

# THE SHROUD OF TURIN AND THE URANTIA BOOK

## DOES THE REVELATION UNCOVER THE TRUTH?

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Unless indicated otherwise, all quotations are from *The Urantia Book*.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

At this time, the Shroud of Turin has not been authenticated, principally due to the issues with its age, as tests by carbon dating are giving varying results. Historical evidence is also inconclusive, and it would depend on the unlikely discovery of additional early records to provide further evidence. In the future, new scientific methods and analysis could be expected to enlighten us further.

A new and expanded record of the times of Jesus is contained in *The Urantia Book*, which claims to be a revelation. The book was first published by the Urantia Foundation in 1955. The Urantia Papers provide additional information that does not exclude the possible authenticity of the burial cloths of Jesus.

### **The Project**

Details of the death of Jesus, the discovery of the empty tomb, and many subsequent events, are woven through various Urantia Papers. This presents a vast concept about the completion of the final bestowal of Jesus and his subsequent resurrection. Research based on the revelation investigates two aspects that relate to the Shroud and the face cloth, the Sudarium.

Firstly, evaluation is made of sequential quotations in the Papers regarding the events leading up to the crucifixion and details of the burial in the tomb.

Secondly, the time from the tomb to the first historical records for the Shroud and the Sudarium is explored within the context of information provided in *The Urantia Book* and coordinated with records in historical documents.

### **Purpose**

A fuller picture is constructed from cross-referencing known and revelatory data. Will the information provided in the Urantia Papers uncover additional truth of the Shroud of Turin? Or the face cloth known as the Sudarium of Oviedo? Is new evidence for each of these now revealed in the Urantia Papers?

### **Method**

Relevant quotations from the Urantia Papers are presented with commentary. Times, in minutes and centuries, help show the consistency and feasibility of the story. On site calculation of distances, and the location of the tomb as described in the book, were applied in this work. Some additional historical information was researched from all of the libraries in Jerusalem. Other sources are referenced.

### **Outcome**

From this data, a comprehensive analysis of links between the book and the Shroud is made, and conclusions presented. Future evidence may come to light. New findings can be integrated into this framework and continue to extend our understanding, and the manner in which we search for truth.

## GRAVE CONSEQUENCES

### Events leading up to the burial

*Since the Jewish authorities had no such force of armed men under their jurisdiction, they went at once to the fortress of Antonia and requested the Roman commander to give them this guard; but when he learned that they intended to arrest Jesus, he promptly refused to accede to their request and referred them to his superior officer. In this way more than an hour was consumed in going from one authority to another until they finally were compelled to go to Pilate himself in order to obtain permission to employ the armed Roman guards. [1973:1]*

This is part of the lead up to the arrest of Jesus. It shows the chain of command. (See 2014:3) By contrast, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were able to go direct to Pilate. (See 2012:3)

*This trial was arranged to take place in front of the praetorium, an addition to the fortress of Antonia, where Pilate and his wife made their headquarters when stopping in Jerusalem. [1987:2]*

This tells us where Pilate lived when in Jerusalem.

*As Jesus and his accusers started off to see Herod, the Master turned to the Apostle John and said: "John, you can do no more for me. Go to my mother and bring her to see me ere I die." When John heard his Master's request, although reluctant to leave him alone among his enemies, he hastened off to Bethany, where the entire family of Jesus was assembled in waiting at the home of Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead. [1997:1]*

This tells of the whereabouts of the family of Jesus during these times.

*David had once heard him make this prediction and, being of a literal turn of mind, now proposed to assemble his messengers early Sunday morning at the home of Nicodemus so that they would be on hand to spread the news in case Jesus rose from the dead. [2001:2]*

David made a commitment to be there early to assemble his messengers. Is this going to be 7:30 am? 8:30 am?

*And so these followers of Jesus, scattered throughout Jerusalem and its environs, that night partook of the Passover and the following day remained in seclusion. [2001:3]*

This is a general reference to all of the followers to show there was no activity after the entombment of Jesus on Friday and during the day and evening on Saturday.

*It was just before nine o'clock this morning when the soldiers led Jesus from the praetorium on the way to Golgotha. [2004:4]*

*It was shortly after nine o'clock when this procession of death arrived at Golgotha... [2006:4]*

This reference is included to give a general idea of the location of Golgotha. Along the way Jesus talked to the women, 1831, was kicked, and had the cross beam taken from him, and a man called Simon was instructed to carry it. The interrupted journey would have taken say 10-20 minutes.

