

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The Shroud of Turin (Figure 1) is one of the most venerated, and debated, articles of the Catholic Church. There has been substantial research and investigation into its authenticity, some of which is indisputable. In regards to facts, the image on the Shroud of Turin does not consist of any known paint although it does contain the blood components hemoglobin and serum albumin and so is generally accepted to be of a man who was crucified after a Roman fashion. Furthermore, it originated from the Near East as evidenced by the analyses of the plants and pollen contained within the cloth. It is also clearly made of linen with a very distinctive herringbone (3-over-1) weave pattern that is similar to a manuscript with a dating of 1180-1195; nowhere near the first century AD. By way of comparison, a shroud from a priest in the first century contained a completely different and simpler two-way, weave.
- b) In contrast, there are a number of areas that scientists have failed to find conclusive evidence, either for or against, of the shroud's authenticity. The most well known is the Carbon-14 dating, which has been debated ever since it was performed after a ten-year delay in 1988. Legitimate concerns have been expressed over the results primarily that the samples were from portions of the Shroud of Turin that had been repaired in the 14th century or that the Shroud of Turin had been contaminated over the years by various protective enclosures, washing, and/or handling. Given the unresolved issues around the Carbon-14 dating, it cannot realistically be used by either proponents or opponents of the shroud's authenticity. While a more recent analysis estimated the date to be 300-400AC, it clearly remains a problem. There are hundreds of other areas of research that would require a whole collection of volumes to examine them all.
- c) While there is documented history from 1349 to the present, there are some indications it was in existence prior to that time including painted replicas and the dating of the weave. However, no documents, evidence, or indisputable research has been able to establish undisputed dates earlier than a few hundred years later than the death of Jesus Christ.
- d) Claims have also been made that seem to be nothing more than weak attempts to align the characteristics of the Shroud of Turin with Biblical scripture. Two cases in point stand out. The first is the questionable imagery of a spear next to the body. The image supposedly is distinct enough to be distinguished as a Roman lance used by the militia as opposed to the *hasta* (thrusting) spear used by the infantry. While this is impressive, many others question whether it is visible at all. Another case of questionable imagery is of the hundreds of plants that encircle the man's body that some dispute exist at all while others claim they can count 132 of the petals on a flower that would normally have 144 of them. Along with the imagery, researchers examined pollen and made claims it is from the Near East and interwoven in the fibers. However, one researcher later called his work "scientifically unsafe" and another disowned his own publication.
- e) Finally, how the image was formed on the cloth has been much debated but all attempts to replicate it fell short or failed entirely. Some proclaim that no known methods, ancient or modern, have been found that can fully replicate the process obviously leading to a claim of a miraculous occurrence. In this there are also many detractors.

- f) Given the above, I have avoided any disputed evidence and research and, instead, attempted to address a few areas that were, in my view, clearly in question.

