

Brief Summary of “The Shroud of Jesus: And the Sign John Ingeniously Concealed”

by Dr. Gilbert Lavoie, © 2023, summary compiled by Rick McKinney, 2026

The Shroud of Turin is thought by millions to be the burial shroud of Jesus of Nazareth and that conviction has much scientific support. Dr. Gilbert Lavoie, M.D. has been following this evidence for decades and his 2023 illustrated book shows and describes many of the incredible scientific features of the Shroud and how they correspond to features described in the gospels, especially the Gospel of John, including the following:

Intro. Chap. 1. The 1969 and 1973 microscopic photos and adhesive tape samplings of dust on the Shroud by Dr. Max Frei shows some 57 pollen grains from Palestine, Anatolia, Constantinople and Europe (pp. 8, 158-161).

Intro. Chap. 1. The 2000 flax cloth analysis by textile expert and historian, Mechtchild Flur-Lemberg, discovered the Shroud's unique stitch work and the probability of dating it to Palestine before AD 74 and it is similar to textiles found in Masada which fell to the Roman army in AD 73 (pp. 9, 161-162).

Intro. Chap. 1. The 1988 radiocarbon dating of the Shroud as between AD 1260-1390 is questionable and lacks homogeneity in the samples taken (pp. 162-163). A 2015 analysis by G. Fanti and G. Malfi using chemical and vibrational spectrometry gives a date range of BC 300 plus or minus 400 years (pp. 163-164). A 2022 structural degradation analysis by Liberato De Caro using wide-angle X-ray scattering determined that the Shroud is 19.3 to 21 centuries old (pp. 11, 164-165).

Chap. 2. In 1898 the first photograph of the Shroud, was taken by Secondo Pia. It shows a remarkable “positive” image on the photographic negative with far more distinctive features on what is supposedly a negative image whereas the supposedly “positive” original image looking like a negative image (p. 13)

Chap. 2. In the 1978 Shroud of Turin Research Project photographer Vernon Miller noted that the blood marks are negative on the black-and-white photo with its “positive” image, but the blood marks are positive on the original cloth with its “negative” image (p. 15).

Chap. 3. The scourge marks on the Shroud are in parallel pairs corresponding to the two prong Roman flagrum or thong and are lined up in ways that there appear to be two scourgers with dumbbell shaped instruments angled downward upon the legs, upward upon the shoulders, and across upon the back and torso (Dr. Barbet's studies pp. 18-20)

with widening of shoulder wounds corresponding to a heavy weight placed upon them (John 19:1 Matt. 27:26, p. 26) and necessary wrist wounds to support a body (pp. 23-25).

Chap. 3. The scalp area shows numerous puncture wounds, which bleed profusely, and swelling under the right cheekbone corresponding to a crown of thorns and being hit upon the face (John 19:2-3, pp. 22-23).

Chap. 3. There is an elliptical wound in the chest corresponding to a possible spear thrust (John 19:33-34) and on the back side the apparent flow of light nearly colorless fluid corresponding to the flow of water and blood (pp. 26-27), which the combination of loss of blood, physical stress, blood pressure drop, with organ and heart failure causing clear fluid backing up into the lungs (p.27-28). Dr. Robert Bucklin, a pathologist who studied the shroud for many years, believes that the water from the spear head corresponds to a pleural effusion (not pericardial fluid) secondary to congestive heart failure (pp. 167-168).

Chap. 4. As to why the gospels do not mention an image on a shroud the simple answer is that images and idols were strictly forbidden in the Torah (Exodus 20:4-6) and the whole nation of Jews would rather succumb to death than violate the prohibition (Josephus, pp. 29-31), so John mentions the shroud in a more oblique or indirect manner.

Chap. 5. According to Dr. Alan Adler, professor of chemistry at Western Connecticut State University who was a member of the STRUP team, under the microscope he detected heme derivatives, bile pigments and proteins revealing whole blood on the Shroud in the opaque areas but notes that on the very thin yellow fibers, in which the main image appears on the Shroud, light could pass through as it would through cloth and that the image could then not be seen. Only the topmost fibers were yellowed, and each fiber was smaller than a human hair. Removing some of the blood showed white fibers underneath revealing that the blood came before the image. He stated that the yellowing of the Shroud image was due to aging of the linen causing it to turn from white to yellow due to a chemical change of the cellulose itself, but he did not know what caused the image (pp. 36-39).