*Beyond Golgotha were the villas of the wealthy, and on the other side of the road were the tombs of many well-to-do Jews. [2005:2]*

Could we ever be sure which tomb might be the actual tomb of Jesus? This ridge faces east and is of rock. Perhaps this is the reason why this was a popular location, stretching about one thousand meters north from the temple and Damascus gate area. (Scholars have deduced the tomb of Jesus would be located within this 1,000 meter sector but their search to date has been unsuccessful.) Commencing with the tomb known as The Garden Tomb at about 150 meters from the Damascus Gate, there could be as many as nine tombs at 100 meter intervals. How many in this terrain would have a large rock near its front entrance? This will never be known so finding such evidence would not be conclusive. Perhaps Joseph of Arimathea used his stonemasons to leave a clue inside the tomb.

Would the tombs be of a similar internal construction? The nearby villas would have occupied the elevated area which was to the west and above the ridge.

*It was the custom to remove all clothes from those who were to be crucified, but since the Jews greatly objected to the public exposure of the naked human form, the Romans always provided a suitable loin cloth for all persons crucified at Jerusalem. Accordingly, after Jesus' clothes had been removed, he was thus garbed before he was put upon the cross. [2007:1]*

*As Jesus saw his mother, with John and his brother and sister, he smiled but said nothing. Meanwhile the four soldiers assigned to the Master's crucifixion, as was the custom, had divided his clothes among them... [2007:7]*

The authorities knew these belongings would be taken by the Roman soldiers and not available to Jesus' followers. They did not take any intervening action.

*It was well that the Roman soldiers took possession of the Master's clothing. Otherwise, if his followers had gained possession of these garments, they would have been tempted to resort to superstitious relic worship. The Master desired that his followers should have nothing material to associate with his life on earth. He wanted to leave mankind only the memory of a human life dedicated to the high spiritual ideal of being consecrated to doing the Father's will. [2008:1]*

Would grave cloths gain relic status? Especially if marked in some way? Surely they would be evidence of a material nature and not desired by Jesus. Was his desire consistent with the will of the Father? If there was an image, done deliberately or inadvertently, the seraphim would have to make sure that it was secreted by someone highly responsible and in a position to look after it. And the midwayers would intervene if necessary to make sure the grave cloths did survive if they were to be protected for a future time. Otherwise the ideal result, marked or not, was for the cloths to be thrown away. Perhaps they were not retrieved, and not meant to be retrieved. But we are not told that they were destroyed. Or is the statement a warning related to the fact that the grave cloths did survive, and the revelators took this seemingly innocent way to say it?

*Standing near the cross at one time or another during the crucifixion were Mary, Ruth, Jude, John, Salome (John's mother), and a group of earnest women believers including Mary the wife of Clopas and sister of Jesus' mother, Mary Magdalene, and Rebecca, onetime of Sepphoris. [2008:3]*

This identifies true followers. Note the presence of Ruth, Rebecca and Mary Magdalene.

*After Mary left, the other women withdrew for a short distance and remained in attendance upon Jesus until he expired on the cross, and they were yet standing by when the body of the Master was taken down for burial. [2010:1]*

*When the Master gave up his life shortly after this hour, less than thirty people were present, only the thirteen Roman soldiers and a group of about fifteen believers. These believers were all women except two, Jude, Jesus' brother, and John Zebedee, who returned to the scene just before the Master expired. [2010:2]*

This shows the presence, loyalty and fearlessness of the women.

*The sandstorm grew in intensity and the heavens increasingly darkened. Still the soldiers and the small group of believers stood by. The soldiers*

*crouched near the cross, huddled together to protect themselves from the cutting sand. The mother of John and others watched from a distance where they were somewhat sheltered by an overhanging rock. When the Master finally breathed his last, there were present at the foot of his cross John Zebedee, his brother Jude, his sister Ruth, Mary Magdalene, and Rebecca, onetime of Sepphoris. [2010:5]*

The physical feature of the site is an overhanging rock nearby. Note the presence of Ruth, Rebecca, and Mary Magdalene.

*After the death of the Master, John sent the women, in charge of Jude, to the home of Elijah Mark, where they tarried over the Sabbath day. [2011:6]*

It is possible that all of the women went to the Mark home. The death of Jesus occurred just before 3:00 pm and the procession left from Golgotha at 4:30 pm. Some of the women had time to return by 4:30 pm. (See 2013:2)

They leave the Mark home by late Saturday for it is then that the Mark lad invites the 11 apostles to stay in the upper chamber. (See 2014:5)

*They carried the body into the tomb, a chamber about ten feet square, where they hurriedly prepared it for burial. The Jews did not really bury their dead; they actually embalmed them. Joseph and Nicodemus had brought with them large quantities of myrrh and aloes, and they now wrapped the body with bandages saturated with these solutions. When the embalming was completed, they tied a napkin about the face, wrapped the body in a linen sheet, and reverently placed it on a shelf in the tomb. [2013:3]*

While not seemingly relevant to this narrative, it is noted that this simple form of embalming, different from the Egyptian method, is questioned by some historians as not in accordance with the traditional Jewish burial practices of the time.

