“He Saw and Believed!”

Is the Shroud of Turin in the Background of John’s Resurrection Narrative?

(John 20:1-10)

By Larry Stalley

ABSTRACT

The author of the Fourth Gospel spends ten verses telling the opening story about what the disciples first discovered on the morning of the Resurrection. Much of that narrative focuses on the funeral linens left behind in the empty tomb. Concerning those linens, we are told that the apostle John “saw and believed.” This paper will analyze this passage and strive to discern what exactly the writer intended for his readers to understand. Since this author believes the scientific and historical evidence for the Shroud of Turin is more than enough to conclude it is the authentic burial cloth of Jesus, he will explore the possibility of this text being a veiled reference to that Shroud.

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. 2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” 3 So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. 4 The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; 5 and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. 6 And

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so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

1. INTRODUCTION

What is so important about the “grave clothes” in John’s Gospel that they become the focal point of the empty tomb on the morning of the Resurrection? Specifically, four verses (vv. 5-8) are focused on the “linen wrappings” (τὰ θόνια) and the “face cloth” (σουδάριον).

Of note, it was something about the burial linens that gave birth to faith in the Resurrection for “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (the likely author of this Gospel). Whereas Paul wrote that “faith comes by hearing,” for that disciple faith came by seeing: “He saw and believed” (v. 8). [Traditionally that disciple has been identified with being the apostle John. We will accept that understanding in this paper.]

2. Textual Analysis

It is difficult to discern exactly what John is attempting to tell us about the grave clothes that caused him to believe Jesus had risen from the dead. The accomplished Greek scholar, A. T. Robinson, wrote of this text: “The Greek is in fact extraordinarily elusive, considering the significance that the evangelist evidently attached to the detail. His

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5 John 20.1-10 (NASB 1995)
6 Due to the plural noun, “linen wrappings,” found here in the account of the Fourth Gospel, John Calvin rejected the idea that the Shroud of Turin might actually be the authentic burial “cloth” of Jesus. But the plural noun here should not cause a problem because (1) all three synoptic Gospels mention the single cloth (σινδών); (2) the plural noun could simply be referring to other “funeral linens” that were involved in the burial process—such as a head band, a face cloth, and thin strips used to wrap the feet and upper body once the corpse had been placed inside the long, single cloth (σινδών); and (3) Luke uses the same plural noun (τὰ θόνια), “funeral linens,” in his account of the Resurrection (24.12) after earlier speaking of the singular burial cloth (σινδών) or shroud (23.53). Likely this plural noun in Luke 23.53 is intended to include all the funeral or “linen wrappings” used in the burial process. Apparently τὰ θόνια refers collectively to several cloths of various sizes. John uses a different word, κειρία, in describing the grave clothes of Lazarus (11.44). Carson describes that earlier burial in this manner: “The corpse was customarily laid on a sheet of linen, wide enough to envelop the body completely and more than twice the length of the corpse. The body was so placed on the sheet that the feet were at one end, and then the sheet was drawn over the head and back down to the feet. The feet were bound at the ankles, and the arms were tied to the body with linen strips…. Jesus’ body was apparently prepared for burial in the same way (cf. 19.40; 20.5, 7).” D. A. Carson, The Gospel according to John. Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991) 418-19.
7 Rom 10.17
expressions are so loose ...”⁸ There are questions we can be asking of this text that, unfortunately, cannot be answered with absolute certainty.

It is not my purpose to evaluate all the possible interpretations of this passage.⁹,¹⁰ Instead, I propose a rather simple conclusion drawn (1) from the text itself and (2) from

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⁹ It is quite possible to make the matter overly complex and, thereby, confusing. This is particularly true regarding the options possible when interpreting the “face cloth” and its relationship to the earlier face cloth in the story of Lazarus (11.44). “Face cloth,” οὐσικάριον (soudarion), is derived from Latin and goes back to the word “sweat.” It was commonly used for a handkerchief, or a cloth for wiping the perspiration from the face. [See Luke 19.20 and Acts 19.12. Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.) 581.] Even so, the Old Testament mentions how Ruth was asleep at the feet of Boaz, wrapped in a “cloak” (NASB) in which, the next morning, Boaz put six measures of barley. The Hebrew word is rare and unclear, but “it appears to have been a large cloth” since it held six measures of barley. [Robert L. Alden, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997) 2:928.] The Targum pseudo-Jonathan uses the Aramaic soudara here for this cloth of Ruth into which Boaz put six measures of barley (Ruth 3.15). That would seem to be a larger cloth than a mere handkerchief. [Guerrera, *The Shroud of Turin: A Case for Authenticity* (Charlotte, NC: TAN Books, 2001) 32.] Furthermore, the Greek word used in the Lazarus story for “face” (όψις) can also mean “outward appearance.” That latter meaning is best for John’s earlier usage of the word (7.44): “Do not judge according to appearance (όψις).