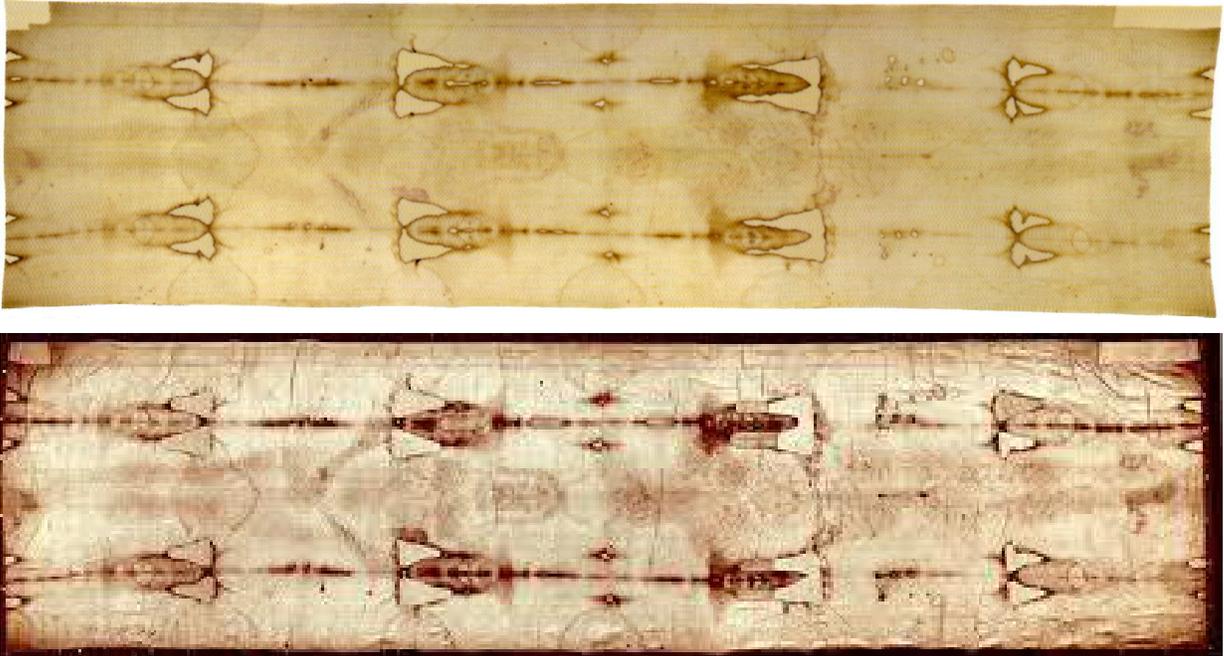


Figure 1 - Shroud of Turin: Folded over the body at the head. Original (top) and enhanced (bottom). Body is oriented front (left) and back (right).

2) CONFLICTS & DISPUTATIONS

a) The Man's Height:

i) PROMULGATIONS:

- 1) Sources list the height of the image of the man on the Shroud of Turin as being 30-35 years old, weighing about 175 pounds, and (variously) 5' 9" to over 6'0".

ii) FACTS:

- 1) The average height of Jews in the first century ranged from about 5'0" to 5'5". This estimate is so much lower it does not even come close to or overlap the height estimate based upon the shroud. The man on the Shroud of Turin would have been extremely tall for people of the time, which is contrary to scripture that describes Jesus Christ as an average man of His day:
 - a) ISAIAH 53:2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; **He has no form nor comeliness that we should look upon Him, nor beauty that we should desire Him.**
- 2) Tall men stood out. A tall man was viewed by the ancient peoples as one who was physically powerful and dominant:
 - a) 1 SAMUEL 9:2 And he had a son named Saul, young and handsome. And there was not a man among the children of Israel **more handsome than he, being taller than any of the people from his shoulder and upward.**
- 3) Jesus was so ordinary that He escaped arrest by moving through a crowd. Both Luke 4:28-30 and John 10:39 record that Jesus was able to elude His captors because He was did not stand out from the crowd.

- a) LUKE 4:28-30 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. 30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,
- b) JOHN 10:39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,
- 4) Jesus' escape in John 8:59 says He "concealed" Himself and escaped; however, this would not have been effective if Jesus was taller than the average man.
 - a) JOHN 8:59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid (concealed) himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

b) **Blood:**

i) PROMULGATIONS:

1) Excerpt from the conclusions of the Shroud of Turin research performed in 1978 (<http://www.shroud.com/78conclu.htm>):

a) "It is clear that there has been a direct contact of the Shroud with a body, which explains certain features such as scourge marks, as well as the blood (*emphasis mine*)."

ii) FACTS:

1) NOTE: While some have argued that the blood was not present at the time the Shroud of Turin was created and others claimed it wasn't real blood, the arguments herein will accept that the blood is real for the purposes of argument.

2) The Shroud of Turin shows three types of blood patterns.

a) The first are from wounds attributed to the Roman scourging (Figure 2). Blood in these areas are confined to the areas of the wound itself and show no signs of having flowed or smeared around the wounds as admitted by the investigators (see above excerpt).

