

PED Response to Carl S. Sweatman, PhD
April 17, 2017 – LinkedIn Posting

First of all, and most adamantly, I do not dispute Holy Scripture whatsoever; as I believe that Scripture is the absolute inerrant Word of God. I also believe one must keep things in proper context by reviewing the different available *versions* of Scripture. Someone with your credentials should know this. It is not prudent to select two verses of Scripture in an attempt to disprove something based solely on one's interpretation of the verbiage used. "Text without Context is Pretext."

Further, I am definitely not trying to "overturn" or "correct" any Scriptural passages, as you wrote. As a student of Scripture, you are certainly aware of the many different versions of Scripture and how a later version may have changed quite drastically or subtly in its word usage from its original Greek and Hebrew; thus, sometimes providing ambiguity between versions. My personally preferred version is the King James Version, which uses "linen clothes" and "napkin", instead of "strips" and "napkin" in the referenced verses. But, I have read other versions as well and can see how, without reading in proper context, it could possibly lead to confusion or ambiguity. This happens all too often.

Hence, my only objection is with Robert's oversimplified declaration that the Shroud is a hoax based on his presentation of two selected verses to bolster his argument. I could present the opposite stance by using the above-stated KJV verses and words. However, other versions must also be collectively considered to obtain a clearer picture, as they are referring *generally* to the same thing, i.e., the fact that the Body of Jesus was wrapped or enveloped in a fine linen cloth, with strips, and placed in a tomb. Just like reading the various Synoptic Gospels, one quickly realizes the writers emphasized certain topics, or may not have discussed them at all. So, too, it is with the various *versions* of Holy Scripture. It is often said that one can find a verse in Scripture to support any argument one makes. However, we both know that using such a method is pretext and insufficient for valid reasoning. Regarding the Shroud, one cannot simply dismiss something, with pretext, which is otherwise so strongly supported.

The Shroud, as a historical object and the traditional burial cloth of Jesus Christ, is one of, or possibly, "the most studied object in human history!" The visible wounds of scourging, the spear thrust, the Crown of Thorn wounds, wrist wounds, etc., are consistent in every way with the Scriptural depictions of Crucifixion of Jesus. That is what I mean when I say it is "fully supported by Scripture." Further, the Shroud does not in any way contradict any part of Scripture; but rather, graphically displays what is written in Scripture. The Shroud Image itself bears the remarkable characteristics of a "photographic negative", wherein the lights and darks are reversed from normal. And, since it has been under constant observation since the mid-1300's, that also means it precedes photography by about 500 years! Even state-of-the-art technology, as well as some of the most eminent scholars, scientists and advanced laboratories in the world

cannot reproduce its unique Image, nor can any of its skeptics! Also, numerous pollen grains of flowers from the general environs of Jerusalem, among other sites of the Shroud's travel, have been discovered on the Shroud. Most of the flowers listed only bloom during March and April, or the Lenten Season.

The burial cloth of Jesus was also consistent with ancient Jewish burial practices. One renowned Shroud scholar, Dr. John Jackson, astro-physicist, led the team of scientists which conducted a "hands-on" examination of the Shroud in 1978. Jackson has hypothesized that a strip was removed from the Shroud and used to wrap and bind the Shroud to the Corpse for entombment; and later, was re-attached to the Shroud. I and many others find this hypothesis very plausible.

There are voluminous data and resources available on the Shroud, including numerous documentaries, websites, articles, etc.; and, as of today, even Amazon.com has listed over 964 available books on the Shroud of Turin. Two of my favorite comprehensive websites are listed below:

- www.shroud.com
- www.shrouduniversity.com
- Also, a good article by Greek scholar, Diana Fulbright, provides some related material on the clothes left in the tomb, i.e., the topic at hand, and is available at: <http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/n62part7.pdf>

I am also *not* ignoring, as you alleged, the word, *othonion*, (οθονιον), a Greek word which has often been used to refer to the fine linen clothes and bandages used for burial and which were present in the tomb. It is well known in Shroud studies. Perhaps, a study of the word and its various meanings could illustrate that we are both talking about the same thing; in essence, and that semantics or word choice has possibly and slightly changed its original meaning. Fulbright's article above is worth reading.

Ironically, the poster to which Robert reacted is actually about my book, *The Keramion, Lost and Found: A Journey to the Face of God*. The book chronicles the remarkable discovery of a small mosaic which served as "the prototypic model of numerous, ancient classical depictions of Jesus Christ." The mosaic was forensically associated with several late AD1st or early AD2nd Century and later paintings of Jesus Christ, which were so identified by the presence of the Christogram, "IC-XC", meaning Jesus Christ. The forensic comparisons utilized the presence of individual characteristics, or unique features, present on both images. The mosaic was found in the museum depots of the city where the Shroud had reportedly been kept for over 900 years. The mosaic is derived from the Shroud! It was also concluded to be the historical *Keramion*, or ceramic which was ceremoniously displayed over the gate through which St. Thaddaeus carried the Cloth of Edessa (Shroud) to King Abgar V circa AD30. To even be considered authentic, the Shroud must be associated to the First Century AND to Jesus Christ. This book does just that, and much more!

Again, please note, my sole objection is with Robert's oversimplified and declared denouncement of the Shroud; and certainly not with Scripture. "Every man has a right to his own opinion, but no man has a right to be wrong in his facts."* There is much available material to study should one desire to do so. I have studied the Shroud since 1973 and have conducted independent research on various aspects of the Shroud, Related Relics and Sacred Art since 2000. And, thankfully, I am still learning while on my journey. My website is located at: www.keramion502.com.

Let us all continue to rejoice in the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! He is Risen... and His Holy Blood and Image remain today on the unique and mysterious cloth known as the Shroud of Turin. *HalleluYah!*

An ancient prayer.

From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth,
From the laziness that is content with half-truth,
From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
God of Truth, deliver us.

Phil Dayvault

* Bernard M. Baruch