Is John telling us that the soudarion wrapped the “outward appearance” of Lazarus? [W. Bauer, W.F. Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957) 606.] Thus, the unlikely case could be made that John is using soudarion (σουδάριον) for the sindon (σινδών)—the Shroud—of the Synoptic Gospels. While there is a degree of ambiguity, this writer is inclined to understand the term, σουδάριον, as used by John, for being the face cloth and not the Shroud. Two factors seem compelling in that regard: (1) σουδάριον is normally understood as a face cloth, or handkerchief, and (2) John clearly states “the soudarion had been upon (ἐπὶ) his head” (τὸ σουδάριον, ῃ ἔν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ). [Yet, to make the matter more confusing, even though ἐπὶ normally means “upon,” in Homer’s Iliad we do find ἐπὶ ἰφιδάμαντι for “over the body of Iphidamas” (Iliad 11.261; cf. 4:470).] Henry George Liddel and Robert Scott, ἐπὶ, in *A Greek-English Lexicon*, accessed August 1, 2019, [http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?q=%E1%BC%90%CF%80%E1%BD%B6&la=greek#lexicon.](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?q=%E1%BC%90%CF%80%E1%BD%B6&la=greek#lexicon.)

My own view is that the burial Shroud is included in “the funeral linens” (τὰ θόνια) (cf. Lk 23.53 & 24.12), but I could be mistaken.

¹⁰ Not only is there a degree of uncertainty regarding the “face cloth” (soudarion/σουδάριον), the exact identity of the “funeral linens” (τὰ οθόνια) is also uncertain. Why does John fail to mention the Shroud (sindon/σινδών) itself that we find mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels. Is the answer because (1) it is to be understood as being included in the “funeral linens” (τὰ θόνια)? That has become the prevalent understanding (cf. fn 6 above). Or (2) is its absence because Jesus (or thieves) had taken the Shroud with Him and, therefore, it was missing in the tomb along with His body? Luke’s narrative (23.53; 24.12) could be read in support of option # 2. In addition, support for option # 2 could also be found with the statement in the very early apocryphal work, *The Gospel According to the Hebrews*, which states, after the Resurrection: “…Now the Lord, when he had given the linen cloth to the servant of the priest, went to James and appeared to him.” [Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, 2. See Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (Christian Classics: Westminster, Maryland, 1992) 1:111.] It is commonly believed that Peter would have been “the servant of the priest,” but that conclusion is uncertain. One problem with option # 2, though, is that John used a different word in the Lazarus narrative for the “strips of linen” (κειρία) that bound his hands and feet (11.44). If John is only speaking of “linen strips”—for binding purposes—in both resurrection narratives,
clues obtained from (a) the prior story of Lazarus’ burial\textsuperscript{11} and (b) the stories immediately following this passage. Before stating my conclusion, four specific textual matters are striking and, therefore, should be noted.

To begin, John never mentions the single linen sheet, the sindōn (σινδών), that each of the Synoptic Gospels speak of Joseph of Arimathea using during the burial process. Instead John writes of Joseph and Nicodemus “\textit{binding the body of Jesus in linen cloths}”\textsuperscript{12} (othonia) (τὰ ὀθόνια). In ancient writings othonia is found for “sail-cloth” made of linen for ships, “linen-wrappings” for a mummy, “bandages” for wounds, and (in the singular form) for an “outward garment” or “cloak.”\textsuperscript{13} I suspect these “funeral linens” included the sindōn.

“Binding” is neither ἐνειλέω (as used by Mark), nor ἐντυλίσσω (as found in Matthew and Luke). Instead of “wrapped” John speaks of “binding.” This verb, δέω (deō), is frequently found in the context of binding a prisoner with chains.\textsuperscript{14} John uses the verb in Revelation for the “binding” of the dragon.\textsuperscript{15} In this sense, δέω carries the prisoner motif often associated with ἐνειλέω. Apparently we should understand from John’s account that Jesus’ body was “bound” or “tied”\textsuperscript{16} with “linen strips of cloth”\textsuperscript{17} (that is, the body was secured to the sindōn with linen strips of cloth).

\footnotesize{why the use of κεκριμένα in the story of Lazarus but an entirely different word, ὀθόνια, in the subsequent story about Jesus (20.5-7)? Furthermore, John wants us to understand the body was not stolen as Mary had concluded (v. 2) and which option # 2 could be understood to support.}

\textsuperscript{11} John 11.44
\textsuperscript{12} John 19.40
\textsuperscript{13} Moulton and Milligan, \textit{Vocabulary of the Greek Testament}, 439.
\textsuperscript{14} Cf. Mark 5.3; 6.17; Acts 12.6; 21.33.
\textsuperscript{15} Rev 20.2
\textsuperscript{16} Cf. Matt 21.2
\textsuperscript{17} Joseph Henry Thayer, tr., \textit{Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.) 439.}
Second, there is a progression of interest and insight by Peter and John concerning the funeral linens. Not readily apparent in the English translation, four different Greek verbs for “looking” or “seeing” are used by the writer in relating this story. With each verb the level of interest increases:

- John “stooping and looking in ...” (v. 5) (παρακύψας).\(^{18}\)

This verb is used to set the stage for the three different “to see” verbs that follow. Παρακύπτω means “to look at with head bowed forwards” or “to look into with the body bent.” The idea here is “to look carefully into” or “to inspect curiously.”\(^{19}\) There is something to see inside the empty tomb and to grasp its significance!

- (John) ... was “seeing” ... (v. 5) (βλέπει).\(^{20}\)

The present tense of this verb suggests an ongoing look, not simply one quick look and “It’s time to move on. Nothing to see here!” What did John see? Interestingly, in the original text we are not told what it was he saw until after the present tense participle, “lying” (κείμενα). The object of what he was “seeing,” and what was “lying,” comes at the end of the clause: the funeral linens. It is worthy of note that “lying” is in an emphatic position in the Greek syntax. In addition, the verb “lying” occurs two more times in this brief passage (vv. 5, 6, 7). This verb is especially important for what the writer is communicating.

