

JEREMIAH J. JOHNSTON, PhD

The

JESUS

DISCOVERIES

10 HISTORIC FINDS
THAT BRING US FACE-TO-FACE
WITH JESUS

The
JESUS
DISCOVERIES

Also by Jeremiah J. Johnston

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10 HISTORIC FINDS
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JEREMIAH J. JOHNSTON, PhD



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For Abel,
our first triplet and my dear son

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INTRODUCTION

What if the stories of Jesus are more than sacred memory? What if we could point to tangible, verifiable, and datable evidence that affirms the biblical record and invites us to encounter Jesus not only in Scripture but also in history?

This is not a flight of imagination; it's the very premise of *The Jesus Discoveries*. For too long, skeptics have claimed that the Gospels are pious legends, faith-based fiction, or the mythologized memoirs of early communities. But nothing could be further from the truth. The Christian faith is grounded in events that occurred in real places, involving real people and leaving real evidence. And with striking clarity, archaeology, textual discoveries, and historical records are beginning to tell the story again.

Stones are still speaking. Inscriptions are still uncovered. Manuscripts, ossuaries, graffiti, and government records—all are emerging from the dust of time and converging with the Gospels' witness. These findings don't replace Scripture, but they do reinforce and illuminate it. And they help us see the figure of Jesus in sharper historical focus.

Sacred Meets Secular

Among all religious systems of the world, Christianity uniquely insists that its founder lived at a particular time, in a real place,

among verifiable people, under specific governments, and amid real historical crises. In other words, our Christian faith is grounded in history, sacred and secular alike.

Whereas many religious texts float in the ether of abstraction—detached from times, places, and credible historical figures—the Bible gives names, plots locations, records dates, and aligns with events confirmed by outside sources. What results is not myth, legend, or allegory but a message grounded in real time and space. When placed under the historical microscope, the sacred documents of the Old and New Testaments consistently emerge as reliable. Far from being in tension, the New Testament and historical evidence correlate beautifully, hand in glove. Roughly 80 to 90 percent of the external sources that reference people, places, and events in the New Testament align seamlessly with the biblical record.

We're living in an age of growing skepticism toward the Christian faith, and yet, uniquely in our time, we have unprecedented access to evidence that confirms the biblical claims of Jesus. That's why the ten discoveries examined in this book matter. And what unites them is their power to answer this essential question: *Who is Jesus, and why does it matter that his life intersected with history?* They dismantle the modern myth that Jesus is a theological idea divorced from historical reality. And they bring us closer than ever to the man who changed history.

The Ten Historic Finds

I am a historical Jesus scholar, and I love the Christian Scriptures. I am a Biblicist. Like John Bunyan was once described, if you prick me, I bleed Scripture.¹ I affirm the authority, sufficiency, and infallibility of the Word of God. And yet in the age of skepticism and scientific inquiry, I am continually astounded by discoveries that corroborate Scripture's reliability.

Part One in this book presents ten of the most significant finds that bring us face-to-face with Jesus of Nazareth. Some are familiar to scholars but remain largely unknown to the general public. Others have only recently been unearthed or reevaluated. Some are physical and some are contextual. But all are deeply compelling. And as we examine the evidence and uncover the historical roots of our faith, we build bridges from the past to the present—bridges that lead us to a face-to-face encounter with the timeless truths of Jesus.

Each section explores a discovery that names Jesus directly, or references his earliest followers (and sometimes detractors), or vividly portrays the world in which he lived and ministered. Some present a combination of these. And the evidence we'll examine comes from ancient manuscripts and imperial edicts, graffiti and ossuaries (which are ancient funeral bone boxes), burial customs and courtroom records. We'll also stand on excavation sites where Jesus' name has surfaced in stone, pottery, and parchment.

Reflections on the Christian Mind

My prayer is that this book will inspire a new generation of thoughtful believers to stand firm in their faith and engage a skeptical world with both truth and grace. To that end, the two chapters in Part Two cover what I believe to be the state of the Christian mind today, how Jesus himself is an intellectual, and the definition of Christian apologetics and its value to us as defenders of our faith.

Dig Deeper

In Part Three I've provided chapters with further content and context specific to the Shroud of Turin—often speaking to the skepticism surrounding it—and burial customs in Jesus' day. And

“The Sudarium of Oviedo” by Doug Powell reveals the possible discovery of Jesus’ burial facecloth.