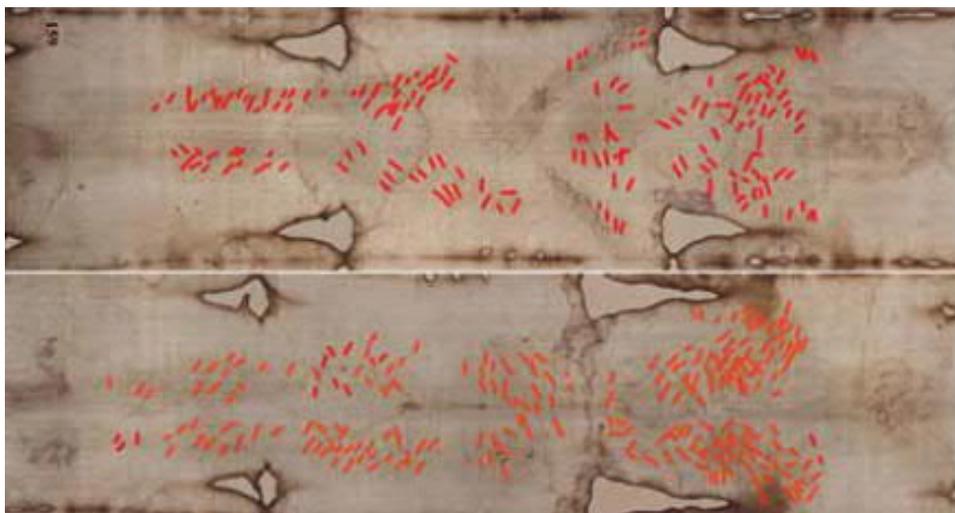


Figure 2 - Shroud of Turin: Showing front (top) and back (bottom) scourging (red) locations.

- b) The second are around the forehead ascribed to punctures from a crown of thorns. These are in the forms of spots except for one that looks like a trail of blood that runs down to the eyebrow (Figure 3).



Figure 3 - Shroud of Turin: Enlargement of face. Note large blood trail in the middle of the forehead (white).

- c) The third are large area patches of blood on the left wrist, feet, and right side. Obviously, these are believed to be due to the crucifixion spikes and subsequent impaling with a spear (Figure 4).

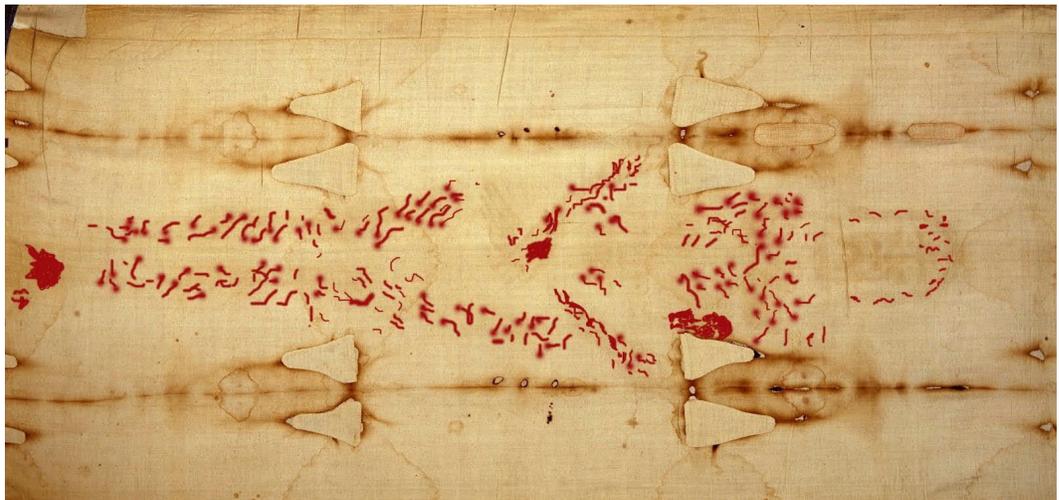


Figure 4 - Shroud of Turin: Frontal blood patterns (red).

- 3) These blood patterns project the idea that the wounds due to the scourging had clotted and were no longer oozing or bleeding; whereas the wounds due to the thorns, crucifixion, and impaling were fresher. This idea is admitted in the conclusions of the research (see above excerpt) but would be in conflict with the actual timeline of events since the order of wounding would have first been the crown of thorns followed by the scourging, crucifixion (nails into the wrists and feet), and, finally, the impalement with a spear. Therefore, the

oldest wound would have been the crown of thorns and, yet, this appears as fresh as the wounds on the left wrist, feet, and right side.