This is the first mention of the positioning of the face cloth and negates the theory that it may have been placed on Jesus at the scene of the crucifixion as a scenario to explain its markings.

*The day and a half that Jesus' mortal body lay in the tomb of Joseph, the period between his death on the cross and his resurrection, is a chapter in the earth career of Michael which is little known to us. We can narrate the burial of the Son of Man and put in this record the events associated with his resurrection, but we cannot supply much information of an authentic nature about what really transpired during this epoch of about thirty-six hours, from three o'clock Friday afternoon to three o'clock Sunday morning. [2012:1]*

This time inside the tomb remains a mystery. Correlated facts are given on pages 2015 and 2016. After the body was placed inside the tomb, because it was followed by the Passover and then the Sabbath, there is little activity outside the tomb during this same interval of time. Guards arrived on the Sabbath to keep watch. (See 2014:3)

*The rulers of the Jews had planned to have Jesus' body thrown in the open burial pits of Gehenna, south of the city; it was the custom thus to dispose of the victims of crucifixion. If this plan had been followed, the body of the Master would have been exposed to the wild beasts. [2012:2]*

Did these wild beasts also roam to the north via the Kidron Valley? Would they have roamed the area below the cliff where the guard disposed of the grave cloths? If so, the cloths would have been retrieved expeditiously and bravely.

*In the meantime, Joseph of Arimathea, accompanied by Nicodemus, had gone to Pilate and asked that the body of Jesus be turned over to them for proper burial. It was not uncommon for friends of crucified persons to offer bribes to the Roman authorities for the privilege of gaining possession of such bodies. Joseph went before Pilate with a large sum of money, in case it became necessary to pay for permission to remove Jesus' body to a private burial tomb. But Pilate would not take money for this. When he heard the request, he quickly signed the order which authorized Joseph to proceed to Golgotha and take immediate and full possession of the Master's body. [2012:3]*

Joseph could visit and directly approach Pilate. Pilate acted immediately on the advice of Joseph. Joseph was authorized to take 'full possession' of the body. Surely the grave cloths were part of his entitlement, especially as they were supplied by him. Perhaps Joseph did not remove the cloths as they were a trivial matter in comparison to the death of the Master. (A temple guard was dispatched on the Sunday morning to dispose of the grave cloths.)

The women showed no customary aversion to the body, the cloths, or to death.

*The centurion ordered the other soldiers to leave the two thieves while they drove back this angry mob of infuriated Jews. When order had been restored, the centurion read the permit from Pilate to the Jews and, stepping aside, said to Joseph: "This body is yours to do with as you see fit. I and my soldiers will stand by to see that no man interferes." [2013:0]*

Joseph could have taken the body anywhere for embalming and burial. Joseph and Nicodemus only decided to use Joseph's tomb on their way to Golgotha. The Romans had no concern about the resting place for the body. However, a temple guard was commanded on Sunday to remove all trace of the burial cloths.

*At about half past four o'clock the burial procession of Jesus of Nazareth started from Golgotha for Joseph's tomb across the way. The body was wrapped in a linen sheet as the four men carried it, followed by the faithful women watchers from Galilee. The mortals who bore the material body of Jesus to the tomb were: Joseph, Nicodemus, John, and the Roman centurion. [2013:2]*

Was this action by the centurion customary or extraordinary and based on his belief in Jesus?

The body was in contact with 'a' linen sheet. It would have been marked by the blood from the body. Would the body be wrapped in exactly the same way after it was embalmed, so that blood marks would line up with any 'Shroud type' image?

We are not given dimensions of the sheet nor told that the sheet was placed under the full length of the body and then folded back over the head in the manner of the Shroud.

*They carried the body into the tomb, a chamber about ten feet square, where they hurriedly prepared it for burial. The Jews did not really bury their dead; they actually embalmed them. Joseph and Nicodemus had brought with them large quantities of myrrh and aloes, and they now wrapped the body with bandages saturated with these solutions. When the embalming was completed, they tied a napkin about the face, wrapped the body in a linen sheet, and reverently placed it on a shelf in the tomb. [2013:3]*

The body was wrapped in 'a' linen sheet, not 'the' linen sheet. Was it another sheet? The 'first' sheet, and even a 'second' sheet, would have bloodstains as an open wound can bleed for hours (even days). So the cloth would have been marked with blood but unlikely to be marked with an image unless a morontia event was already underway. From the reading of 2020:4 this was not occurring.