But of utmost importance throughout *The Jesus Discoveries* is this certainty: Jesus is not legend. He is Lord. And the record bears that out.

Part One

THE TEN HISTORIC FINDS

DISCOVERY 1

THE SHROUD OF TURIN

Face-to-Face with Jesus' Sacrifice and Resurrected Life

The Shroud of Turin testifies to the life, suffering, death, burial, and bodily resurrection of Jesus. Hard to believe? I once was a skeptic myself.

A few years ago my pastor, Jack Graham, asked me to preach on the Shroud of Turin at a Good Friday men's Bible study. I was nervous because almost everything I'd heard or read about the Shroud was negative. Yet I'd never researched the information and had (rather dangerously) formed my own opinion secondhand, based on the opinions of others. I was mistaken. I'm so grateful to God for Pastor Graham's encouragement to study this information for myself.

Fast-forwarding to present day, I've become a spokesman for the Shroud all over the world. I never asked for this. But the Shroud of Turin is one of the most unique and effective evangelism tools I've ever experienced.

This is not theory for me. I've stood in Turin, Italy, and personally viewed the Shroud in its sacred reliquary. I've sat across from

some of the world's leading physicists, mathematicians, chemists, and materials scientists—those directly responsible for preserving the Shroud and investigating its extraordinary properties. I've asked hard questions. I have evaluated the peer-reviewed data carefully. I've tested the hypotheses. And I've walked away with not only scholarly respect but spiritual awe.

The deeper I've delved into the science, the stronger my faith has become. Not a blind faith but an informed faith. Not a leap into the dark but a step into the light of evidence. Because the deeper you go into the facts of Christianity, the more rock-solid your faith becomes. And the Shroud brings us face-to-face with the Man of the Shroud—the resurrected Christ Himself!

Make no mistake, no other evidence other than the Bible does that. It's the best mystery of all because it goes to the core of the gospel message. The Shroud invites people to investigate it on their own, and I believe it speaks for itself. After all, Acts 1:3 powerfully states, "After his suffering, [Jesus] presented himself to [his disciples] and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive" (NIV).

Why is it a stretch to believe that this burial cloth was preserved, maintained, passed down through generations, and is in Italy right now? I encourage you to read on and consider that question for yourself.

What *Is* the Shroud of Turin?

The Shroud of Turin is a burial cloth believed to have once wrapped the crucified Jesus of Nazareth. It displays the front and back images of a crucified, naked, bearded man, nearly six feet tall and 170 to 180 pounds, with long hair parted in the middle. The cloth itself is nearly fourteen feet four inches long and three feet eight inches wide, woven in a herringbone twill pattern and made of pure linen. The blood, the wounds, the scourge marks, the piercing in the side, the crown of thorns—every feature mirrors and corresponds to the Passion narratives of the Gospels.

The Shroud isn't abstract art or medieval forgery. It's a mystery that no modern science has unraveled. And while it's not necessary for belief, it's a powerful brick in the wall of our faith.

And that's what I love about it. Our global ministry, Christian Thinkers Society, has even brought a Shroud of Turin exhibit experience to several churches. In partnership with Othonia, a group of experts based in Rome, the *Who Is the Man of the Shroud?* exhibit features more than fifty carefully curated artifacts, each helping people—young and old—come face-to-face with Jesus, our bodily resurrected Messiah.

Where Did the Shroud Come From—and When?

Although the documented history of the Shroud begins in Lirey, France, in the mid-fourteenth century, compelling evidence suggests its presence in the Eastern Orthodox Church long before then. Early references, such as the second-century *Hymn of the Pearl*, mention a burial cloth bearing the image of a king. The sixth-century Image of Edessa—also called the Mandylicon—was venerated as an image not made by human hands. Iconographic studies show a remarkable consistency between these early images and the face on the Shroud. (The Discovery 6 chapter shares an example of this—a seventh-century Roman coin.)

