη). To begin with, both the Shroud and the covering of “the Holy Place” were made from linen cloth.⁸⁷ Furthermore, because Jesus’ burial cloth had been sanctified by his sacrificial blood, it could typologically be identified as being a sacred covering.⁸⁸ either as (a) “the Holy Place” of the heavenly sanctuary or (b) as His “priestly robe”!⁸⁹

Interestingly, Jesus’ burial cloth had the three necessary characteristics to serve as a High-Priestly garment: (1) it was made of “fine linen,” (2) it had been consecrated (i.e., made holy) by being sprinkled with “sacrificial blood,” and (3) it had a special “checker

the inference that, it was understood by the early Christians, Jesus had been invested with the holy garment (or, robe) of the High Priest! (See Rev 7.9-17)

⁸⁵ The verb (παραγενόμενος) (9.11) is a past tense, aorist participle from παραγίνομαι, “to come” or “to appear.” Some manuscripts have a variant reading for the next verb: “the good things which are to come” (μελλόντων; cf. 10.1). However, the past tense, “the good things that have now come” (γενομένων), “appears to have superior attestation on the score of age and diversity of text type.” Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971) 668.

⁸⁶ By “distinct” I mean not identical to, not one and the same (9.11). The use of the preposition with “sacred tent” requires it to be understood as different from the “sanctuary.” *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.* William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1991) 47b:238.

⁸⁷ The Tabernacle structure was covered with a cloth made of fine twisted line, blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim embroidered by skilled craftsmen. That linen cloth was then covered with a layer of cloth made from goat hair, which in turn was covered with ram skins (dyed red), which was covered with a top layer of hides from sea cows, providing a waterproof covering and camouflaging the rich interior from enemies and bandits. *Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps, and Time Lines*, 10th Anniversary Edition (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2015) 93.

⁸⁸ Two basic aspects associated with “tent” are “covering” and the tent commonly being a place of abode or “dwelling.” Michaelis, “σκηνή,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1971) vii:368. “In secular Gk. skene originally denoted a tent-covering ...” M. J. Harris, “Tent, Tabernacle,” ed. Colin Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1978) 3:811.

⁸⁹ It is interesting that John, when speaking of the sacred presence of Christ as he dwelt on earth, uses the verb form (σκηνώω) of this word, “sacred tent” (σκηνή): “And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory...” (John 1.14). Cf. Rev 7.15; 21.3.

work” weave!⁹⁰ And then there is this pertinent question: How could Jesus be the superior High Priest and perform His priestly duties without a priestly robe? It is unlikely the early, Jewish Christians overlooked this matter. So, it seems a plausible inference can be made that Jesus must have had a proper priestly robe when He served in the Holy Place, ministering as the superior High Priest!

How did the early Church view the burial cloth of Jesus that was discovered in the empty tomb? Why wasn't it viewed as an unclean object—desecrated by blood and the corpse—and disposed of? Here is the likely answer: Jesus' Shroud was viewed as having been consecrated by His sacrificial blood. This resulted in two consequences.

First, the early Christians treasured Jesus' Shroud and, due to persecution, attempted to safeguard it from enemies of the Church. On that basis, it is a plausible inference that any reference to the Shroud during the period of the early Church would be done in a veiled or cryptic manner.

Second, because the Shroud had been both consecrated and possessed a shadowy, *miraculous* image—one “not made by human hands” and “not of this creation”—a set of beliefs developed around it. What message was it supposed to convey? How might the Shroud be used in evangelism to teach the Gospel to potential converts and to new disciples?

Consequently, a rich typological understanding developed around the Shroud. The early Christians identified it, typologically, with His priestly-kingly robe! The earthly being a *shadow*, or a type, of the heavenly! Furthermore, evidence suggests the Shroud was identified as a type of the heavenly tabernacle (“*the greater and more perfect sacred tent*”⁹¹) that “*the Lord pitched, not man.*”⁹² The author of Hebrews developed a rich and fluid typology based on his understanding of the Shroud. He linked it with the Holy Place⁹³ and the inner curtain⁹⁴ that, “*by means of His flesh*” He went “*through*” to enter the heavenly sanctuary.