There was at this time no authority for an event of accelerated time. There are no references to marks on any sheet. Joseph or Nicodemus would have taken a 'first' sheet home with them, or disposed of it. (What would the monetary or sentimental value of such a cloth have been?) There is also mention of 'a' shelf in the tomb, not 'the' shelf.

Note the mention of a separate item, a napkin, about the face. This was tied in place on the face BEFORE the body was wrapped in a linen sheet. (And AFTER the bandages?) How would this have affected an image on the Shroud? Lessened it? Distorted it? Would it have resulted in two different images, as the napkin was fixed in place and more likely to cover the facial contours while the



linen cloth was wrapped around the body and more likely to cover the facial area with less definition?

Also it is not clear if the bandages covered the face as part of 'the body' that was wrapped. If so, the image on the Shroud would have passed through the bandages and the face napkin, unless the midways made changes to all coverings prior to dissolution.

*The men hurried back to the city, but the women lingered near the tomb until it was very dark. [2013:5]*

This tells of a tendency for the women to linger near the tomb. It does not say if they entered the tomb.

*While all this was going on, the women were hiding near at hand so that they saw it all and observed where the Master had been laid. They thus secreted themselves because it was not permissible for women to associate with men at such a time. These women did not think Jesus had been properly prepared for burial, and they agreed among themselves to go back to the home of Joseph, rest over the Sabbath, make ready spices and ointments, and return on Sunday morning properly to prepare the Master's body for the death rest. The women who thus tarried by the tomb on this Friday evening were: Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Clopas, Martha another sister of Jesus' mother, and Rebecca of Sepphoris. [2013:6]*

This indicates the women did not enter the tomb. So how did they know the body was not properly prepared for burial? Perhaps it was due to the brevity of time taken to place Jesus in the tomb. Or they knew Joseph and Nicodemus were not fully prepared. They left after dark and did not return until early Sunday morning.

The women were able to hide nearby. It may have been in a sheltered rock formation, say 20-25 meters north (or south) of the tomb. Any of them would also have been able to hide at the time the temple guard arrived on the Sunday to collect the grave cloths. They would not have approached the guard.

The women were staying at the home of Joseph of Arimathea.

*Aside from David Zebedee and Joseph of Arimathea, very few of Jesus' disciples really believed or understood that he was due to arise from the tomb on the third day. [2013:7]*

David and Joseph understood the situation. And they had faith.

*When Pilate heard this request of the Sanhedrists, he said: "I will give you a guard of ten soldiers. Go your way and make the tomb secure." They*

*went back to the temple, secured ten of their own guards, and then marched out to Joseph's tomb with these ten Jewish guards and ten Roman soldiers, even on this Sabbath morning, to set them as watchmen before the tomb. These men rolled yet another stone before the tomb and set the seal of Pilate on and around these stones, lest they be disturbed without their knowledge. And these twenty men remained on watch up to the hour of the resurrection, the Jews carrying them their food and drink. [2014:3]*

This is a time when there is no information about the tomb. The soldiers arrive on Saturday morning, and remain until the resurrection on the Sunday morning.

The Jews who were carrying them food and drink would have visited the tomb after the guards and soldiers fled the scene early on the Sunday morning. They must have entered the tomb during these early morning hours. It could only have been them who reported the existence of the grave cloths to the captain of the temple guards. The fleeing Jewish guards went to their homes and reported to the captain of the guards without seeing inside the tomb.

*Throughout this Sabbath day the disciples and the apostles remained in hiding, while all Jerusalem discussed the death of Jesus on the cross. There were almost one and one-half million Jews present in Jerusalem at this time, hailing from all parts of the Roman Empire and from Mesopotamia. [2014:4]*

The Jewish authorities would be concerned that a large number of people could show interest in the resurrection.

*Late Saturday night, John Mark summoned the eleven apostles secretly to come to the home of his father, where, just before midnight, they all assembled in the same upper chamber where they had partaken of the Last Supper with their Master two nights previously. [2014:5]*

The apostles continued to hide, now in the Mark home.

*Mary the mother of Jesus, with Ruth and Jude, returned to Bethany to join their family this Saturday evening just before sunset. David Zebedee remained at the home of Nicodemus, where he had arranged for his messengers to assemble early Sunday morning. The women of Galilee, who prepared spices for the further embalming of Jesus' body, tarried at the home of Joseph of Arimathea. [2014:6]*

David was at the home of Nicodemus where he planned to assemble his messengers early Sunday morning. Ruth has now gone to Bethany.

