

The Shroud of Turin

For years people have wondered if the famous Shroud of Turin is the one that was used to wrap the body of Jesus. Fortunately, the Bible provides us with an answer. For those who have never heard of the Shroud, here are a few quotes describing it. This is from the official Shroud of Turin website (<http://www.shroud.com/>):

The Shroud of Turin is a centuries old linen cloth that bears the image of a crucified man. A man that millions believe to be Jesus of Nazareth. Is it really the cloth that wrapped his crucified body, or is it simply a medieval forgery, a hoax perpetrated by some clever artist? Modern science has completed hundreds of thousands of hours of detailed study and intense research on the Shroud. It is, in fact, the single most studied artifact in human history, and we know more about it today than we ever have before. And yet, the controversy still rages.

This is what Wikipedia has to say about it (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shroud_of_Turin):

The Shroud of Turin (or Turin Shroud) is a linen cloth bearing the image of a man who appears to have suffered physical trauma in a manner consistent with crucifixion. It is kept in the royal chapel of the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Turin, northern Italy. The origins of the shroud and its image are the subject of intense debate among scientists, theologians, historians and researchers.

Some contend that the shroud is the cloth placed on the body of Jesus Christ at the time of his burial, and that the face image is the Holy Face of Jesus. Others contend that the artifact postdates the Crucifixion of Jesus by more than a millennium. Both sides of the argument use science and historical documents to make their case.

The image on the shroud is much clearer in black-and-white negative than in its natural sepia color. The striking negative image was first observed on the evening of May 28, 1898, on the reverse photographic plate of amateur photographer Secondo Pia, who was allowed to photograph it while it was being exhibited in the Turin Cathedral. The Catholic Church has neither formally endorsed nor rejected the shroud, but in 1958 Pope Pius XII approved of the image in association with the Roman Catholic devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus.

Most probably, the Shroud of Turin is the single, most studied artifact in human history. In 1978 a detailed examination was carried out by a team of American scientists called STURP. It found no reliable evidences of forgery. STURP called the question of how the image was formed "a mystery." In 1988 a radiocarbon dating test was performed on small samples of the shroud, concluding that they date from the Middle Ages, between 1260 CE and 1390 CE. Controversy has arisen over the reliability of the test.

As Wikipedia says, it is possible to get an image off of the Shroud – an image of a bearded man. Is this face of Christ?

According to the Bible, **the answer is no**. The Shroud cannot be the one that Christ was buried in because it does not match the shroud that is described in the Bible. For example, look at this passage from John:

John 20:6: “Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie,
7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.”

If you do a search for the Shroud of Turin (or even just visit the Wikipedia page) you'll see that the Shroud is **a single piece of cloth that covered an entire body from head to toe**. However, the shroud described in the Bible is **not** a single piece of cloth. Instead it is described as having two pieces: there was the linen cloth that covered the body, and a napkin that covered the head. These two pieces were actually found in different places when the disciples discovered that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead. Therefore, since the Shroud of Turin is a single piece of cloth, and the shroud used to bury Christ was a two-piece set, the Shroud of Turin cannot be the one described in the Bible.

Some may argue that the shroud John speaks of in verse 6 was a head-to-toe shroud, and the napkin was inside the shroud covering the head. If that was the case then the face of Christ would have been marked on the napkin and *not* the shroud, since His face never touched the shroud. (After all, John 20:7 clearly says that the napkin had been “about his head.”) But if you look at the image of the Shroud of Turin you can see a face on it, suggesting that it was directly in contact with the face of the person who was buried within it.

In my opinion this provides very good evidence that the Shroud of Turn was not the one that Jesus was buried in. Now, it may or may not be a genuine burial shroud and it may or may not date to the time of Christ; I cannot address any of that. What I *do* know is that John 20:6-7 strongly argues that it was not the one that was used by Jesus.