The pioneering work of forensic botanist Max Frei-Sulzer revealed that the Shroud contains pollen from at least fifty-eight species, many of which are unique to the Jerusalem region and bloom during the springtime—precisely when the crucifixion occurred, according to the gospels. This regional specificity situates the Shroud in first-century Judea, and strongly supports its Jewish provenance.¹ Mineral analysis of limestone dust from the feet region matches samples from ancient tombs in Jerusalem. Dust from the feet area of the Shroud contained a specific calcium carbonate from travertine aragonite limestone, similar to dust taken from a tomb in Jerusalem. These are not circumstantial coincidences;

they are cumulative clues. Max Frei was a well-respected forensic scientist well-known for his work outside of the Shroud research, such as his work investigating the “Hitler Diaries.”²

Misunderstood and Misrepresented

Serious scholars across more than one hundred disciplines have spent more than five hundred thousand hours studying the Shroud. But it may still be the most misunderstood and misrepresented archaeological artifact in the world. It’s been called a graven image (violating the second of the Ten Commandments), labeled a Catholic relic, dismissed as a forgery, and criticized for supposedly contradicting Scripture. Yet each claim crumbles under scrutiny.

As an editor of *The City* academic journal in the past, I was honored to publish a thought-provoking article by the late Barrie Schwartz titled “Five Reasons Why Some Christians Are Shroud Skeptics.” Barrie, who served as the documenting photographer for the historic STURP (Shroud of Turin Research Project) team, was one of the most trusted voices on the subject. His TED Talk on the Shroud of Turin remains a landmark presentation, widely respected for its clarity, depth, and accessibility.

Barrie’s contribution to our journal helped countless Christians navigate common misconceptions and avoid critical pitfalls in their study of the Shroud. His careful, evidence-based approach invited readers into a deeper understanding of both the science and significance of this remarkable artifact. His voice is missed, but his legacy endures.

I’ll summarize Barrie’s thoughts and add a few of my own insights from my scholarship:

- The Shroud is not a graven image. Its features were not made by human hands.
- The Shroud is universal. Though legally owned by the Pope, its reliquary is located inside of a church and open

to all. It is not just for Catholics. It's for Christians of all denominations. Indeed, it's for everyone, regardless of one's creed. Of course, those who believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus will find it spiritually stirring. But its historical, archeological, and scientific value can be appreciated by anyone willing to examine the evidence.

- Scripture supports both a large shroud and smaller cloths, so there is no contradiction. (See the Part Three chapter on first-century Jewish burial customs.)
- Long hair? I find it extremely unlikely that Jesus and his Jewish male contemporaries would ignore the law of Moses by shaving off their beards. Jesus, like Samson or Samuel, likely wore his hair according to Jewish custom. Jews were forbidden to cut their hair and beard (Leviticus 19:27).
- A plucked beard? Look closely at the image. You'll see a patch of hair missing under the chin—an inverted V. Isaiah 50:6 prophesied, “I gave . . . my cheeks to those who pull out the beard.” (See the Part Three chapter on Jewish men and beards at the turn of the era.)

Because of a 1988 radiocarbon test, dating the Shroud to 1260–1390, skeptics argue that it could be a medieval forgery. But no forger has been able to reproduce its most mysterious properties, including its anatomical accuracy, lack of pigment, and three-dimensional characteristics. And recent peer-reviewed statistical studies have discredited the validity of that test due to contamination of the sample area. New technologies like Wide-Angle X-ray Scattering (WAXS) have confirmed a first-century date.

So why did it suggest a medieval origin? Was it accurate? Or was something wrong?

We now know something did go wrong. Multiple peer-reviewed studies have exposed contamination, faulty sampling, and questionable methodology. The very section tested may have been part of a medieval repair. The most notable study, published in the

Oxford journal *Archaeometry*,³ persuasively shows the conclusions of the original carbon dating are actually not tenable because the science shows that the sample used in the original carbon dating was not homogeneous. Indeed, there are changes in age based on the spot on the cloth. Therefore, if the sample is not representative of the whole cloth, it cannot be used to reliably date it. Case closed on the carbon dating.

This leads to a staggering question: If the image wasn't created by a natural event, might it be the natural result of a supernatural one? What if the Shroud bears the physical residue of Jesus' resurrection itself? We'll consider these questions after examining more of what the shroud itself tells us about the formation of its image and the elements of data and probability.

Authentication from the Shroud Itself

Let's dive into two of the Shroud's own key authenticating revelations: how its fabric tells a story and how it also confirms Jesus' crucifixion injuries as told in Scripture.