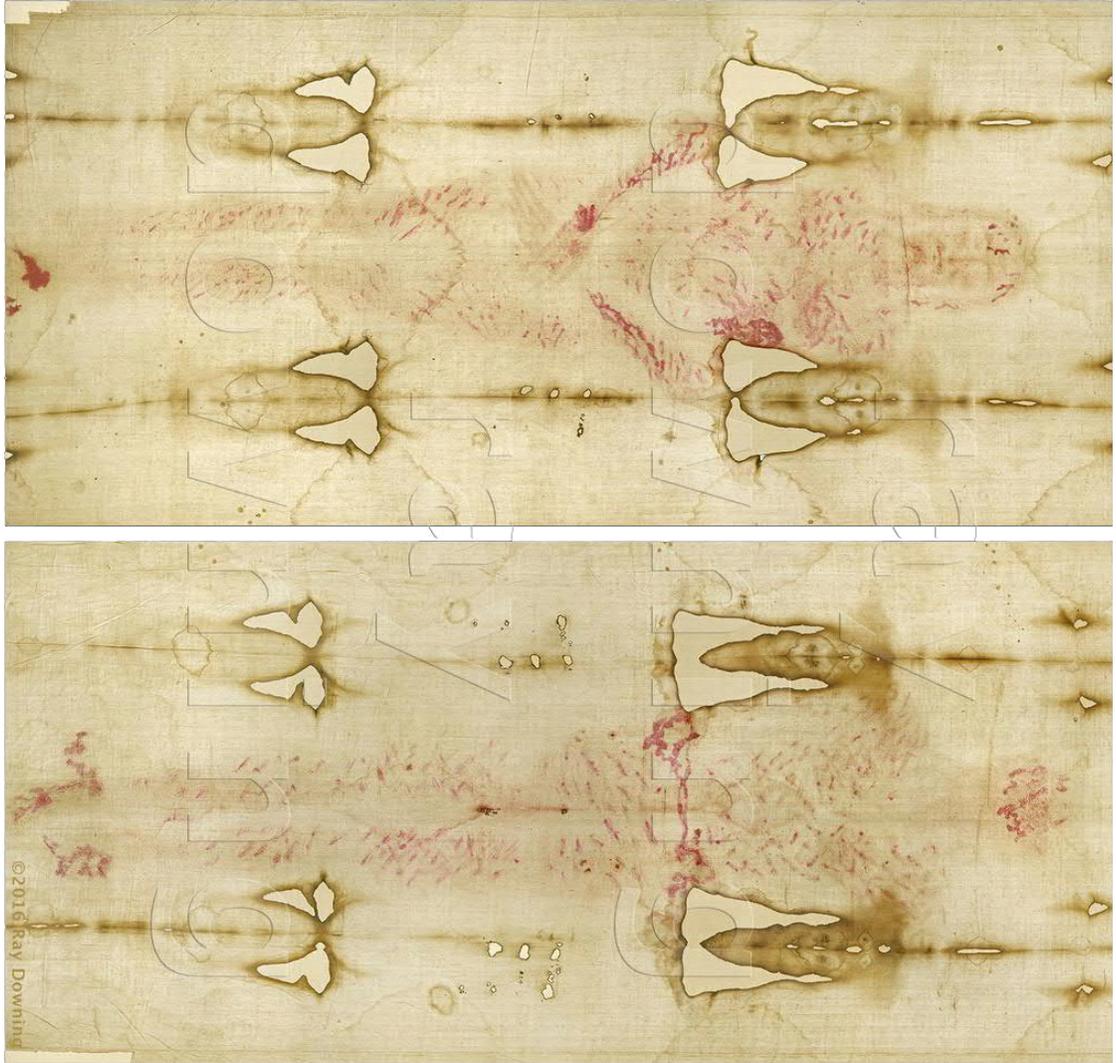


Figure 5 - Shroud of Turin: Front (top) and back (bottom) blood patterns (red).

- 4) Even though scripture does not indicate whether Jesus' body was washed prior to application of the spices and linen burial cloth, there are only two possibilities and each is in conflict with the blood images on the Shroud of Turin:
 - a) The first possibility is that the body was washed beforehand. In this case, the large areas of blood on the left wrist, feet, sides, and forehead should not be visible or it would be contained within the actual wound areas.
 - b) The second possibility is that the body was NOT washed beforehand. In this case, given that the wound on the forehead from the thorns indicated a spillage of blood, then the whole image should be bathed in blood from the myriads of punctures from the frontal scourging because none of the blood would be coagulated since the wounds from the thorns were very early on.
- 5) An area of extreme skepticism is the fact that the face shows no blood whatsoever (Figure 3). Isaiah 52:14 prophesies that Jesus was "marred more than any man". While it could be argued that "visage" includes the entirety of the body, it still cannot exclude the face. Even so, the word for "visage"

evokes, at least in modern terms, a view of one's face. Since it was completely untouched, it is unimaginable how the image on the Shroud of Turin is one of a man "marred more than any man".

a) ISAIAH 52:14 As many were astonished at thee; **his visage (H4758) was so marred more than any man, and his form (H8389) more than the sons of men:**

i) These two phrases are synthetic parallelism. *Visage* (H4758) refers to a person's face whereas *form* (H8389) can more generally include the whole body. Both translations are upheld by Isaiah 53:2 where H4758 refers to the lack of Jesus' physical beauty and that would necessarily include His face.