- Peter, upon entering the tomb, was “beholding” or “observing” (θεωρεῖ)\(^{21}\) the funeral linens (v. 6).

The Expositor’s Greek Testament comments: “θεωρεῖ is probably used here in its stricter sense of seeing so as to draw conclusions.”\(^{22}\) Another resource states: “θεωρέω indicates “the careful perusal of details in the object (seen).”\(^{23}\) This verb can have the figurative meaning “to comprehend” or “to understand.”\(^{24}\)

- Finally, we are told that John entered and “he saw (εἶδεν)\(^{25}\) and believed” (v. 8).

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\(^{18}\) This is an aorist participle of παρακύπτω.

\(^{19}\) Thayer, “παρακύπτω,” Greek-English Lexicon, 484.

\(^{20}\) This verb is a present active indicative of βλέπω.

\(^{21}\) This verb is a present active indicative of θεωρέω.

\(^{22}\) Marcus Dods, The Expositor’s Greek Testament (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, n.d.) 1:862.


\(^{25}\) This verb is a 2nd-aorist active indicative of ὁράω.
Ὠράω serves well as a climax for all that has proceeded. This verb communicates the idea of “mental and spiritual perception.” It is sometimes used for the “supernatural.”

Third, we should take note of the fact that there is no object for the verb ὤραω in verse eight: “He saw and believed!” But what exactly did he see? We are not told.

- Is the absence of a specific object John’s way of tantalizing or hinting at the miraculous image which exists and that some people will later be fortunate enough to see for themselves, assisting them in coming to faith—similar to the experiential story of Thomas that will soon follow (verses 26–31)?

- Was the burial Shroud lying on the stone slab undisturbed, exactly as it had been before (bound to the corpse with a couple of thin, linen wrappings), except now lying flat—“sunken down”—without the body?

- Did the scene convey the conclusion that, somehow, the body had literally dematerialized and passed through the burial cloth to release itself from the bonds of death and imprisonment?

- “He saw and believed!” Just as the writer does not explicitly tell us what he saw, he also does not inform us what exactly it was that he “believed.” Even so, we can correctly presume he intends for his readers to understand that, based on what he saw, he came to believe in Jesus as having been raised from the dead.

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26 Bauer, Lexicon, 581–82. In explaining Isaiah’s prophecy and the people’s lack of spiritual discernment, Jesus states: “And you will keep on seeing (βλέπω), but will not perceive (ὠράω)” (Matt 13.14).

27 Ibid. For example, Matthew uses ὤραω in relating the story of the Transfiguration (Matt 17.3, 5a, 5b, 8).

28 Although an object is omitted in verse eight for the verb “to see,” the writer has not left that object in doubt. Prior to this, twice he stated what the object was: “he (John) saw the linen wrappings lying there” (v. 5) and “he (Peter) beheld the linen wrappings lying there” (v. 6).

29 The image on the Shroud of Turin is on the inside of the cloth. Therefore, it would not have been the image that the disciple saw. But omitting the object of the verb would be an effective way to cause readers who were familiar with the existence of the image to think (noncritically) of it as the object seen.

30 Perhaps that is how the writer wants us to understand the present participle of that verb which he mentions four times (vv. 5, 6, & 12). “The use of κείμαι is greatly varied.” Buchsel, “κείμαι,” in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 3:654. We are specifically told that the face cloth was not “lying” with the linen wrappings. Is the writer also telling us that the linen wrappings were “lying” differently than was the face cloth (since the face cloth had been “rolled up”)?

31 The verb δέω not only means to “tie” or “bind,” sometimes it is used of actual imprisonment (Acts 12.6; cf. 21.33). Bauer, Lexicon, 176. It is interesting that John uses δέω for the binding of Jesus with the linen wrappings (Ἐδήσην αὐτὸ ὁθνίοις (John 19.40)). Mark writes of Jesus’ body as having been “enveloped” (ἐνείλησεν) by the burial Shroud (Mark 15.46).

32 This is evident by the three subsequent stories that follow where disciples come to faith in the Resurrection upon either hearing or seeing Jesus. “Believe” is repeatedly used this way in the third story featuring Thomas. The whole chapter is about the disciples coming to believe in the Resurrection.
Fourth, not only is the identity of the “face cloth” crucial in understanding this passage, but a crux interpretum concerns what one decides to do with the perfect tense of the verb “rolled up” (ἐντετυλιγμένον) in verse seven.

In their Greek grammar, Dana and Mantey remind us that “It is best to assume that there is a reason for the perfect whenever it occurs,” rather than the use of the simple aorist tense.33 Another Greek grammarian states that, when a Biblical writer makes use of the perfect tense instead of the common past tense of the aorist, one “ought, in every case, to look for a reason for one tense being used rather than the other.” 34

What is the significance of the perfect tense? The perfect tense:

- “... denotes the continuance of completed action.” 35
- “... implies a past action and affirms an existing result.” 36

At some point in the past someone had rolled the face cloth up and put it to one side, away from the other funeral linens. Two factors are critical: (1) When did that happen? (2) Who did it? Was it Jesus after His Resurrection or someone earlier? The perfect tense informs us that the face cloth remains in that same, rolled up, state until the very present time.