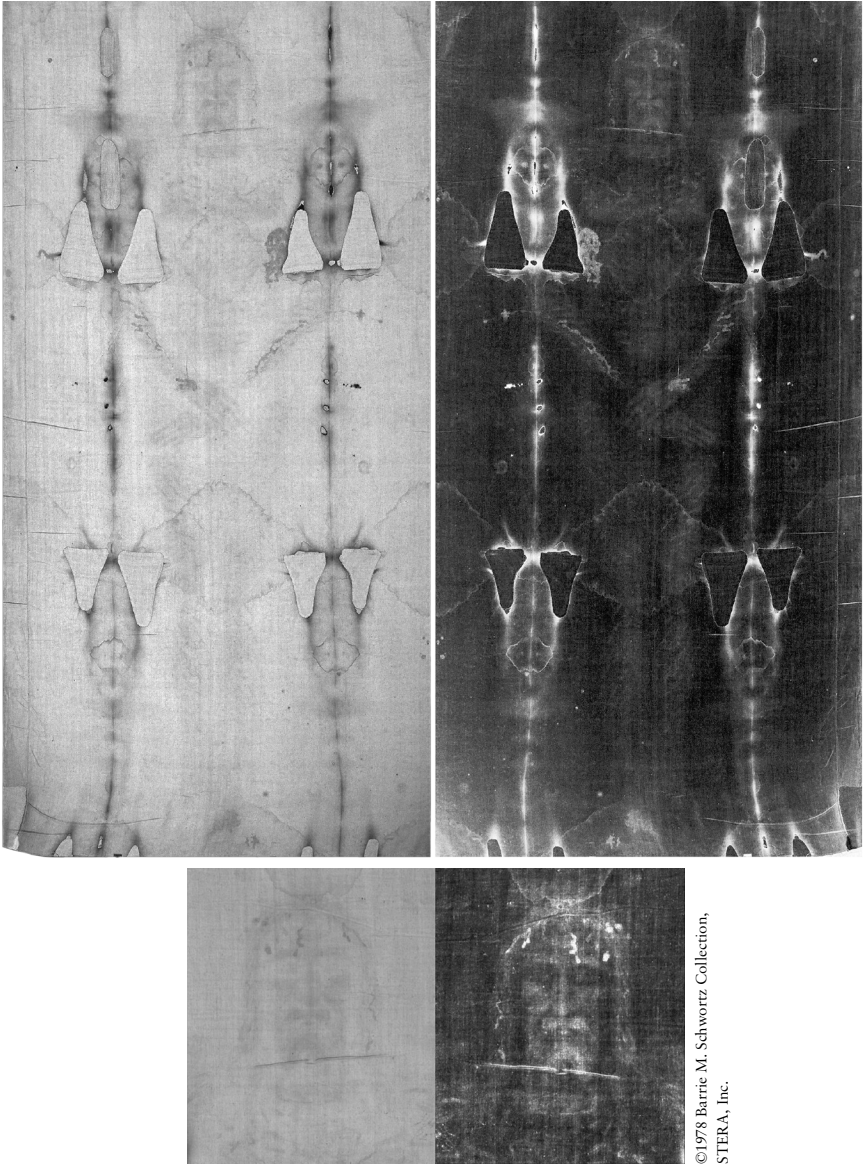
The Shroud's Fabric Speaks

The linen of the Shroud is a quality textile that aligns with descriptions of fine burial cloths in the Gospels. Notably, the cloth is pure linen—unmixed with wool or cotton—as prescribed by Jewish purity laws (Leviticus 19:19). The Gospel of Matthew records that Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy man and secret disciple of Jesus, purchased a “clean linen shroud” for Jesus' burial (Matthew 27:59). The material, the weave, and the care with which the cloth was used all affirm its authenticity within a first-century Jewish context.

The image on the Shroud isn't painted, stained, or imprinted by any known artistic technique. Microscopic analysis shows that the image rests only on the outermost fibers of the linen threads—less than one micron deep, 0.2 microns to be exact. No pigment, binder, or directionality consistent with brush strokes has been

The Shroud of Turin

found. When photographed by Secondo Pia on May 25, 1898, the Shroud's negative image revealed a startling positive: a vivid and



anatomically accurate portrayal of a crucified man. I personally examined this original photo during my expedition to Turin to view the Shroud. The photographic negative launched a new era of scientific examination, culminating in the formation of the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) in 1978.

