

The Shroud of Turin

Jefrey Breshears

Mysterious Relic.

- All Four Gospels record that Jesus was buried in a *sindone*.
- The Shroud of Turin is an ancient piece of faded linen that bears the image of a crucified man.
- A sepia-colored linen cloth 14 feet long and 43 inches wide.

The Controversy.

- Can a 2,000-year-old piece of cloth survive?
- A medieval forgery?
- No natural explanation.
- Human bloodstains.
- A 3-dimensional image.
- A testimonial to the Resurrection?
 - Russ Breault: The Shroud is either the greatest hoax in history or the greatest Christian artifact in history.
 - Father Robert Spitzer: The Shroud is the most scientifically studied artifact in history.... The only possible explanation for the image is a burst of light.
 - Dr. Cheryl White: The Shroud is the greatest mystery in the world and the most studied art object in the world.... All of the scientific research shows us what the Shroud is NOT.... There is no known naturalistic explanation.



Early History of the Shroud.

- The history of the Shroud from the time of Christ to 1357 is uncertain.
- The *Mandylion*.
 - Eusebius (c. 325): The legend of Thaddaeus and King Abgar V of Edessa.
- **Antioch.**
 - Athanasius (c. 360): An image of Christ was taken to Antioch.
 - Discovery in 544.

.....

.....

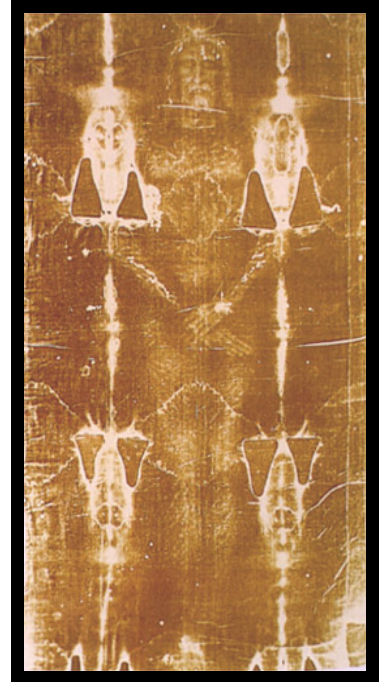
.....

.....

.....

.....

- **Edessa.**
 - Occasional public displays.
 - Gervase of Tilbury (c. 1211: "... [B]y divine power there was impressed on the linen a most beautiful imprint of not only the face, but the entire body of the Lord."
- **Constantinople (944-1203?).**
 - A grand processional.
 - Annual displays from 944 to the Fourth Crusade in 1203.
 - Robert de Clari (1203): "There was another church, My Lady of St. Mary at Blachernae, where there was the Shroud in which our Lord had been wrapped...."
- Disappearance of the *Mandylion*.
 - The Crusader sack of Constantinople in 1203.
 - Robert de Clari: "And no one, either Greek or French, ever knew what became of this cloth after the city was taken."
 - Pope Innocent III (r. 1198-1216) and the looting of sacred relics from Constantinople.



Later History of the Shroud.

- 1357: Reappearance of the Shroud.
 - Sir Geoffrey II de Charny.
- 1453: The Shroud becomes the property of the House of Savoy.
 - 1532: A fire nearly destroys the artifact.
- 1578: Removal of the Shroud to the **Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Turin.**
- 1898: The Shroud was publicly displayed.
 - Secondo Pia takes photographs of the cloth.
- 1983: The **Vatican** takes possession of the Shroud.

The *Sudarium*.

- The face cloth of Jesus?
- A well-traveled cloth.
- The **Cathedral of St. John** in **Oviedo, Spain.**
- Similarities between the Shroud and the *Sudarium*.
- The 1999 investigation.
 - Mark Suscin: "It seems to be a funeral cloth that was probably placed over the head of the corpse of an adult male... The man whose face the Sudarium covered had a beard, a moustache, and long hair.... The man was wounded before death with something that made his scalp bleed and produced wounds on his necks, shoulders and back."

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

The Man of the Shroud.