1) ISAIAH 53:2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; He has no **form (H8389)** nor comeliness that we should look upon Him, nor **beauty (H4758)** that we should desire Him.

6) Another issue is that the face of the image reveals the man's beard is symmetrical and full (Figure 3). If this were the face of Jesus, then there should be evidence where the tormentors plucked out His beard not only leaving gaps in the beard but also blood from the tearing away of the hair.

a) ISAIAH 50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and **my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair:** I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

7) Isaiah 50:6 also brings out that Jesus was (primarily) scourged on His back. This is a further concern for the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin since the image shows that the scourging on the man's front side almost entirely and evenly covered the front of his legs, arms, and upper torso; therefore, the frontal scourging must have been deliberate, which would contradict scripture. While it is possible that the scourging could have unintentionally inflicted wounds on the front side, it is still an unresolved conflict between scripture and the Shroud of Turin image. If they were unintentional, then why are the front-side wounds so symmetrical? If it was intentional, then why are there no wounds on the man's face and abdomen?

a) ISAIAH 50:6 I **gave my back to the smiters,** and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

c) **Linen Burial Cloth:**

i) **PROMULGATIONS:**

1) The image on the Shroud of Turin includes the front and back sides of a crucified man.

2) Excerpt from the conclusions of the Shroud of Turin research performed in 1978 (<http://www.shroud.com/78conclu.htm>):

a) "However, while this type of contact might explain some of the features of the torso, **it is totally incapable of explaining the image of the face with the high resolution that has been amply demonstrated by photography.**"

ii) FACTS:

- 1) The above excerpt is obviously attributing the facial features to the miraculous imprinting at the time of the resurrection; however, it would be miraculous indeed if the high resolution was limited solely to the man's face.
- 2) Four scriptures mention the burial of Jesus and each one uses a different verb to describe how the burial cloth was applied to His body. While Matthew and Mark use related verbs, there are three distinct verbs among them that all indicate that the body of Jesus was deliberately entwined, enwrapped, or bound wherein the cloth contacted His whole body of instead of being underneath and draped or laid on top. There can be no question that the cloth completely encircled Jesus' body and was not merely laid or draped over it.
 - a) MATTHEW 27:59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he **wrapped (G1794)** it in a clean linen cloth,
 - b) MARK 15:46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and **wrapped (G1750)** him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.
 - c) LUKE 23:53 And he took it down, and **wrapped (G1794)** it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.
 - d) JOHN 19:40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and **wound (G1210)** it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.
- 3) It is indisputable that the Shroud of Turin bears imagery of a body that had been wrapped in it. The image clearly shows the front and back of the man; however, there is no imagery of the SIDES of the body. The fact that ONLY the front and back are visible is highly unlikely given that the head and knees were not in line with the torso. For that to occur, the wrap would have to be tight around the legs to ensure that the imprint of the back of the legs would be visible. Since the front and back are complete and uniform with no gaps, how is it possible that the SIDES of the body are nowhere to be seen if the shroud was wrapped tightly enough to ensure an even imprint of both the front and back? On the other hand, if the wrap was loosely draped over the front of the body, how is it possible that the back side was imaged at all?
- 4) Additionally, the man's hair looks as if it was hanging in a natural state, i.e., as if he were standing or vertical. Given that the body was clearly horizontal at the time of the resurrection, the hair should have been both falling away from the face or been pressed against the head due to the wrapping of the cloth.
 - a) While most indications are that the men of the first century Near East actually had short hair in keeping with the Roman tradition, it could be argued that it had been some time since Jesus last cut His hair. Even so, part of the burial tradition was to trim the hair of the deceased prior to wrapping the body in the burial cloth. Therefore, it is unlikely that Jesus Christ would have had long hair either due to the style of the Roman culture or it would have been trimmed just prior to burial.
 - i) NOTE: There is no evidence or tradition for intervals between haircuts in ancient times. The Bible only mentions Absalom, the son of David (2 Samuel 14:25-26) who had his hair cut once a year.