In addition, John used a different word when he was describing how the face cloth had been “wrapped around” (περιεδέδτο) the face of Lazarus (11.44). Should we understand ἐντετυλιγμένον (20.7) as “folded up” or “rolled up.” If the latter, is the face cloth a jaw band that is now apart from the other linens but has retained (perfect tense) its shape? Similarly, does part of the solution to this passage lie with the funeral linens (assisted by the spices) now retaining a certain form, as if the body were still present inside but is not?37

If the writer wanted to tell us that Jesus folded or rolled up the face cloth after the Resurrection, it seems likely he would have used the aorist tense. So, what is the writer implying using the perfect tense concerning the sudarium but the present tense for the linen wrappings? The writer is telling us that the face cloth is just as it was when the body had been laid to rest. Someone at that time had folded the smaller face cloth up

37 Whitacre states: “With the body gone, the clothes were presumably collapsed, though perhaps retaining much of their shape due to the spices.” R. A. Whitacre, “John,” IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999) 4:473.
and placed it to the side. Everything is just as it was when the tomb was closed, except now the body has somehow escaped its prison, leaving the grave clothes behind but without disturbing them or unbinding them. They are “reclining” or “lying flat,” lying as the body had been (v. 12) but now absent a body.

Before we reach additional conclusions about this passage, we should consider some potential clues from the larger context.

3. CLUES FROM THE LARGER CONTEXT

3a. “Blood and water came out”

The spear wound in the side of the crucified Christ is depicted by John as being quite significant. Why? What symbolism is behind the “blood and water” that came forth from the corpse of Jesus while on the Cross?

Early in his Gospel, with the contrasting stories of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, John connected the prophecy of “living water” promised by the Jewish prophets of old with Jesus’ ministry and the giving of the Holy Spirit.

- Jesus warned Nicodemus, the male scholar who came in the darkness of night:
  - “Unless one is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God!”
  - Truly, truly, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

- Jesus offered the unlearned, peasant woman who came to Jacob’s well when the sun was at its brightest:
  - “If you knew the gift of God, … you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”
  - “Everyone who drinks of this water (i.e., Jacob’s well) shall thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life.”

38 John 19.34
39 John 3.3. “Born from above” can also be translated as “born again.” The Greek word can mean either. Nicodemus understood ἄνωθεν to be a second birth from the womb.
40 John 3.5; cf. Ezek 36.25-27; 39.29; Joel 2.28-29; Zech 12.10; 13.1
41 John 4.10; cf. Jer 2.13; 17.13
42 John 4.13; cf. Jer. 2.13b; Zech 12.10; 13.1
43 John 4.14; cf. Jer 17.13
Later in his Gospel, when mentioning the spear wound at the time of the Cross, John linked that wound with Zechariah’s prophecy: “They will look on Me whom they have pierced.”44 Interestingly, immediately before that statement in Zechariah, we find a reference to the “pouring out of the Spirit”:

“And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced…”45

Importantly, just five verses later we find this promise: “In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.”46 This prophetic statement certainly helps to explain why John looked upon the spear wound as being so important, theologically. The wound depicted the opening of that saving “fountain”!

3b. The Burial and Resurrection of Lazarus

There are two important differences about the burial and resurrection story of Lazarus that are likely clues for us in understanding the Resurrection narrative of the empty tomb.47 Throughout John’s Gospel we find layers of meanings and double meanings.48 Sometimes stories stand in contrast to each other.49 In that regard, the funeral linens concerning Jesus are unlike those of Lazarus in two important ways:

1. The face cloth is not wrapped around his head!50
2. Jesus does not need someone to “Unbind him and let him go!”51

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44 John 19.37 quoting Zech 12.10b
45 Zech 12.10
46 Zech 13.1; cf. 12.10a
48 For example, early on John writes, “... grace upon grace we have received. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ” (1.16-17). How does John develop or illustrate that truth for his readers? Consider the “signs” of Jesus in contrast to the “plagues” in Egypt that came through Moses. Whereas the first plague featured Moses turning the Nile River into blood, the first sign of Jesus featured a wedding where he turned water into wine (2.1-11). Likewise, the final plague brought the death of Pharaoh’s first-born son; but, as a final sign in the Gospel, the Father raises His only begotten Son back to life!
49 For example, the Jewish scholar Nicodemus comes in the darkness and remains in the dark about the words of Jesus (3.1-21). On the other hand, the subsequent chapter features an uneducated and sinful woman who comes to Jesus at noontime and becomes enlightened (4.1-42).
50 John 11.44
51 John 11.44
Then we have one significant clue that is repeated in each of the three stories immediately following our passage of interest. In each of the subsequent three stories there is a peculiar feature about Jesus that is new and striking: out of nowhere the Lord suddenly appears!

1. Mary is standing outside the tomb weeping. Two angels in white speak to her from inside the tomb. After she responds to them, we are told: “She turned around and beheld Jesus standing there ...”\(^{52}\) Now where did He come from?

2. “When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’”\(^{53}\)

3. “And after eight days again His disciples were inside and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, ‘Peace be with you.’”\(^{54}\)

It is time to wrap this analysis up and draw some conclusions about what John intended his readers to understand.