Chap. 5. There are no dyes or stains in the yellowed image areas of the Shroud. Using vacuum-ultraviolet radiation Dr. Paolo Di Lazzaro was able to produce photochemical changes in flex fibers similar to the yellowed fibers, but he noted that life size radiation images were beyond today's technology (pp. 41-42, 177-179).

Chap. 6. The ancient Jewish commentary on the Torah known as the Mishnah notes that the normal washing of a body for burial is often not prescribed when there is a violent death

and when there is a mixture or mingling of blood flow before and after death such that the amount is over a quarter-log (about one small wine cup). Such blood is considered unclean and touching this blood renders oneself unclean. It is life-blood, the blood that makes atonement. The Mishnah gives a crucified man as an example and such corpses are buried with just a linen cloth (p. 43-55, 179-181).

Chap. 7. In the transfer of blood to the Shroud Dr. Lavoie did much of his own experiments using blood from volunteers and noted things like dried blood, clotting, serum fluid, and that the crucified man died upright and was then carefully transferred unto the shroud with minimum disturbance suggesting a Jewish burial. He noted the neatness of blood clot transfers as the presence of serum moisture is important in obtaining neat clot-to cloth transfers as seen on the Shroud and that it needs to be in a small amount of time, like two and one half hours corresponding to John's Gospel (John 19:41-42, pp. 57-69, 183-185).

Chap. 8. The flow of the blood confirms that the crucified man died in an upright position with an off-mark position at the left elbow with flow underneath the arm indicating the shroud was over a three-dimensional figure and that the blood dripped down from the wrist following the flow of gravity. But unlike the left arm the right elbow appears to have been at a 90-degree angle. Experiments on volunteers showed that when the left foot is secured on top of the right foot the body automatically sags to the right so that the right arm is at a 90-degree angle and the left arm is stretched out in an elongated fashion and that the blood stains on the Shroud show this (Lavoie, pp. 71-79).

Chap. 9. According to Dr. Lavoie the blood marks on the face and hair appear to have been caused by two separate events but the cause of the facial image is still unknown. The blood clots from the right and left feet occurred during the wrapping and confirm the three-dimensional anatomy of the image (pp. 81-86, 186-187).

Chap. 10. According to Lavoie's study with live volunteers and photos, the image of the Shroud's facial shadows and non-depressed back sides and hair placements indicate that the yellowed image was created when the body was sitting in an upright position with the legs extended outward in a floating like position (pp. 87-97, 187-190).

Chap. 11. Dr. Lavoie concludes that what John saw and believed (per John 20:8-9), was not the resurrection, but that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God (pp. 99-106).

Chap. 12. Dr. Lavoie discusses the three possible categories of how the image and blood on the shroud were made – by human hands, by natural event, or by a supernatural event (pp. 107-117). See <https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2505-web.pdf>.

Chap. 13. Dr. Lavoie discusses how the Gospel of John reveals the Spirit and the plan of God (pp. 117-123).

Chap. 14. Dr. Lavoie discusses the Gospel of John and its emphasis on how God and His Christ is Life, Light, Love and Truth (pp. 125-134).

Chap. 15. Dr. Lavoie discusses the Gospel of John and its “hour of Glory” (pp. 135-138).

Chap. 16. Dr. Lavoie discusses the Gospel of John and its “Bread of Life” (pp. 139-144).

Epilogue. Dr. Lavoie discusses that what we see on the Shroud with “the Son of Man ascending to where he was before” is meant to happen to all who believe (John 6:40, pp. 145-146).

The Sign. Dr. Lavoie discusses, as illustrated, a three-dimension sculpture of the Shroud (pp. 147-156).

Notes and References. (pp. 137-192).

Some Possible Questions:

- 1) What were your impressions of the book?
- 2) What were some of the evidences presented in the book that impressed you the most or that you did not know before?
- 3) In John 19:39-40, the Gospel notes that Nicodemus brought some 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes and taking the body with Joseph of Arimathea “wrapped it in strips of linen with the spices” (Greek – “deō autos othonion meta ho aroma”), according to Jewish burial customs. However, the Shroud shows no signs of spices and the women came on Sunday to add or begin providing spices to anoint the body (Lk. 24:1, Mk 16:1). Did the unclean blood stop their work or is this a red flag contradicting the Scripture and prohibitions on images as some Protestants claim?
- 4) How does one explain all the seemingly remarkable or supernatural evidences on the Shroud and does it call for a conclusion that it is the burial cloth of Jesus?
- 5) Does the Shroud provide modern scientific evidence of the suffering, crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as noted in our ancient creeds?