- 5) Another major concern with the idea that the Shroud of Turin was used to cover Jesus is that the image actually shows a face in startling detail. Scripture clearly testifies that a separate napkin was used to cover the face of a dead person. Scripture clearly states that one was used on both Lazarus and Jesus. At the very least, the face of the image on the Shroud of Turin should be less distinct than the rest of the image if not completely missing; however, the clarity of the facial details exceed all the rest of the image so there is no evidence a napkin was present on the man's body.
- a) JOHN 11:44 And he (*Lazarus*) that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and **his face was bound about with a napkin**. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.
 - b) JOHN 20:7 And **the napkin (G4676), that was about his head**, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.
 - i) NAPKIN = G4676; a sudarium (sweat-cloth), i.e. towel (for wiping the perspiration from the face, or binding the face of a corpse). Of Latin origin.
- 6) Similar to the face, the first century burial traditions included binding the wrists and ankles with strips of cloth to keep them together. This is further confirmed in John 11:44. Again, there is no evidence of any bindings in the image on the Shroud of Turin. Quite the contrary, the wrists and ankles are not only as clear as other parts of the body but have large, obvious bloodstains. Bindings on the wrists would have surely prevented the blood on the wrists from appearing in the image at all.
- a) JOHN 11:44 And he (*Lazarus*) that was dead came forth, **bound hand and foot with graveclothes**: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.
- d) **Crucifixion:**
- i) PROMULGATIONS:
 - 1) The Shroud of Turin shows a man that was crucified with wounds indicated on the left wrist (the right hand is covered by the man's left hand) and feet. Specifically, the wound in the left wrist was in or near the ulna/radial bones, which is in accordance with accepted evidence of crucifixions. The wounds on the feet show the nails were through the tops.
 - ii) FACTS:
 - 1) Archaeological evidence has now substantiated that crucifixions at the time of Jesus Christ involved nails driven through the ulna/radial bones of the wrists as well as through the SIDES of the ankles.
 - a) WRISTS: Bones of one man, named Johanan, living ca. 50-70AD were unearthed that showed that "at the wrist end of the forearm, a scratch mark as if from a nail was identified on the radial bone; parts of the scratch had been worn smooth from 'friction, grating and grinding between the radial bone and the nail towards the end of the crucifixion', a grim confirmation of the seesaw motion ... [that] characterized the final agonies of the Shroud man." (*The Authentication of the Turin Shroud: An Issue in Archaeological Epistemology* by William Meacham).

- b) **ANKLES:** The location of the wounds on the image of the man's feet does not coincide with the archaeological evidence. Referring again to the bones of the man named Johanan, his ankles "were riveted by a single nail with traces of wood adhering to it" (Ibid) wherein the spikes entered and exiting from the **SIDES** of the ankles (Figure 6) rather than the tops as indicated by the image on the Shroud of Turin.

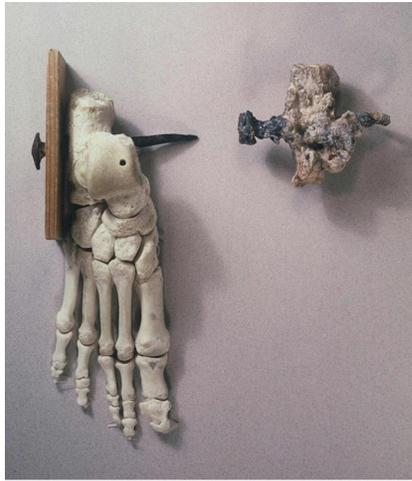


Figure 6 - Crucifixion spike through the side of an ankle bone (left) of a man living 50-70AD.

- 2) While the method of attaching a body to the cross for crucifixion surely varied somewhat over time as the Romans perfected the agony of that instrument of torture, the above archaeological evidence was within only 20-40 years of the actual occurrence. No contradicting evidence has been produced that coincides with the nail marks in the tops of the feet of the image of the Shroud of Turin and certainly none that is as timely as the Johanan man; therefore, the location of the wounds in the feet of the Shroud of Turin image are questionable. It is likely that the location of the nails in the image on the Shroud of Turin was copied from the many depictions of a crucified Jesus Christ that were extant during the time around the 14th and 15th centuries.
- e) **Rigor Mortis:**
- i) PROMULGATIONS:
- 1) Figure 8 shows the method of affixing the feet with two nails to the cross as exhibited in the image on the Shroud of Turin. One foot had a spike through the top near the ankle that would support the weight of the man while the other foot was driven by a spike through the top and into the other foot.
- ii) FACTS:
- 1) While the only archaeology evidence shows that the feet of the victim were nailed through the sides instead of the top, even if the latter method was used there is at least one significant issue. The 3D model of the Shroud of Turin shows a crucified body with rigor mortis in a state of complete rigidity that caused permanent elevation of the head and permanent angling of the legs at the knees when the shroud was placed on the body.
- 2) Rigor mortis is a process that causes gradual stiffening of the muscles during the first 8 hours, becoming completely stiff within 8-12 hours, and remaining completely stiff for 12-24 hours. After 12-36 hours, the stiffness dissipates and