**4. CONCLUSIONS**

**First**, we are to understand that the body had not been stolen! Contrary to what Mary had concluded from her quick appearance at the tomb earlier in the day,\(^{55}\) the grave clothes are laying in such a way that theft of the body is ruled out. Besides, who would first unwrap the body and then take only the corpse, leaving the Shroud behind?\(^{56}\)

**Second**, no one had unwrapped the linens to set Jesus free! His glorious, resurrected body is now able to pass through shut doors. His glorious body had done the same regarding its captivity with the Shroud! His body had dematerialized and passed right through the linen. John could see how the bands of cloth used to secure the corpse to the Shroud were still tied. It is as though the body had somehow vaporized and gone right through the cloth! Now the linens are lying there entirely undisturbed in any way.

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\(^{52}\) John 20.14

\(^{53}\) John 20.19

\(^{54}\) John 20.26

\(^{55}\) John 20.2. Three times in this chapter Mary expresses her belief that Jesus’ body had been taken by grave robbers (vv. 2, 13, 15).

\(^{56}\) John certainly did not come to faith in the Resurrection by only seeing the strips of linen that had bound the corpse!
This is consistent with the typology in Hebrews where we are told that Jesus’ “flesh” went through the “inner curtain” (made of linen) of the Tabernacle and “entered the Holy of Holies.”

In chapter nine of Hebrews, the canonical author wrote how Jesus, during His High-Priestly ministry: “… (passed) through (διά) the greater and more perfect tabernacle (sacred tent) … and through (διά / perhaps here understood as “with”) His own blood, He entered the heavenly Sanctuary (τὰ ἅγια).” Then, in the very next chapter, the author built upon that teaching by asserting:

Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the heavenly Sanctuary (τῶν ἅγιων) by (έν) the blood of Jesus, (by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through (διά) the curtain), that is, by means of His flesh … let us draw near. …

Jesus—by means of His “blood” and by means of His “flesh (going) through the holy curtain”—opened “a new and living way” for us to have access to the presence of God Almighty. He took believers along with Him (cleansed and regenerated by “the water” & redeemed by “the blood”) into the heavenly presence of His Father.

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57 Heb 10.20. For more on the Shroud as a type in Hebrews, see my paper, “Early Christians Identified the Shroud with Jesus´ Priestly & Royal Robe!” at www.shroud.com. A revised version, “The Shroud of Turin Served as a Tabernacle During the High-Priestly Ministry of Jesus! (Hebrews 9:11-12),” can be found at https://www.academia.edu/42692597/The_Shroud_of_Turin_Served_as_a_Tabernacle_During_the_High -Priestly_Ministry_of_Jesus_.
58 Heb 9.11-12
59 Heb 10.19-20, 22
60 The structure of v. 20 is patterned after v. 19. The “by” (έν) preposition used in verse 19 (“by His blood”) should govern the understanding of the “through” (διά) preposition in verse 20 (“through the curtain”) as also applying to “His flesh” in an instrumental sense (i.e., “by means of”). This analogous structure in the original Greek is graphically depicted by William L. Lane, Hebrews 9-13, Word biblical Commentary (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 47b:275.
61 Jesus sacrificial death opened the “way” into the heavenly sanctuary for all believers! It is a “new” (πρόσφατος) way in the sense of being recent; it had not previously existed. It is also “new” with respect to quality as it is characterized by the freshness of the New Covenant. It is “living,” and therefore exists in the present, and is also the “way” that leads to life!
62 Cf. Rev 1.6; Eph 1.3, 20; 2.6; 1 Pet 2.5,9
• This perspective of the body dematerializing and passing through the Shroud at the time of the Resurrection also provides the best solution to John’s puzzling statement found in the last chapter of his First Epistle: \textit{This is the one who came by water and blood}...\textsuperscript{63} This traditional translation of the clause fails to provide a rationale as to why the two anarthrous nouns, along with the preposition “through” (διὰ), are immediately and repeatedly changed to nouns with the definite article, along with a different preposition “with,” “in,” or “by” (έν).

  o In another paper,\textsuperscript{64} the current author develops the thesis that a better translation and understanding of this phrase is: \textit{This is the one who passed through water and blood}.” The Greek verb ἔρχομαι commonly means “to come.” However, it can also mean “to go.” For example, in the story of the Prodigal Son we are told: \textit{He arose and went} (ἦλθεν) to his father.\textsuperscript{65} Only one other time do we find John joining together water and blood. In his Gospel he\textsuperscript{66} testifies how, at the crucifixion, a spear pierced the side of Jesus, and \textit{blood and water} came forth.\textsuperscript{67}

  Importantly, the most prominent wound visible on “the man of the cloth” is a blood-fluid (pericardial fluid?) stain on the victim’s right side. This spear wound that brought forth “blood and water” appears to be very important to John, as he states:

  ... there came out blood and water. And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.\textsuperscript{68}

  o The two passages from Hebrews discussed on the previous page provide important insights as to how the early Church viewed the burial cloth left behind in the empty tomb.\textsuperscript{69} For one thing, Jesus’ Shroud was typologically identified with the first (outer) compartment of the Tabernacle and the holy curtain that separated the two compartments. I see no reason why the Apostle John, who came to faith because of the Shroud,\textsuperscript{70} would have been ignorant of this teaching or would have