What could be described as a “**sacred tent**” that is “*not of this creation,*” that was associated with both the actual *blood* of Jesus and the heavenly *sanctuary*, but (at the same time) was distinct from both? This author knows of only one answer: Jesus' consecrated burial Shroud, stained with His sacrificial blood and bearing the miraculous image of His crucified body!

⁹⁰ Exod 28.4-5, 39; 29.21

⁹¹ Heb 9.11

⁹² Hebrews 8.2; 9.11-12

⁹³ Heb 9.11-12

⁹⁴ “*...Jesus inaugurated a new way for us through the curtain, that is, by means of His flesh...*” (Heb 10.20).

Typologically, the Shroud was a bridge linking the transition from Jesus' earthly entombment to presenting (as High Priest) His perfect sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary.

**3-4b. "WHEN THE LORD HAD GIVEN THE LINEN CLOTH
TO THE SERVANT OF THE PRIEST..."**

Additional support for this thesis is likely provided by the statement in the very early apocrypha work, *The Gospel According to the Hebrews*, which states, after the Resurrection: "...Now the **Lord**, when he **had given the linen cloth to the servant of the priest**, went to James and appeared to him."⁹⁵ It is commonly believed that Peter would have been "the servant of the priest."^{96, 97} If Peter was the "servant" then Jesus must have been "the priest." That results in this statement being a very early reference⁹⁸ where Jesus' burial cloth is mentioned in the same sentence with the Lord being a priest!

That linkage aligns very nicely with the very intriguing statement found in *Hebrews*:

*"Now when Christ came as a High Priest, with (διά) (or by means of) the greater and more perfect **sacred tent** (σκηνης), not made with human hands, ... and ... with (διά) His own blood ... He entered into the heavenly Sanctuary (τὰ ἅγια) ..."*⁹⁹

3-5. "...ONE LIKE A SON OF MAN, CLOTHED IN A ROBE REACHING TO THE FEET..."

(Revelation 1.13; cf. 19.16)

⁹⁵ *The Gospel According to the Hebrews* is now a "lost gospel." Jerome gave us this interesting quote in the late 4th century (392-3). [Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, 2.] Originally it was written in the Aramaic language but in Hebrew characters. It was, therefore, in use by Palestinian Christians who spoke Hebrew (Aramaic), which explains its name. "At Jerome's time, most people regarded this apocryphal gospel as the Hebrew original of the canonical Gospel of Matthew which Papias mentioned (Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3, 39, 16; 6, 25, 4; Irenaeus 1, 1)." Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (Christian Classics: Westminster, Maryland, 1992) 1:111-12.

⁹⁶ See footnote 61 above where I discuss why Peter is likely the best candidate to have been the first custodian of the Shroud.

⁹⁷ Consider the sacrificial-priestly-servant theme(s) behind 1 Pet 1.2, 15-16, 18-19, 22; 2.4-10; 3.15, 18; 4.10-11. It is important to remember the need the writer felt to be cryptic about the identity of the Shroud's custodian in order to safeguard the cloth from potential enemies. Some choose to identify the apostle John with "the servant of the priest." However, there is no certainty that John was "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Ben Witherington, for example, has concluded Lazarus was likely that beloved disciple. Furthermore, the evidence for John being "the servant" relies on the Johannine narrative of the Passion story. However, this lost gospel aligns itself closely with Matthew's narrative.

⁹⁸ It must have been written before the last quarter of the second century as Clement of Alexandria used it in his *Stromata* (2.9.45).

⁹⁹ Heb 9.11-12

In the first chapter of his *Revelation* John describes “the Alpha and the Omega,” the Almighty, as Daniel’s “One like a Son of Man” who was presented before “the Ancient of Days.”¹⁰⁰ Some of the descriptive terms for Jesus in John’s passage are found elsewhere in Scripture for the LORD God Almighty. But what was the source for the “Son of Man” being “*clothed in a robe reaching to the feet*”? This is found nowhere else in Scripture!¹⁰¹ It is interesting that the “man on the Shroud” is depicted on the cloth down to his feet.