## The unprecedented events in the tomb

*Soon after the burial of Jesus on Friday afternoon, the chief of the archangels of Nebadon, then present on Urantia, summoned his council of the resurrection of sleeping will creatures and entered upon the consideration of a possible technique for the restoration of Jesus. These assembled sons of the local universe, the creatures of Michael, did this on their own responsibility; Gabriel had not assembled them. By midnight they had arrived at the conclusion that the creature could do nothing to facilitate the resurrection of the Creator. [2020:1]*

They could act 'on their own responsibility'. This meeting was no doubt a responsible act but somewhat optimistic. They had not previously needed to consider such a situation. So no action results at this time.

Gabriel advised them that the Personalized Adjuster of Jesus, being in personal command of the assembled celestial hosts then on Urantia, would take the appropriate action.

*At two forty-five Sunday morning, the Paradise incarnation commission, consisting of seven unidentified Paradise personalities, arrived on the scene and immediately deployed themselves about the tomb. At ten minutes before three, intense vibrations of commingled material and morontia activities began to issue from Joseph's new tomb, and at two minutes past three o'clock, this Sunday morning, April 9, A.D. 30, the resurrected morontia form and personality of Jesus of Nazareth came forth from the tomb. [2020:4]*

Here we are given an exact time. The process of the morontia resurrection took twelve minutes. In so many other cases, time is not as specific. Also, the spiritual/morontia nature of this event is evidenced by the fact that Paradise personalities only are involved. (Also see 2021:3)

There is reference to 'material' activities. This activity may have produced an image. The linen sheet was still in place and covering the body. (See next quote) If morontia activities caused an image, material science may have difficulty in explaining it? And any image on the cloth would have passed through the bandages and the napkin.

There may be evidence on the walls of the tomb that a cosmic event took place.

*After the resurrected Jesus emerged from his burial tomb, the body of flesh in which he had lived and wrought on earth for almost thirty-six years was still lying there in the sepulchre niche, undisturbed and wrapped in the linen sheet, just as it had been laid to rest by Joseph and his associates on Friday afternoon. Neither was the stone before the entrance of the*

*tomb in any way disturbed; the seal of Pilate was still unbroken; the soldiers were still on guard. The temple guards had been on continuous duty; the Roman guard had been changed at midnight. None of these watchers suspected that the object of their vigil had risen to a new and higher form of existence, and that the body which they were guarding was now a discarded outer covering which had no further connection with the delivered and resurrected morontia personality of Jesus. [2021:1]*

This confirms 'the' linen sheet was still in place subsequent to the morontia resurrection. Or did the commission move it after 3:02 am?

We still cannot be sure of the precise way the body was wrapped.

Roman rule was well organized. The Roman guard changed at midnight.

*Mankind is slow to perceive that, in all that is personal, matter is the skeleton of morontia, and that both are the reflected shadow of enduring spirit reality. How long before you will regard time as the moving image of eternity and space as the fleeting shadow of Paradise realities? [2021:2]*

There is imagery in the words 'skeleton', 'image', and 'reflected shadow'. It would be unwise to read anything into this.

*As far as we can judge, no creature of this universe nor any personality from another universe had anything to do with this morontia resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. On Friday he laid down his life as a mortal of the realm; on Sunday morning he took it up again as a morontia being of the system of Satania in Norlatiadek. There is much about the resurrection of Jesus which we do not understand. But we know that it occurred as we have stated and at about the time indicated. We can also record that all known phenomena associated with this mortal transit, or morontia resurrection, occurred right there in Joseph's new tomb, where the mortal material remains of Jesus lay wrapped in burial cloths. [2021:3]*

The event seems to have been fully controlled and according to God's will. Any wall markings, shelf marking, or an image would have been part of the known phenomena caused by the morontia resurrection and fully intended. But as they say, there is much about it all that even the Midwayers do not understand.

There is definite reference to the fact that all phenomena took place within the tomb, unlike the dissolution of the body. And again it is confirmed that the burial cloths were still intact.

*We know that no creature of the local universe participated in this morontia awakening. We perceived the seven personalities of Paradise surround the tomb, but we did not see them do anything in connection with*

*the Master's awakening. Just as soon as Jesus appeared beside Gabriel, just above the tomb, the seven personalities from Paradise signaled their intention of immediate departure for Uversa. [2021:4]*

Due to the unprecedented and exceedingly high level spiritual nature of this event, we can not know anything about it, let alone any image that may have resulted from the interplay of energies. But the personalities would have been sure of the effects of their actions, perhaps having performed such a mission on previous occasions in other jurisdictions. This being the case, we can reasonably assume they would not have contravened any incarnation mandate.