\textsuperscript{63} 1 John 5.6 (NASB)
\textsuperscript{64} See Larry Stalley, “Is the Image on the Shroud of Turin \textit{The Father’s Witness}’? (1 John 5.5-13),” at https://www.academia.edu/44010360/Is_the_Image_on_the_Shroud_of_Turin_The_Fathers_Witness_1_John_5_5_13.
\textsuperscript{65} Luke 15.20
\textsuperscript{66} The pronoun “he” in 19.35 might be in reference to the soldier rather than to the author of the Gospel.
\textsuperscript{67} John 19.34
\textsuperscript{68} John 19.34b-35
\textsuperscript{69} Cf. fn 57
\textsuperscript{70} See John 20.8
rejected it. The theology found in Hebrews supports the following understanding and translation of John’s puzzling statement in 1 John 5.6:

This is the One who passed (went) through water and blood (i.e., through the water and blood stained Shroud evidenced by the spear wound on the right side, the Shroud itself typologically equated with the inner curtain of the Tabernacle, at the time of the Resurrection), Jesus Christ; (He went through the curtain into the Heavenly Sanctuary) not with the water only (i.e., the water of regeneration) but with the water and with the blood (i.e., the blood of redemption).

The collective evidence provided by Jeremiah, Zechariah, John’s Gospel, the Letter to the Hebrews, and John’s First Epistle provide insights as to how the Apostle John understood the theology and typology behind the spear wound (i.e., “blood and water came forth”) and why he attached so much importance to it! Furthermore, John 20, Hebrews 9-10, and 1 John 5 each support the conclusion that early Christians perceived Jesus' body, in the tomb, as having dematerialized or “having gone through” the water and blood-stained Shroud at the time of His Resurrection. The typological teaching explained above developed from that understanding.

This understanding of the burial shroud in John 20:1-9 is consistent with the one scientific explanation that begins to answer how the image on the Shroud of Turin was formed (with all its inexplicable characteristics). Based on extensive scientific research over forty years, physicist John Jackson postulated the unconventional “Fall-Through Hypothesis.” He proposed the image formation involved an intense burst of ultraviolet light coming forth from a radiant body that was mechanically transparent:

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71 It is interesting and likely significant how “light” is frequently associated with both Jesus Himself (“the light of the world,” Jn 8.12) and His garments: “He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light” (Matt 17.2; cf. Rev 1.13-16). John wrote in his prologue: “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness did not overpower it” (1.4-5). The final verb of that statement is an aorist, past-tense verb (κατέλαβεν). It seeks to communicate that at one singular time in the past, darkness attempted to extinguish the light. All the forces of darkness were at work against the crucified Christ and “darkness fell over the whole land” (Luke 23.44). When Jesus’ lifeless corpse was put to rest within the darkness of the tomb, it appeared darkness had won! The light of life had been snuffed out. Or so it appeared. But then, on the third day, a flash of light suddenly burst forth from the body and Christ was resurrected! The light of life triumphed over all the forces of darkness ... and continues to shine on! See the author’s paper, “Is the Shroud of Turin Foreshadowed in the Transfiguration Story? (Matthew 17.1-9)” at https://www.academia.edu/42193514/Is_the_Shroud_of_Turin_Foreshadowed_In_the_Transfiguration_Story_Matthew_17.1-9.
I propose that, as the Shroud collapsed through the underlying body, radiation emitted from all points within that body and discolored the cloth so as to produce the observed image.\textsuperscript{72}

A third conclusion from our analysis of this passage concerns John’s statement regarding the face cloth in verse seven. Likely this cloth had been used by Joseph of Arimathea when taking the body down from the cross. Covering the victim’s face was an attempt to protect whatever privacy or dignity was left to secure. Once inside the tomb, before enveloping the corpse with the Shroud, the face cloth had been removed, rolled up, and set aside.

- Since the face cloth was not on the corpse when the Resurrection took place, it should not have an image on it like the Shroud of Turin.
- This is in keeping with the Sudarium of Oviedo, a face cloth that has been in Spain since 616 AD. Scientific tests done on both the Shroud of Turin and the Sudarium of Oviedo demonstrated that “both cloths touched the same face.”\textsuperscript{73}

Fourth, in this chapter disciples come to believe in the Resurrection by different means. At first, Mary Magdalene concluded the corpse had been moved or, perhaps, stolen. But she comes to faith only by hearing the voice of Jesus utter her name, “Mary!” She, in turn, went and announced to His disciples, “I have seen the Lord.” Yet we are not told anyone believed her testimony. Even so, within hours, Jesus bodily appears to them from behind locked doors and, consequently, they come to faith too. Yet Thomas was absent and refused to believe their testimony.

> Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”\textsuperscript{74}

Subsequently, Jesus appeared to Thomas and invited him to “Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.”\textsuperscript{75}

So, the disciples came to believe in the Resurrection in different ways. No one came to faith by means of someone else’s testimony. Mary heard Jesus’ voice; others saw Him


\textsuperscript{73} See Spitzer, “Science and the Shroud,” 16-19.

\textsuperscript{74} John 20.25

\textsuperscript{75} John 20.27
alive with their own eyes; and we are told that John, the writer himself, came to faith by observing the grave clothes left behind in the empty tomb.