This verse is similar to the later statement in Revelation, “*And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.’*”¹⁰²

These two verses in Revelation (along with Hebrews 7:1 and Daniel’s enthronement of the “Son of Man”) give support to this author’s thesis that early Christians identified Jesus’ consecrated burial cloth typologically with His heavenly, kingly robe! This thesis is reinforced and strengthened by the allegory of the prince’s marvelous robe found in the early apocryphal poem, *The Hymn of the Pearl*, which later became inserted into the *Acts of Thomas*.¹⁰³

3-6. “TO THESE HE PRESENTED HIMSELF ALIVE ... BY MANY CONVINCING PROOFS”

(Acts 1:3)

What were these many “proofs” shown to His apostles *after* His Passion, proofs that served to convince them He was alive? We are not told; we can only speculate. But we do know that the disciple whom Jesus loved came to faith in the Resurrection as a result of the way His funeral “linens” were “lying” in the empty tomb!¹⁰⁴ So a primary candidate for one of these “convincing proofs” should be the Shroud with its miraculous image!

“Convincing proofs” in the original Greek is one word: τεκμήριον, a strong word which occurs only here in the New Testament. It carries the idea of proofs that are “convincing” and “decisive.”¹⁰⁵ One Greek grammarian states: “*A tekmerion is such an evidence as to remove all doubt.*”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ Dan 7.13

¹⁰¹ Daniel 10.5 does speak of “a certain man dressed in linen,” but does not speak of a full-length robe “reaching to the feet.”

¹⁰² Rev 19.16

¹⁰³ The whole thesis is set forth and developed in the author’s paper, “*Jesus’ Priestly & Royal Robe*,” op. cit.

¹⁰⁴ John 20.8. See the author’s paper, “*He Saw and Believed*,” op. cit.

¹⁰⁵ Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 815.

¹⁰⁶ J. Rawson Lumby, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Cambridge Greek Testament (Cambridge: University Press, 1912) 81.

Certainly the live appearances Jesus made to His apostles after His Passion, as recorded in Luke’s first volume (i.e., the Gospel), are understood here: “... *appearing to them over a period of forty days.*”¹⁰⁷ But that doesn’t exclude early Christians—those who were enlightened about the Shroud bearing a miraculous image—from understanding His burial cloth was also one of those “convincing proofs”!

3-7. “HE HAS FIXED A DAY IN WHICH HE WILL JUDGE THE WORLD ... HAVING FURNISHED *PROOF* TO ALL MEN BY RAISING HIM FROM THE DEAD.”¹⁰⁸

(Acts 17.31)

While the “convincing proofs” of 1.3 were specifically given to Jesus’ “apostles,” now we have “proof” (πίστις)^{109, 110} that has been furnished to “all men.” This proof is identified with Jesus serving as the Judge at the end of time due to his Resurrection from the dead. But how can all men be certain of His Resurrection? What evidence or “proof” did Paul have to present to the Athenians that the Resurrection took place? Why should they believe him? Were they simply to take him at his word? Did Paul have the Shroud along with him as an aid in evangelism, using its miraculous image as “proof” of the death and Resurrection of Jesus? Galatians 3.1 could certainly be support for such a thesis!

3-8. “FOR NOW WE SEE IN A MIRROR DIMLY, BUT THEN FACE TO FACE.”¹¹¹

(1 Corinthians 13.12)

The Greek “by means of¹¹² a mirror” (δι’ ἐσόπτρου) is found only here in the New Testament. One author wrote: “*Ancient mirrors made of burnished metal—a specialty of Corinth—were poor reflectors; the art of silvering glass was discovered in the 13th century.*”¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Acts 1.3b

¹⁰⁸ At the conclusion of my presentation at the 2019 International Conference on the Shroud, during the Q & A, I asked if anyone had suggestions of a text in the N.T. that might be a veiled reference to the Turin Shroud. Russ Breault, an expert on the Shroud, suggested this verse from Acts 17.

¹⁰⁹ Whatever was included in the “convincing proofs” mentioned in 1.3, here is another verse later in the same document that bears some of that same thinking. Evidence was available to believe in the Resurrection! The word here in 17.31 is different: πίστις (faith), as a “pledge” or “proof” (of Jesus’ fitness for the office to Judge). Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 668.

¹¹⁰ The writer of Hebrews uses πίστις in a very similar way when he links it with ἔλεγχος (“proof” or “inner conviction”): “*Faith is the essence of hoping, the proof or evidence of not seeing*” (Heb 11.1). In his Greek-English lexicon, Bauer gives this rendering for such “faith:” “*the assurance of what we hope for, the proving of (or a conviction about) what we cannot see.*” Bauer, “πίστις,” 669.

