

SHROUD ENCOUNTER--Program Overview

Program is 90 minutes long with a ten-minute break in the middle. Over 200 animated images on the big screen illustrating every facet. Frequently scheduled for Saturday evening or Sunday afternoon (or both).

Topics Covered:

What is the Shroud? Front and back images observed. All markings are identified, i.e. bloodstains, burn marks from 1532 fire and water stain patterns from when the fire was doused.

What does the Scripture say? All four gospels mention the shroud but no reference to an image. Hidden for a reason? How far back in time does this tradition go? All the way to the Sixth Century!

What about strips of linen mentioned in John's gospel? Comparison with synoptic gospels and Jewish burial practices circa first century. Complete correlation.

Is the Shroud merely a pious fraud or the most significant artifact on the planet?

The role of science. The Shroud can never be proven absolutely—no DNA of Jesus to make a match. However, science CAN prove what it is NOT...

1978: Shroud of Turin Research Project Inc: Nearly 40 American scientists had hands-on access to the cloth for five days and nights. Multitude of tests. Primary conclusion: *The Shroud is not the work of an artist and bloodstains test positive for hemoglobin and serum albumin.*

Core attributes of the Shroud image and corresponding bloodstains: Blood penetrates the cloth; the image is purely superficial residing on only top two microfibers composing the threads. No trace of paint, ink, pigment, stain or dye. No image under the blood indicating blood was on the cloth first followed by the image. Bloodstains show the evidence of gravity—man was in an upright position when wounds occurred. Bloodstains show a serum contraction ring indicating the blood had clotted and emanated from actual wounds. Ring does not occur with “painted” blood.

Negative image—discovered in 1898 after first photograph revealed many more details not seen in the natural image.

3D image characteristics discovered in 1976—demonstrates the image contains distance information that correlates with the cloth having wrapped a body.

Is it the work of an artist? No artist is named, and no artistic process has been determined.

1988 Carbon dating: 1260-1390. Does not fit with the facts. What might have gone wrong? Only one sample used from the outside corner edge—most handled—most contaminated section and most likely repaired. Different theories are explored.

Historical trail demonstrates a much older origin. Historical trail indicates a mysterious cloth with an image of Jesus arrived in Edessa (now Urfa, Turkey) circa first century—and was a source of healing for King Abgar V. Persecution caused the cloth to be hidden away inside a niche above the west gate of city around 57AD. Forgotten for 400 years until rediscovered in 525 AD after a flood required the rebuilding of the wall. It was two hundred years past Constantine—safe to be a Christian—cloth and image become known as “*The True Likeness of Christ*” and described as “*The image not made by human hands.*” The Shroud image became the genesis for all Orthodox/Byzantine icons of Christ featuring long hair, full beard, large eyes and flattened nose. Exact features of Shroud image were carved into a coin mold from 692 AD. Cloth taken to Constantinople in 944 and stolen in 1204 by the French during the 4th Crusade. Shroud reappeared in Lirey, France in 1356 from where the trail is fully documented until today.

What other evidence can support this trail? Pollen evidence shows the cloth was in Jerusalem at some point in history. Limestone particles match the hills and tombs of the Holy Land. DNA fragments shows it was handled by people of middle east origin.

Crucifixion explored in depth. Could it be Jesus? No DNA to match but a comparison of the Shroud with the gospel leaves no mistaken identity: Crown of thorns, bruises on the face, abrasions on the back, scourge marks all over the body from neck to ankles, nail wounds in the wrists and feet, wound in the side.

What happened to Jesus in the tomb? No eyewitnesses—must be inferred from other scriptures. Mount of Transfiguration and Paul’s Damascus Road encounter both involve brilliant light. Latest image research from 2011 published in a peer reviewed journal demonstrates how a micro-burst of light from a UV high power laser achieves the same coloration seen on the Shroud and the same depth—only 1-2 microns. This perfectly correlates with Paul’s description in First Corinthians 15:52 as an event lasting no longer than the “twinkling of an eye.”

If the Shroud is authentic, what is the message? Doubting Thomas is the answer. Perhaps God in his mercy has preserved the Shroud over the centuries, revealed it in the 20th Century through modern science precisely for the 21st century at a time when *we communicate more with images than we do with words*. Perhaps the Shroud offers most everyone on the planet through photography and the internet the same opportunity he gave Thomas—to see and believe. Jesus pronounced a blessing on those who can believe without seeing, but He did not condemn Thomas for his unbelief. Perhaps the Shroud is a silent witness to the resurrection pointing the world in the right direction.

The program ends with an explanation of the “Receipt” concept. This is a powerful principle based on what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross. We have been “bought”, “purchased”, “redeemed” and “ransomed”. They are all words of transaction. There must be a record of the transaction. Could the Shroud be a receipt? A proof of purchase?

See sample “receipt” handout everyone receives at the end of the program.