**Fifth, faith was not void of evidence.** Each person who came to faith had some form of evidence to convince him or her of Jesus’ Resurrection. Today I frequently encounter objections to the authenticity of the Shroud from Reformed Evangelical Protestants who assert that we should believe in Jesus by “faith alone,” supported by “Scripture alone”! It’s as if they perceive faith and evidence to be in opposition to each other.

Several fallacies are apparently at play. (1) Evidenced-based faith, such as faith encouraged and buttressed by the image on the Shroud, is viewed as being inferior to faith unsupported by any such evidence. (2) The occasional nature of the General Epistles is neither understood nor appreciated. (3) It is assumed that the Turin Shroud, with its incredible image of the crucified Christ, is nonexistent in the New Testament.76 (4) And there is a failure in understanding that absence of evidence does not equate to evidence of absence.

Should we view faith and evidence as opposites? Are they in conflict? Is blind faith more noble than faith supported and strengthened by evidence?

Consider what the Biblical author wrote in this Gospel concerning his own birth of faith in the Risen Christ. In verse eight of our passage, we read: “He saw and believed!” And then immediately he followed that declaration with this comment: “For as yet they did not understand the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead.”77 His own faith came about due to evidence he saw firsthand regarding the burial linens, even though he did not understand at the time that the Resurrection had been foretold long beforehand in the Scriptures.

Biblical faith should not be equated with blind faith. This Gospel places an emphasis on “signs.” Jesus states: “If I do the works of My Father, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”78

Then, following the resurrection of Lazarus, we are told:

*Many therefore of the Jews, who had come to Mary and beheld what He had done, believed in Him.*79 “And so the multitude who were with Him when He

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77 John 20.9
78 John 10.37-38 (edited)
79 John 11.45
called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, were bearing Him witness. For this cause also the multitude went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign.  

No one is asked to follow Jesus blindly or irrationally. Faith void of evidence (i.e., blind faith) should never be viewed as something that is either required or as being superior to evidence-based faith. The writer of The Letter to the Hebrews was not an eyewitness or a first-generation disciple. He wrote of his conversion and coming to faith in this “great salvation” in this manner:

After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.  

Faith for him included both the spoken Word and the evidence-based confirmation of that Word by “signs and wonders and miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit.” Then, later in his Letter, he states: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The Biblical writer understood faith to be that which we have conviction concerning and the proving of what we cannot see! Personally, that describes my own belief in the Resurrection of Jesus.

Rather than being contrary to faith, my own perspective regarding the Holy Shroud views it as being “the Father’s witness concerning His Son” and the Gospel story. It is a gracious gift for faith left behind in the empty tomb. A very powerful apologetic!

Beholding the image of the crucified Christ on the Shroud can strengthen faith, but it does not replace faith! It can point to the Savior, but it will never replace the Savior! It might indeed be “the image of the invisible God,” but it is only His shadow, not Him. After beholding the image, it is still necessary to walk by faith, not by sight.

Beholding the miraculous image on the Shroud is not contrary to faith but, rather, supports both the birth and the conviction of faith! Standing alone, the image on the Shroud lacks interpretation and remains an inexplicable mystery. Thankfully, we have the Holy Scriptures to explain for us the meaning behind “the man of the cloth” and the

80 John 12:17-18
81 Hebrews 2.3-4
82 ὑπόστασις: “confidence,” “substance,” “essence,” or “reality”
83 ἔλεγχος: “proof,” “proving,” or “inner conviction”
84 Hebrews 11.1
85 1 John 5.9-10. See the author’s paper, Stalley, “The Father’s Witness,” op. cit. (fn 64).
reason behind the horrible suffering that person underwent. The miraculous image graphically illustrates how “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

In addition, the image graphically depicts the great humility and willingness of the Son to take our own punishment for sin upon Himself:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{He was pierced through for our transgressions}, \\
&\text{He was crushed for our iniquities}; \\
&\text{The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,} \\
&\text{And by His scourging we are healed...} \\
&\text{The Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.}
\end{align*}
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Here is a sixth conclusion: The subsequent story of Doubting Thomas should not be divorced from our current passage.

- Importantly, the very wounds prominent on the Turin Shroud are the same wounds Thomas is invited to inspect that he might believe.

- Furthermore, this apostle, Thomas, is present in the popular legend that arose in the early Church concerning a cloth with the image of Jesus’ face on it and its role in the conversion of King Abgar of Edessa.

- Thomas is the main character—and depicted as the identical twin of Jesus—in the early Christian apocryphal work, The Hymn of the Pearl, which centers upon the prince’s fabulous robe—“the garment of light”—that bears a full-body “image of the king of kings.”

This is one more occurrence in John’s Gospel where stories are interconnected. Why doesn’t the Gospel writer make mention of the image on the cloth? Due to the threat of persecution during the period when the New Testament documents were written, we should not be surprised that writers would be reluctant to make clear references to the miraculous image lest the Holy Shroud be hunted down, confiscated, 

\[\text{References:}\]

87 John 3.16
88 Isaiah 53.5-6
89 John 20.24-31
90 Thomas is said to be the one who, after the Ascension of Jesus, sent the disciple, Addai, to Abgar. See the “Teaching of Addai,” dated c. AD 400. George Howard, trans., The Teaching of Addai (Ann Arbor, MI: Scholars Press, 1981) 11.
92 Cf. fn 48-49
and destroyed by either religious opponents or by hostile, political authorities. As Jesus himself both warned and commanded: “Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”

A plausible inference can be made that, due to the threat of persecution and confiscation, any reference to the Shroud in the New Testament itself would be veiled. John's statement that the doors were shut for “fear of the Jews” may have had more than one intended meaning. The fear was not only for personal safety; it also pertained to the survival of the Shroud. Such secrecy would be in keeping with what would become known as “The Discipline of the Secret.”