- The body: 5'11" in height and weighed about 175 pounds.
- A spike driven through the man's wrists (not the palms).
- No legs were broken.
- Nearly 120 wounds, mostly on the back, arms and shoulders.
 - Wounds produced by a Roman *flagrum*?
- Wounds covering the top of the skull and head.
- An oval-shaped wound on the right side produced the greatest amount of blood flow.
- The body shows clear signs of rigor mortis, but no signs of decomposition.(!)

Scientific Examinations.

- From 1978-81, the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) conducted the most extensive tests ever performed on an historical artifact.
- Findings:
 - ▶ The image on the Shroud was not produced by paint or scorch marks.
 - ▶ Reddish-brown marks on the cloth are human blood – type AB+.
 - ▶ The VP-8 Image Analyzer showed a 3-dimensional image.
- Pollen and dirt evidence.
 - ▶ Did the Shroud originate in Israel?

Carbon 14 Testing.

- 1988: Three laboratories conducted carbon 14 tests on the Shroud.
 - ▶ The conclusion: The cloth dated to between 1260 and 1390.
- Serious flaws in the testing procedure.
 - ▶ The fire that damaged the Shroud in 1532 produced carbon.
 - ▶ The piece of cloth cut from the Shroud came from a patch on the outer edge of the garment.
- The bioplastic theory:
 - ▶ All ancient objects are coated with a residue of bacteria and fungus.
 - ▶ Problems with the carbon 14 tests.
 - An accurate test would clean away the bioplastic coating and other contaminants from the underlying fibers.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Significance of the Shroud

Three Options:

(1) The Shroud is a hoax.

- ▶ A medieval forgerer somehow produced a life-like representation of a crucified man on a cloth that contains human blood, microscopic grains of pollen from numerous species of plants indigenous only to Israel, and a nearly invisible amount of limestone dirt from the Jerusalem area.
- ▶ The artist produced a forgery that baffles modern scientists.

(2) The Shroud is legitimate, but the man of the Shroud is not Jesus.

- ▶ The man died in a manner identical to Jesus, and his image was produced onto the cloth in a way that cannot be duplicated by modern science.

(3) The Shroud is legitimate, and the image on it is that of Jesus of Nazareth.

- ▶ His image was produced by a radiation phenomenon associated with the resurrection.
- Confirmation of the Biblical account:
 - ▶ Grant Jeffrey: “If the Shroud of Turin is genuine, then its physical evidence confirms the authenticity of many details of the Gospel accounts as genuine history... The Shroud provides a powerful confirmation of the Gospel record of the scourging and crucifixion of Jesus. In contradiction to the theory of many liberal scholars that the early Church simply invented the tradition of the empty tomb, the evidence from the Shroud indicates that the body of the crucified man did not remain covered by the burial cloth for long. Furthermore, the Shroud reveals that the crucified man did not remain in the tomb to decompose...

“If the Shroud ultimately proves to be the true image of the body of Jesus, it would certainly constitute the most powerful evidence of the existence of the historical Jesus and especially of his resurrection from the tomb.” [Grant R. Jeffrey, *Jesus: The Great Debate*]

Post-script:

- The uniqueness of the weave of the Shroud.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

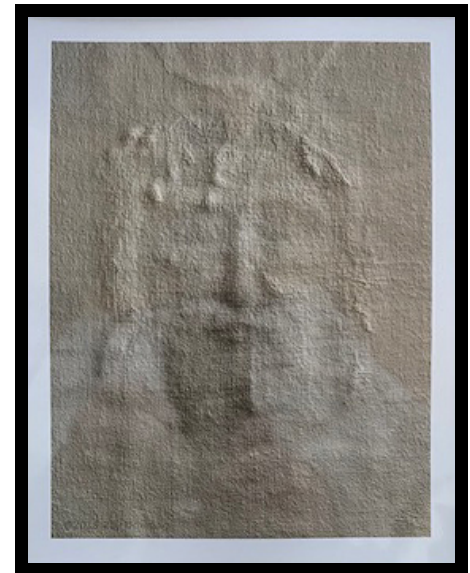
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



A 3-D depiction of the image on the Shroud