STURP's official conclusions based on years of analysis? The scientific consensus has proven the image "is that of a real human form of a scourged, crucified man. It is not the product of an artist. The bloodstains are composed of hemoglobin and also give a positive test for serum albumin."⁴ Further studies revealed high bilirubin levels, consistent with severe trauma prior to death—a physiological detail no medieval forger could have imagined or faked—a by-product of hemoglobin degradation. This could be a response to extreme physical trauma suffered by the man of the Shroud. This could also explain why the blood has retained its bright red color over the centuries on the Shroud itself.

The Shroud Confirms Jesus' Crucifixion Injuries

The signs of injury visible on the Shroud (see page 30 for images) align precisely with the Passion accounts in the Gospels:

- Scourge marks consistent with a Roman flagrum, a whip constructed with three cords, each ending in two lead or metal balls. (Scourge lacerations numbering 372 are visible, but the lateral sides of the image on the Shroud aren't shown. Total lacerations are estimated at 700.)
- Head wounds consistent with wearing a crown of thorns (See the Part Three chapter on the crown of thorns—its appearance and significance.)
- Nail wounds through the wrists, not through the soft tissue of the palms, which would have ripped apart the hands for lack of support

- Nail wounds in the feet through the calcaneus, the feet positioned in such a way that one sole is fully visible on the Shroud)
- A side wound with blood and clear fluid later found to have flowed postmortem
- Two prominent shoulder abrasions that correspond to the carrying of the cross. The distortion of the scourge marks on the right shoulder and lower left shoulder blade show that the man carried a patibulum (a horizontal cross beam) instead of a T-shaped cross. The patibulum weighed 75 to 125 pounds (34 to 57 kilograms).

There is no evidence of broken bones, fulfilling Psalm 34:20 and John 19:33.

The Shroud reveals the brutal intensity of scourging most clearly on the back, where the marks are most densely concentrated. Unlike the standard Roman practice, in which a man condemned to crucifixion was usually spared further physical punishment, the evidence from the Shroud suggests that this victim endured a separate and severe flogging prior to crucifixion—as did the historical Christ (Matthew 27:26). (Notably, the heart region shows minimal scourging, likely because repeated blows to this vital area could have caused the victim’s premature death—an outcome Roman executioners would have avoided until crucifixion was carried out.)

What Formed the Image on the Shroud?

Some scientists propose natural chemical reactions as a source of the image. Others suggest that a burst of radiant energy caused the discoloration of the cloth’s surface. This would explain the three-dimensional information encoded in the image, which no two-dimensional artifact or photograph contains. When analyzed by a VP-8 Image Analyzer, the Shroud image produced accurate

topographical relief—an effect impossible with conventional images.

Paolo Di Lazzaro and his team at ENEA Labs in Rome spent five years trying to answer what formed the image on the Shroud. I spent a few days with Paolo in Turin and interviewed him for our documentary film. He is a physicist of the first order. His life's work has focused on laser, power, and energy, and his lab worked with flax grown from first-century genetic seed stock. After hundreds of failed attempts, they concluded it would take a burst of 34,000 billion watts of radiant energy delivered in one 40-billionth of a second to create the image—and that's only to match the superficial coloration of the outermost linen fibers.

No one has that technology. No one.

What the Data Tells Us

In the city of Turin—already sacred to many Christians as the home of the Shroud—was born a man uniquely equipped to approach this relic with both reverence and rigor. Professor Bruno Barberis, born in 1953, is not a theologian, priest, or even a traditional historian—though the irony of his last name is not lost on me. (It sounds similar to Barabbas, who Jesus replaced on the cross.) He's a mathematician, a physicist, and a lifelong researcher in cosmology, probability, and applied science. And yet, through his scientific acumen, Professor Barberis has offered one of the most compelling, data-driven arguments for identifying the man in the Shroud as Jesus of Nazareth.