This serves as an excellent hypothesis as to why the verb “to see” is lacking an object in verse eight. We are not told exactly what John saw that caused him to believe (presumably to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead). Technically, John would not have seen the image on the Shroud when he entered the tomb because it existed only on the inside of the cloth! Even so, the lack of an object (or clarity on the matter) was a clever way for the writer to tease the informed reader.

How did the Thomas story function for John in his Gospel?

- On the one hand, perhaps the story served as a response to those who had heard of the miraculous image and, following in the footsteps of Thomas, were saying, “I will not believe in Jesus unless I see the cloth and its image with my own eyes!”

- On the other hand, a reasonable inference can be made that many of John’s original readers were believing disciples who knew about the existence of the Shroud and its ghost-like, miraculous image. And they might hope, one day, to have the privilege of seeing it, much like Thomas got a chance to see the risen Jesus.

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93 Matthew 7.6
94 The current author has written several other papers concerning textual candidates (from the period of the early Church) that are likely “veiled references” to what we know today as the Shroud of Turin. See Stalley, “The Crucified Christ Seen by the Galatians: A Literal Context for ΠΡΟΕΓΡΑΦΗ (Galatians 3.1);” “Is the Image on the Shroud of Turin ‘the Father’s Witness’? (1 John 5.5-13);” “The Shroud of Turin Served as a Tabernacle for the High-Priestly Ministry of Jesus! (Hebrews 9.11-12; 10.19-20);” “The Image on the Turin Shroud Is “the Sign of Jonah” for Our Generation! (Matthew 12.38-42);” “Is the Shroud of Turin Foreshadowed in the Transfiguration Story? (Matthew 17.1-9);" "BRING THE CLOAK THAT I LEFT AT TROAS WITH CARPUS!” Did the Apostle Paul Make Use of a Cryptonym for the Holy Shroud? (2 Timothy 4.13);” and “Are There Veiled References to the Shroud of Turin in the New Testament?” op. cit. Most of these papers were published online at www.shroud.com. All papers are at www.academia.edu. Links to the most recent editions can be found on the author’s website: www.theincredibleshroud.com/authenticity.
Lord. Furthermore, they might believe that “seeing” the miraculous image would convey a special blessing upon them. In the Middle Ages pilgrims were promised an indulgence when they traveled to see the special relic.

John cryptically informs his readers that, in either case, while seeing the wounds of Jesus on His burial cloth might strengthen one’s faith, no special blessing of another sort will be obtained by doing so! You will not be superior to those not so privileged.

In fact, it can be said that faith apart from seeing is blessed: “Blessed are those who did not see (i.e., Me bodily raised) and yet believed.”

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96 This engraving by Antonio Tempesta (1555–1630) depicts the feast day in 1613 and illustrates the popularity of the Shroud. The picture is from an article by Charles Freeman, “The Origins of the Shroud of Turin” (2014) at Medievalist.net.  
https://www.medievalists.net/2014/10/origins-shroud-turin/

97 In the Fourth Gospel “signs” are good miracles which can give birth to faith or assist in enhancing a person’s faith in Jesus (cf. 20.30-31). For example, following the resurrection of Lazarus we are told: “...the multitude went and met Him because they heard that He had performed this sign” (John 12.18).

98 We should neither conclude from this that it is wrong to view the Holy Shroud, nor that faith based on evidence is inferior to “blind faith.” See Hebrews 11.1, the previous footnote, and pages 15-16 above.

99 See what? The scars and wounds? See Jesus bodily raised? Why does the verb lack an object? “Me” is understood from the previous sentence. Contextually, Jesus is speaking of those who will never see Him physically raised from the dead. That would include every person on the planet today! In that technical sense, everyone who believes today falls into the category of being “those who did not see and yet believed.” Everyone! Both those who have visually seen the image on the Holy Shroud and those who have not! No one today has been privileged to see the Lord in the flesh, as did Thomas. All must walk by faith! Might the absence of a direct object for the verb “to see” serve as John’s way of teasing his informed readers about not having the chance to see the image on the Shroud? Does he include in the category mentioned those who did not or will never see the image of the Christ on the cloth? If that is the case, I would caution the reader to carefully ponder the prior two footnotes.
“Reach here with your finger and see My hands; reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving but believing!” 101, 102

100 John 20.29
101 John 20.27
102 “The Incredulity of Saint Thomas” is an oil painting on canvas by the Italian Baroque master Caravaggio, c. 1601–1602. It is housed in a museum, in Potsdam, Germany. This picture shows an ingenious, computer retouching of that painting. The portrait of Jesus has been replaced with the image on the Shroud. St. Thomas is depicted inspecting the wounds of Jesus found on His Shroud. © 2003 Rev. Albert R. Dreisbach Jr. Collection, STERA, Inc.