¹¹¹ This statement was also proposed at the 2019 International Conference as a possible veiled reference to the Shroud. Unfortunately, I do not know who suggested it.

¹¹² The preposition *διὰ* could be translated here as “in,” “through,” or “by means of.”

¹¹³ Finlay, *Expositor’s Greek Testament*, 5 vols (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, n.d.) 2:901.

The Greek word for “dimly” (αίγνυμα) means an “obscure image” or “riddle.”¹¹⁴ We derive our English word “enigma” from this Greek noun. Literally the text says, “*We are seeing at the present time by means of a mirror in an enigma (or riddle).*”

This is an intriguing statement to contemplate with regards to the Turin Shroud, seeing how it bears a shadowy image of the crucified Lord! Readers could find their “hope” strengthened by the Shroud’s existence. Those aware of the image “not made by human hands” understood it to be a powerful, apologetic witness. Some might have believed that simply seeing it would grant a person a special blessing. However, void of love the Shroud loses its evangelistic power and influence! “*But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*”¹¹⁵

3-9. “IN HIS DAY, THE SON OF MAN WILL BE AS LIGHTNING FLASHING...”¹¹⁶

(Luke 17.24-25)

“For just as the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.”¹¹⁷

Earlier in Luke’s Gospel his readers were informed that Jesus’ opponents were demanding to see a “sign from heaven.”¹¹⁸ In response, Jesus promised one spectacular miracle that He labeled “the sign of Jonah.” Immediately following that promise, the Lord began to speak on the metaphor of light.¹¹⁹

The context of this statement found later in Luke’s Gospel (perhaps drawn from the parallel context of Matthew 24) seems to be the destruction that would come upon Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Even so, in the immediate passage, “the flash of lightning” is presented as something connected to and arriving after the Passion. Knowing what we do about how the miraculous image on the Shroud was likely formed, this statement about a flash of lightning becomes very interesting.

Only one (unconventional) hypothesis begins to explain the formation of the inexplicable and mysterious image and also account for several perplexing enigmas

¹¹⁴ Cf. Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 23.

¹¹⁵ 1 Cor 13.13

¹¹⁶ At the 2019 International Conference on the Shroud, Michel A. Iacono of Montreal Canada suggested this text as a possible veiled statement to the Shroud.

¹¹⁷ Luke 17.24-25

¹¹⁸ Luke 11.16, 29-36

¹¹⁹ Luke 11.33-36. We know how Jesus spoke of Himself as being “the Light of the world” who wants to impart light to His followers so they will “not remain in darkness” (John 8.12; 12.46).

associated with the image.¹²⁰ Dr. John Jackson (and other physicists) theorized that a very brief, intense burst of vacuum ultraviolet radiation might be the source behind the image.¹²¹ The needed radiation would be in the form of “light” (protons), rather than in the form of “heat.”¹²² A “flash of lightning” is certainly a good metaphor for depicting such a miracle!¹²³

4. CONCLUSION

Unfortunately, students of the Bible have tended to view the Turin Shroud as being either unimportant or unauthentic. However, Sindonological research over the last several decades has furnished a plethora of strong evidence witnessing to the Shroud’s authenticity.

Many have rejected the Shroud on the premise that it is a forgery. Otherwise, why are there not clear references made to it by the writers of the New Testament? This paper has worked from the plausible inference that, because of the threat of persecution, there was good reason for the early Church to have been discreet and secretive about the existence of the Shroud. And this paper has surfaced several excellent statements from the New Testament itself that should likely be regarded as veiled references to what we know today as the Shroud of Turin.

A story about an unparalleled person named Jesus has been passed down through the centuries. Is there any tangible, extraordinary evidence corroborating what the Bible calls “the Gospel” story? Yes!

Today a visual witness exists affirming the authenticity of the Jesus story! It is, in fact, an artifact that has been studied by scientists more than any other artifact in history. An ancient burial cloth displays the faint image of a crucified man and shows the unique wounds mentioned in the Biblical narrative of Jesus' death. Yet, surprisingly, scientists have been unable to either fully replicate this image or to explain how this remarkable

¹²⁰ For a detailed analysis of this theory and the enigmas associated with the image, see Spitzer, *Science and the Shroud*, 23-28.