Since 1975, Barberis has combined his academic vocation with a deep investigation into the Shroud of Turin. He has served in various leadership roles within the Confraternity of the Holy Shroud and the International Center for Shroud Studies in Turin, including—as of this writing—his role as Chairman of the Scientific Committee. He has organized exhibitions, participated in conservation efforts, and delivered more than four thousand lectures

across the globe—from South Korea to South America, and from the United States to Georgia and Israel. His contribution is both public and profoundly personal. I'm grateful to Bruno for sharing so much of his experience with me during my time with him over meals and interviewing him when I visited the Shroud in Turin.

What especially sets Professor Barberis apart is not only his academic contribution but his direct, privileged proximity to the actual Shroud of Turin—not a facsimile or digital replica, but the cloth itself. When I asked him how many times he'd personally stood before the actual Shroud, he answered with humility and precision: "Over one hundred times . . . I show it to the president of Italy and am asked to show it to other dignitaries too."

That statement carries profound weight. Here is a man whose academic discipline is mathematics and physics, whose commitment to objectivity is beyond reproach. And yet he's spent more time in the presence of this singular artifact than perhaps any living scientist. He knows the linen's weave, its discolorations, its preservation environment. He's seen what most of the world views only through glass or photography—dozens of times over.

I asked him, "Do you think the man in the Shroud is Jesus?" His response was classic: "I must believe it. The numbers cause me to be sure!"

What Probability Tells Us

When I first met Professor Barberis, I was struck by the way he bridged his background in mathematics with the theological and historical implications of the Shroud. For example, in one widely cited study, Barberis employed probability theory to assess the likelihood that the individual buried in the Shroud could be any random crucified man from antiquity rather than Jesus of Nazareth himself.

Barberis identified seven unique features that connect the man of the Shroud with the Gospel descriptions of Jesus' crucifixion and burial:

1. **Burial in a linen shroud**—a rarity for victims of crucifixion, who were typically thrown into mass graves or left for scavengers.
2. **Wearing of a crown of thorns**—unparalleled in any other known execution method of the period. (For more on the crown, see the Part Three chapter on its appearance and significance.)
3. **Carrying of a crossbeam (patibulum)**—evidenced by bruising on the shoulder area, matching the biblical detail of Jesus bearing his cross.
4. **Nailed to the cross**—rather than being bound with ropes, which was more common.
5. **Side wound without leg fractures**—mirroring John’s Gospel account that Jesus’ legs were not broken, unlike the others crucified beside him.
6. **Lack of washing and anointing of the body**—suggesting a rushed burial before the Sabbath, consistent with Jewish customs and Gospel narratives. (For more on this, see the Part Three chapter on first-century Jewish burial customs.)
7. **Brief entombment**—the body appears to have lain in the cloth for less than seventy-two hours, just long enough for the image to be impressed but not long enough for decomposition to leave stains or distort the image.

Each of these characteristics (see page 30, lower image) on its own might be noteworthy, but Barberis calculated the cumulative probability of a single crucified man exhibiting all seven. His conclusion? The odds are 1 in 200 billion. That is, of 200 billion crucifixions, only one individual would have exhibited this precise profile.

Even if one assumes generous margins of error, the statistical weight is staggering. Nowhere near 200 billion crucifixions have been suffered in human history. At most, a few hundred thousand. This means the individual in the Shroud stands virtually alone in the historical record.

This is not theological speculation. This is probability analysis—pure math. And it lands us squarely back at the feet of Jesus. The thorn punctures on the head of the figure, then, virtually guarantee that the image of the figure on the shroud belongs to Jesus. That and the wound in the side remove all doubt that the crucified man of the Shroud is the historical Jesus.

Still, Professor Barberis is careful not to overstate the case. He emphasizes that science, by its very definition, can't "prove" a supernatural event like Christ's resurrection. Science is the discipline of the observable, the repeatable, the natural. Resurrection is by nature supernatural—outside the realm of repeatable experiment. What science *can* do, however, is show us the limits of natural explanation. And when every natural theory has failed—chemical imaging, medieval artistry, radiation theories, even scorch tests—we are left staring into the face of an evidential miracle. A scientifically inexplicable image on a cloth bearing the marks of crucifixion, death, and absence.

Beyond Science

The discovery of a damaged fresco in a tomb dating to the Hellenistic period (third or second century BC), excavated by Antonio Arieti in 1875, provides rare pre-Christian visual evidence of crucifixion. Though partially destroyed by modern construction, what remains of the fresco shows a crucified man whose left arm is clearly affixed—perhaps nailed—to a horizontal crossbeam. This demonstrates that the method of execution later used by the Romans, including during Jesus' time, already had visual and physical precedents in the wider Mediterranean world.