the muscles become flexible once again. Since it was a full 72 hours from the time of Jesus burial and resurrection, it would be impossible for the head and legs to remain elevated as shown in the Shroud of Turin image and the resultant 3D model. Furthermore, the hands and arms, which appear to be in a natural and relaxed position, contraindicate the permanent elevation of the head and legs which can only be a result of full onset rigor mortis (completely stiff). Therefore, the head and legs of the Shroud of Turin image and 3D model disprove the flexible state that occurs with long-term rigor mortis (beyond 36 hours), which would have existed at the time of the resurrection. It also rules out the possibility that the arms could have been moved to their final location over the body if the head and legs are at the point of the full onset of rigor mortis (completely stiff).



Figure 7 - 3D image made from the Shroud of Turin.

- 3) NOTE: The 3D representation of the image in the Shroud of Turin shown in Figure 7 does not adequately depict that the feet are actually contorted into the position they must have been in (Figure 8) when they were nailed to the cross through the tops of the feet. The image itself seems to confirm the feet were in a highly contorted configuration (Figure 9), back view of crossed feet). This is another indication that the image on the Shroud of Turin was impossibly in full onset rigor mortis (completely stiff) since the resurrection was 72 hours after death.



Figure 8 - Orientation of the feet in the image on the Shroud of Turin.