*His material or physical body was not a part of the resurrected personality. When Jesus came forth from the tomb, his body of flesh remained undisturbed in the sepulchre. [2021:6]*

This confirms there is a second intervention, and either or both could have caused an image to be created. There could be one or two images. Or none.

*Jesus now began the contacts of the morontia level, being introduced, as a creature, to the requirements of the life he had chosen to live for a short time on Urantia. This initiation into the morontia world required more than an hour of earth time and was twice interrupted by his desire to communicate with his former associates in the flesh as they came out from Jerusalem wondering to peer into the empty tomb to discover what they considered evidence of his resurrection. [2022:3]*

The initiation into the morontia world events took place between 3:02 am and say 4:30 am. Then the second morontia appearance (to Mary Magdalene) took place before 4:30 am. We do not know the whereabouts of Mary Magdalene between that time and the time she spoke to David. It seems she spoke to him either at the tomb, at 7:15 am, or at 8:15 am.

*At ten minutes past three o'clock, as the resurrected Jesus fraternized with the assembled morontia personalities from the seven mansion worlds of Satania, the chief of archangels - the angels of the resurrection - approached Gabriel and asked for the mortal body of Jesus. Said the chief of the archangels: "We may not participate in the morontia resurrection of the bestowal experience of Michael our sovereign, but we would have his mortal remains put in our custody for immediate dissolution. We do not propose to employ our technique of dematerialization; we merely wish to invoke the process of accelerated time. It is enough that we have seen the Sovereign live and die on Urantia; the hosts of heaven would be spared the memory of enduring the sight of the slow decay of the human form of the Creator and Upholder of a universe. In the name of the celestial intelligences of all Nebadon, I ask for a mandate giving me the custody of*

*the mortal body of Jesus of Nazareth and empowering us to proceed with its immediate dissolution." [2022:5]*

How do the archangels cause 'immediate dissolution'? It seems this can be caused by a technique of dematerialization or a process of accelerated time.

Would the process of accelerated time have caused an image on the sheet?

In the life of Jesus there were many instances of 'the abridgement of time'. (See 1516:4 and 1531:4) They appear to be a different application of accelerated time. They involved the conjoint action of a Creator Son's will and the Father's will. And there were no additional signs apart from the event itself. There was no evidence of any unusual side effect.

Did the archangels run out of time and end up using their own technique of dematerialization (which they did not propose to use) rather than the process of accelerated time? It does not read that way. (See 2023:6 and 2024:1) Then if an image were to be made by immediate dissolution using the accelerated time method rather than the technique of dematerialization, then the Most Highs would have been aware. They could have activated a chain of archangel events to preserve and protect the sheet.

Perhaps dematerialization leaves an image and that is why they did not plan to use it. Perhaps dematerialization would have caused the cloth to dematerialize along with the body.

The book does provide a description of how an image could possibly have possibly created. Such an explanation is of particular interest as there are no chemical or physical methods known which can account for the totality of the image, nor can any combination of physical, chemical, biological, or medical circumstances explain the image adequately.

A transfer of body to cloth resulting in an image does not follow our ordinary understanding of space and time.

*Said the Adjuster: "I will, as you have directed, enjoin the employment of this attendant host of universe intelligences in any manner in connection with your earth career except in those cases where the Paradise Father directs me to release such agencies in order that his divine will of your choosing may be accomplished, and in those instances where you may engage in any choice or act of your divine-human will which shall only involve departures from the natural earth order as to time. In all such events I am powerless, and your creatures here assembled in perfection and unity of power are likewise helpless. If your united natures once entertain such desires, these mandates of your choice will be forthwith*

*executed. Your wish in all such matters will constitute the abridgment of time, and the thing projected is existent. [1516:4]*

*Nevertheless, many similar events occurred before the Son of Man took final leave of his mortal life in the flesh. [1531:4]*

These two quotes show the so called miracles of Jesus were in association with his Personalized Thought Adjuster and consistent with the will of God. The actions of the Chief of Seraphim and associates are not a comparable episode.

*And when Gabriel had conferred with the senior Most High of Edentia, the archangel spokesman for the celestial hosts was given permission to make such disposition of the physical remains of Jesus as he might determine. [2023:1]*

We need to consider the implications of 'disposition of the physical remains'. There is a transfer of authority to a rank above that of the archangels and Gabriel. Could they have decided to change the method of dissolution due to time constraints and so created an image?