But no artifact in human history has stirred both scientific curiosity and spiritual awe quite like the Shroud of Turin. Unlike any other burial cloth, the Shroud bears an anatomically perfect, front-and-back image of a crucified man—an image that defies replication by conventional means.

And yet this isn't simply a matter of science. For the many who have viewed the Shroud up close—including heads of state, scholars, and pilgrims—it's a deeply personal encounter. I will never forget my dear friend Glenn Beck, through tears, giving testimony in the Holy Chapel of the Shroud: "It's one thing to see it on television. It is a whole other thing to witness it firsthand."⁵

The reddish stains—clearly distinguishable as blood—align perfectly with the biblical account of Jesus' crucifixion: scourge marks, a crown of thorns, nails through the wrists and feet, and a spear wound in the side. The forensic correspondence isn't merely consistent with crucifixion; it's consistent with *one* crucifixion.

This is not pseudoscience. This is not myth. This is a discovery—a Jesus discovery—that brings us face-to-face with the singularity of the Christian claim: that God became flesh, suffered, died, and rose again.

The Shroud is no death cloth. The Shroud is a resurrection cloth! Indeed, the Shroud doesn't speak of decay; it proclaims resurrection.

Jesus: The Incarnation of Power

To put Paolo Di Lazzaro's research calculation in perspective, it would take a burst of thirty-four billion watts of radiant energy delivered in one 40-billionth of a second to create the image on the Shroud of Turin. That's more energy than all power plants on earth could generate at once, and it had to be delivered with surgical precision and speed. What are we witnessing?

Not a slow resuscitation. Not a mythological fable. But something more akin to the detonation of light itself. If the Big Bang marks the origin of the universe, then Christ's resurrection was the Big Reversal—death undone, sin shattered, hope detonated into history. Jesus didn't stumble out of the tomb. He rose as a superpower. Not a political conqueror. Not a comic book figure. But the incarnation of divine energy, holiness, and glory.

The same Jesus who humbled himself in the Incarnation returned from death not as a weakened ghost but in a resurrected,

glorified, and radiating body—a power so concentrated it branded linen with an image that no machine has ever replicated.

The Resurrection: A Cosmic Superpower

The resurrection of Jesus was not a quiet whisper in a garden. It was a supernatural eruption that left evidence scorched into the very fabric of his burial shroud. Not since the Big Bang has the universe experienced such power as it did in the resurrection of the Son of God.

This was not simply a man waking from death. It was not a metaphor or a hallucination. Jesus Christ—the crucified, buried Son of God—rose up in such radiant, glorified power that the atomic structure of linen reacted. This was a power that could not be contained by the stone, the seal, or Caesar.

He rose not as a casualty of history but as its Conqueror.

He rose not as a fading figure in memory but as a Superpower—the incarnation of divine force, the fulfillment of Psalm 110:1: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”

The Shroud may be the photographic negative of the single most explosive event in the history of creation: the moment when death itself lost its sting and life eternal burst forth from a dark tomb.