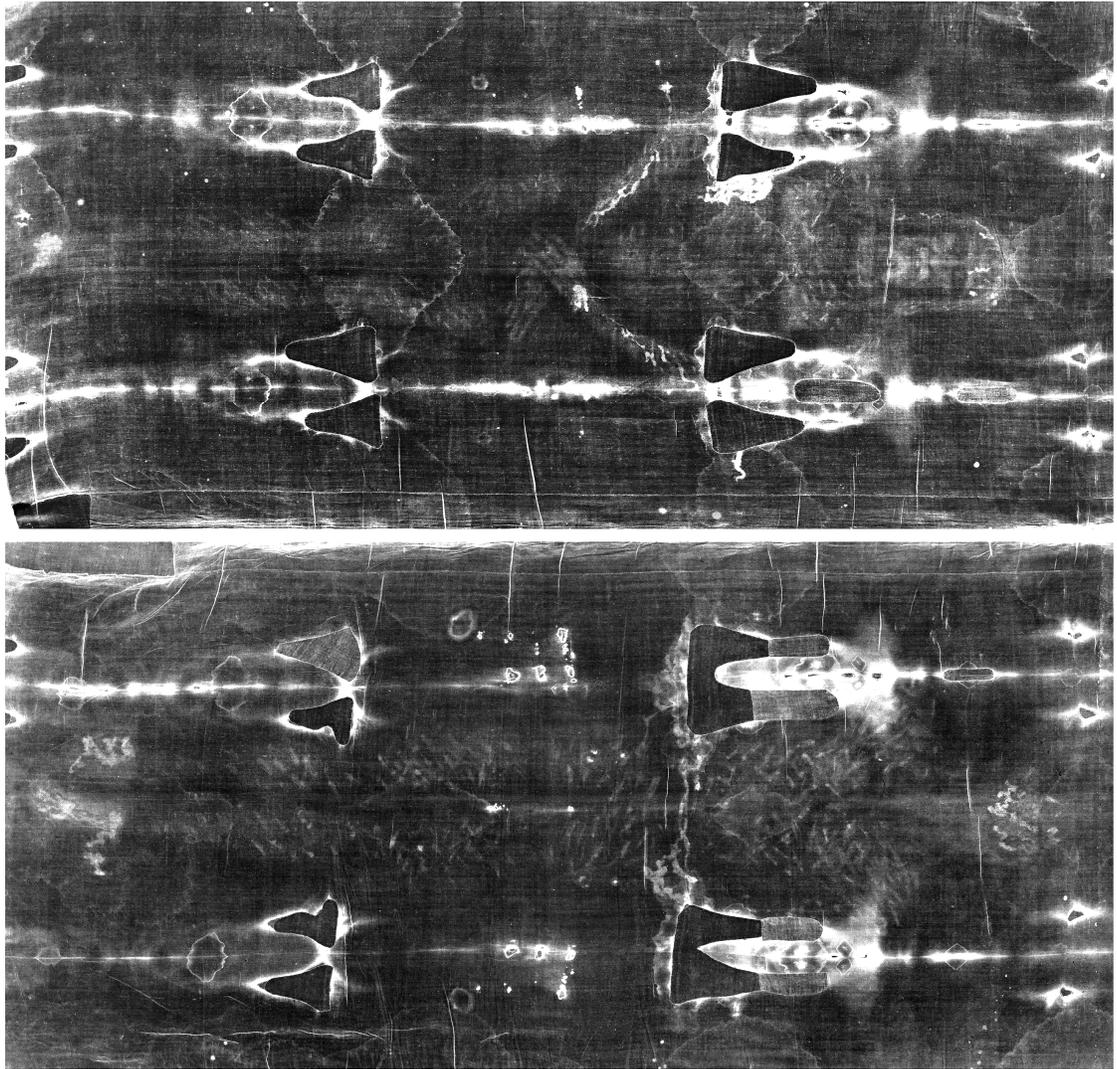


Figure 9 - Shroud of Turin: Negative. Front (top) and back (bottom). Blood appears as gray to white. Compare the relaxed position of the overlapped hands (top middle) versus the contorted position of the crossed feet (bottom left).

3) CONCLUSIONS

- a) The most striking case against the Shroud of Turin is the fact that there is not one single piece of undisputed evidence that advocates for its authenticity. There have been literally hundreds of investigations and a plethora of research applied to the shroud and, yet, none have been accepted without legitimate and intense debate even if personal bias is eliminated or, at least, taken into account.
- b) In addition, there are clearly unresolved issues when the facts are compared with the Biblical record. Even in this, there is not a single shred of evidence that can explain these obvious discrepancies other than, at best, the Shroud of Turin was used on an unknown man that was crucified (but NOT Jesus Christ) and, at worst, the Shroud of Turin was a complete forgery as believed by at least one early Catholic Bishop.
- c) Probably the most notable omission of all is that, if the Shroud of Turin had indeed covered the Christ, the disciples never wrote of an image having appearing on the cloth in the Gospels and no mention of it is contained in any other writings. The Bible only records that the disciples knew that Jesus Christ was resurrected upon seeing the linen cloth, after which they left it behind when they went to inform the others. Surely, if

such an image had been visible on the burial cloth, the disciples would have taken it not only to preserve it as evidence but to show to the other disciples. Instead, they looked inside the tomb, saw the burial clothes, and then ran back to tell the others. The most obvious reason for this is that the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus was not an image on the burial cloth but that the burial cloth was still in the original wrapped condition, but minus the body. Stated another way, the disciples saw that the burial wrapping remained positioned exactly as if it still entwined the body of Jesus but had collapsed upon itself after Jesus' body had vanished from within it. If they had tried to move the burial clothes, the evidence would have been ruined as it would have been loose enough to fall apart without a body to support it. If it bore the image of Christ, then moving it would not have been an issue because that was sufficient evidence by itself.

- d) Finally, consider the impact if an image of Jesus Christ was visible upon the burial clothes from the perspective of the Jewish authorities. Upon its discovery, the response by Jewish authorities would had to be much more than just bribing Pilate's Roman soldiers for their silence (Matthew 28:11-15). Instead, they would also have had to eliminate the evidence by DESTROYING the burial clothes with the image so this means that the Shroud of Turin would truly be a forgery. Even if the Jewish authorities decided to instead hide the burial clothes, word of the image on the burial clothes would have gotten out and been told far and wide (at least one of the Sanhedrin was a disciple of Jesus - Mark 15:43). Whether it was destroyed or hidden, there would likely be historical evidence of the burial clothes bearing the image of Christ that would be traceable to the first century. Obviously, this has never been established even with the Shroud of Turin. The repercussion of such a historical record would also have resulted in many more "Shrouds of Turin" being forged over the centuries for profit. While there are several painted replicas that were accepted as such, there does not exist any other shrouds that are revered as much as the one kept in the Cathedral in Turin, Italy.
- i) MATTHEW 28:11-15 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch (Roman guards) came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. 12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, 13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him [away] while we slept. 14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. 15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.
- ii) MARK 15:43 Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counselor (member of the Sanhedrin), which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.
- e) While there will always be arguments for and against the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin from extremists and those with biased viewpoints, the evidence strongly suggests that it is a fake.