¹²¹ John P. Jackson, “An Unconventional Hypothesis to Explain all Image Characteristics Found on the Shroud Image” in *History, Science, Theology and the Shroud* ed. by A. Berard (St. Louis: Symposium Proceedings) 1991, accessed July 10, 2019, <http://theshroudofturin.blogspot.com/2012/01/john-p-jackson-unconventional.html>.

¹²² The STURP investigation concluded the image was not the product of scorched or heated linen because the image did not fluoresce. See comment by STURP member Barry Schwartz, in “The Image on the Shroud of Turin is Not a Scorch” in *The Shroud of Turin Blog*—shroudstory.com, 2012, accessed October 7, 2019, <http://shroudstory.com/2012/02/10/the-image-on-the-shroud-of-turin-is-not-a-scorch/>.

¹²³ Then again, connecting this statement in Luke with the Turin Shroud could simply be a case of apophenia. We have no way to know for certain.

image could have been naturally formed. In that regard, "*Its origin remains a mystery wrapped in an enigma.*"¹²⁴

The ghostly image has properties associated with being a high-definition, three-dimensional, photographic negative!¹²⁵ Therefore, the image bears witness to "Intelligent Design."¹²⁶ Yet, it was not the work of an artist!¹²⁷ How can that be?

"The man on the cloth" bears witness to only one man and to only one story known throughout all of history!¹²⁸ Does this cloth, known today as "the Shroud of Turin," provide evidence for both the Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus? Could this artifact have anything to do with the Father's witness—an "attesting miracle from heaven"—which Jesus promised before his death and labeled "The Sign of Jonah"?

The Turin Shroud has the potential to greatly impact the theologian's search for the historical Jesus! Since the Enlightenment there has been a tendency to demythologize the New Testament and to view the Resurrection as something that existed only in the minds of Jesus' followers. Consequently, the Christ of history is blurred and the Christian's assurance of hope beyond the grave is attacked. In both extremely important matters, the Shroud of Turin is a game changer! Next to love, the image on the Shroud should be embraced by the contemporary Church as today's supreme apologetic and as God's gracious gift to every doubter of the Gospel story!

¹²⁴ Viviano, "Why Shroud of Turin's Secrets Continue to Elude Science," *National Geographic*, April 17, 2015, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/04/150417-shroud-turin-relics-jesus-catholic-church-religion-science.html>

¹²⁵ For a summary revealing the findings of science regarding the Shroud of Turin see Spitzer, "Science and the Shroud," op cit.

¹²⁶ "Formation of the image on the Shroud required three things: a discoloration mechanism, energy, and information.... And information defining the shape of the body and the presence of some of the bones was needed to guide the process so that front and back images with good resolution could be formed. It is argued that if we follow the evidence where it leads and not be constrained by a presupposition of naturalism, then we find that the best explanation for the evidence on the Shroud is that the required energy was delivered to the Shroud by radiation emitted from within the body.... The radiation that was emitted from within the body, by means of its intensity and direction, carried the necessary information from the body to the Shroud so that the image could be formed." [Robert A. Rucker, "Role of Radiation in Image Formation on the Shroud of Turin," *Academia.edu* (October 11, 2016) Abstract, https://www.academia.edu/28946606/Role_of_Radiation_in_Image_Formation_on_the_Shroud_of_Turin?email_work_card=interaction_paper.] "People can see the image of a crucified man on the Shroud of Turin because the threads of the Shroud contain fibers that are discolored in a pattern that contains the information content that defines the appearance of a crucified man. This information could only have come from the body that was wrapped within the Shroud, because this information was only inherent to the body and not to its surroundings." [Robert A. Rucker, "Information Content on the Shroud of Turin," *Academia.edu* (October 11, 2016) Abstract, https://www.academia.edu/26580240/Information_Content_on_the_Shroud_of_Turin.]

¹²⁷ See footnote 21 above.

¹²⁸ For an overview of the evidence for the Shroud being the genuine burial cloth of Jesus see Marc Borkan, "Ecce Homo? Science and the Authenticity of the Turin Shroud," *Vertices: The Duke University Magazine of Science, Technology, and Medicine* 10, no. 2 (Winter 1995) 18–51.