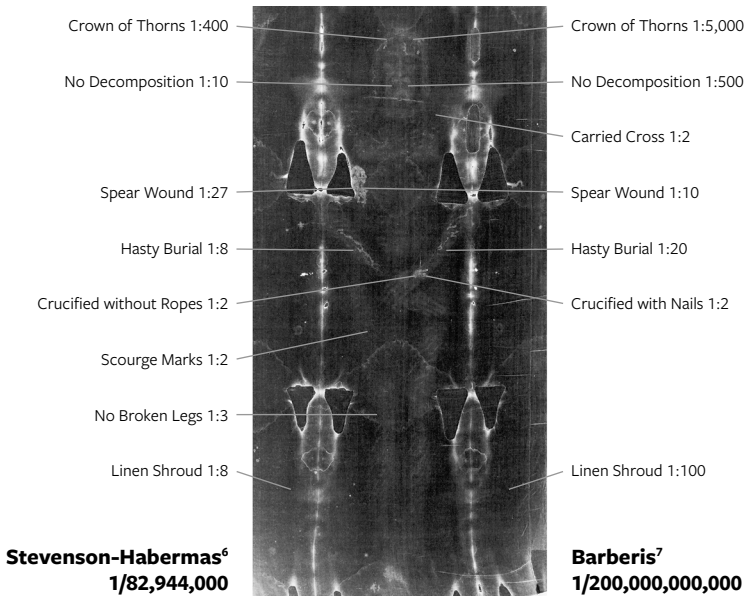
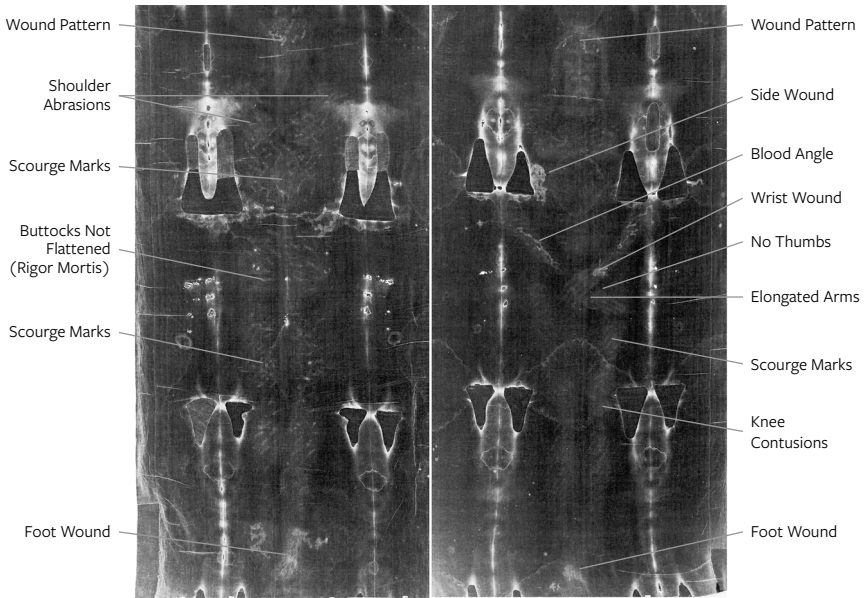
What is the probability that the man of the Shroud is anyone other than the historical and biblical Jesus? Extremely low, based on the converging historical, medical, forensic, and textual data.

- Jesus of Nazareth: Explains all the data with no special pleading
- Any other individual: Requires multiple unsupported assumptions

Historically speaking, the probability that the Man of the Shroud is someone other than Jesus is so small that it approaches zero.

Conclusion: Spiritually Profound

What science cannot do—and will not do—is measure the mystery or capture the movement of the stone rolled away. Science may



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attempt to give us the who, what, when, where, and how of the Shroud, but it can never answer the “Why?” question. Only the Scriptures can answer why Jesus rose from the grave. That answer is you. To pay for your sin. To forgive you. To have a relationship with you. To give you a “living hope” (1 Peter 1:3).

On Easter morning, Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb before 5:43 a.m., only to find the stone—estimated at 2,750 pounds—rolled away. John 20:1–8 recounts the scene with forensic clarity. Peter and the “Beloved Disciple” run to the tomb. The disciple stoops to look, Peter goes in and observes, and finally, the disciple enters, sees, and believes.

They did not see the body.

They saw only the burial cloths.

As I state in the brochure for our *Who Is the Man of the Shroud?* exhibit:

There is no compelling objection to the antiquity and authenticity of the Shroud of Turin. There is also no reason to think that the image of the man in the Shroud is anyone other than Jesus of Nazareth, who in the first century was crucified under the authority of Pontius Pilate, who was resurrected on the third day, and who appeared to Saul of Tarsus as blinding light. Given all that we know, we should conclude that the Shroud of Turin is indeed the burial shroud of Jesus and that this astounding artifact provides weighty evidence of the truth that his followers have proclaimed since that first Easter Sunday: “Jesus Christ is risen indeed!”⁸

The convergence of evidence, therefore, is not only scientifically significant but spiritually profound. If the Shroud of Turin is indeed the burial cloth of Jesus—and the evidence bears this out—then we are looking at one of the most tangible connections between archaeology, history, and the gospel message. This discovery invites us to rethink the past and take seriously the claim that Jesus of Nazareth died, was buried, and rose again.