*By the aid of certain morontia auxiliary personalities, the morontia form can be made at one time as of the spirit so that it can become indifferent to ordinary matter, while at another time it can become discernible and contactable to material beings, such as the mortals of the realm. [2023:2]*

The morontia body may have resurrected as spirit leaving no trace. Or it may have been made momentarily discernible as it created a physical image.

*As they made ready to remove the body of Jesus from the tomb preparatory to according it the dignified and reverent disposal of near-instantaneous dissolution, it was assigned the secondary Urantia midwayers to roll away the stones from the entrance of the tomb. The larger of these two stones was a huge circular affair, much like a millstone, and it moved in a groove chiseled out of the rock, so that it could be rolled back and forth to open or close the tomb. When the watching Jewish guards and the Roman soldiers, in the dim light of the morning, saw this huge stone begin to roll away from the entrance of the tomb, apparently of its own accord - without any visible means to account for such motion - they were seized with fear and panic, and they fled in haste from the scene. The Jews fled to their homes, afterward going back to report these doings to their captain at the temple. The Romans fled to the fortress of Antonia and reported what they had seen to the centurion as soon as he arrived on duty. [2023:3]*

The midwayers obviously needed physical access to the body so it was necessary to roll away the stone. Also it frightened all the people away so they

could work unobserved. But why was it necessary to remove the body from inside the tomb? Perhaps 'near instantaneous dissolution' caused intense heat and may have been the reason for going outside the tomb. What was then the sequence of events?

- They 'made ready to remove the body'. Does this mean removing the cloth, the face napkin, and the bandages at that stage?
- Could the image pass through the bandages if they had not been removed, and appear on the cloth?
- Could the image pass through the face napkin if it had not been removed?
- Was the body made naked, with the burial cloth replaced under the body and above the body, the napkin folded, and the bandages replaced in previous position on the ledge? Did all that take place in the tomb?
- The body may have then been taken outside, with only the linen sheet still in place when the dissolution took place.
- If the dissolution was known to leave an image, the seraphim and midwayers had the choice to leave the sheet in place or remove it. So any image generated and left for later generations was a deliberate act.
- The linen sheet would then have been placed at the foot of the niche after the dissolution of the body.
- There is great significance here regarding the napkin. If it were left in the tomb, it would not have been part of the dissolution process. Presuming that process resulted in the Shroud image, the Mandylion would not be genuine.
- For the Mandylion to be genuine, the midwayers had to deliberately place it over the face prior to the dissolution of the body. This still leaves the question about how an image could result on two surfaces, the napkin and the Shroud.

Could the imprinting on the cloth also be powerful enough to etch an image on the rock surface of the shelf?

There would be no markings on the burial ledge and no evidence on the walls of the tomb of this cosmic event as all activity took place outside the tomb.

The secondary midwayers could physically move a very large stone. In like manner, could they have also removed the large rock in front of the tomb? (It may no longer be in front of any discovered tomb. As this has no apparent relevance to their primary task it is unlikely to be an issue.)

The tomb is now unguarded.

The Roman guards did not report the incident until the centurion came on duty. They came on duty at midnight. Did the centurion arrive at 8:00 am? There is no indication that the Roman guards returned to the tomb as a result of the report. Was any action taken by the centurion? If the tomb was visited after 7:45 am the



cloths would no longer be there. If Joseph visited Pilate at 7:20 am, orders for a Roman guard to visit the tomb might not have been given until after 7:30 am by which time the temple guard was on his way to the tomb.

*The tomb was truly empty when the first believers arrived... [2023:5]*

Unless non believers arrived before them in this interval of 15 minutes, these were the first people to arrive after the departure of the guards.

*Seraphim are able to function as material ministers to human beings under certain circumstances, but their action in this capacity is very rare. They are able, with the assistance of the midway creatures and the physical controllers, to function in a wide range of activities in behalf of human beings, even to make actual contact with mankind, but such occurrences are very unusual. ... occasions have arisen, involving jeopardy to vital links in the chain of human evolution, in which seraphic guardians have acted, and properly, on their own initiative. [1246:4]*

*The tomb of Joseph was empty, not because the body of Jesus had been rehabilitated or resurrected, but because the celestial hosts had been granted their request to afford it a special and unique dissolution, a return of the "dust to dust," without the intervention of the delays of time and without the operation of the ordinary and visible processes of mortal decay and material corruption. [2023:6]*

The words 'special and unique dissolution' may merely indicate that the process was nothing more than the circumvention of time and decay. Or it may refer to a cosmic event. Would there have been any residue at all? Any dust?

*The mortal remains of Jesus underwent the same natural process of elemental disintegration as characterizes all human bodies on earth except that, in point of time, this natural mode of dissolution was greatly accelerated, hastened to that point where it became well-nigh instantaneous. [2024:1]*

This suggests that nothing exceptional transpired except for the acceleration of time. Not mere acceleration but virtually instantaneous dissolution. What measurable results take place at such a time? Would that alone be sufficient for an image to be made on the sheet?

## The discovery of the empty tomb

*The true evidences of the resurrection of Michael are spiritual in nature... [2024:2]*

Is 'true' being used in a generic sense? Is this suggesting that there is other evidence of a physical nature?

*As we approach the time of the resurrection of Jesus on this early Sunday morning, it should be recalled that the ten apostles were sojourning at the home of Elijah and Mary Mark, where they were asleep in the upper chamber, resting on the very couches whereon they reclined during the last supper with their Master. This Sunday morning they were all there assembled except Thomas. ... Thomas was with them for a few minutes late Saturday night when they first got together... He looked his associates over and immediately left the room, going to the home of Simon in Bethphage... [2025:2]*

This accounts for the whereabouts of the apostles.

*At the home of Nicodemus there were gathered together, with David Zebedee and Joseph of Arimathea, some twelve or fifteen of the more prominent of the Jerusalem disciples of Jesus. At the home of Joseph of Arimathea there were some fifteen or twenty of the leading women believers. Only these women abode in Joseph's house, and they had kept close within during the hours of the Sabbath day and the evening after the Sabbath, so that they were ignorant of the military guard on watch at the tomb; neither did they know that a second stone had been rolled in front of the tomb, and that both of these stones had been placed under the seal of Pilate. [2025:3]*

This accounts for the whereabouts of David, Joseph, not all of the disciples, and not all of the leading women.

*A little before three o'clock this Sunday morning, when the first signs of day began to appear in the east, five of the women started out for the tomb of Jesus. They had prepared an abundance of special embalming lotions, and they carried many linen bandages with them. It was their purpose more thoroughly to give the body of Jesus its death anointing and more carefully to wrap it up with the new bandages. [2025:4]*

The women departed from the home of Joseph. It was not against their religious beliefs or difficult to remove the bandages. It was no doubt customary. The midwayers could also have removed the bandages from the body without difficulty and either left them on the shelf or returned them to the shelf.

*The women who went on this mission of anointing Jesus' body were: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of the Alpheus twins, Salome the mother of the Zebedee brothers, Joanna the wife of Chuza, and Susanna the daughter of Ezra of Alexandria. [2025:5]*

Mary Magdalene was the only one who knew the location of the tomb. She was the leader. Compare the identities of these women with the faithful women of Galilee who followed the men to the tomb on the Friday. Those women were Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Clopas, Martha another sister of Jesus' mother, and Rebecca of Sepphoris. (See 2013:6)

*It was about half past three o'clock when the five women, laden with their ointments, arrived before the empty tomb. As they passed out of the Damascus gate, they encountered a number of soldiers fleeing into the city more or less panic-stricken... [2025:6]*

They took around 30 minutes to reach the tomb. Allowing for the fact that the women were laden and it was night time, Joseph's home would normally have been about a 10-12 minute walk from the Damascus Gate, and located in the Old City. Say the women arrived at the Damascus gate around 3:16 am. They could tarry a few minutes and arrive at the tomb around 3:30 am.

At 3:10 am the Chief of the Archangels petitions Gabriel (about the body of Jesus) who confers with the senior Most High of Edentia. Permission is granted. Decisions upon high were taken with great speed. The Chief of the Archangels summons various orders of celestial personalities including secondary midwayers who then roll away the stone. This means that the Most High took decisions quickly and the stone rolled away at say 3:14 am. The fleeing soldiers arrive at the Damascus Gate around 3:16 am.

The Chief and his associates knew the women were on their way, and they now had only about 15 minutes to take care of the body before the women arrived (3:16 am to about 3:30 am). The women paused for a few minutes and had a 10-15 minute walk.

Can this period of 15 minutes be compared with the 12 minutes for the morontia process? (Probably not.) Did the seraphim and midwayers almost run out of time? (Was it fortunate the women tarried at the Gate for a few minutes?) This may account for the way the cloths were arranged. The bandages may have taken some time to arrange, thereby accounting for the cloth somewhat abandoned at the foot of the niche. Or perhaps the sheet was left in a way to disguise an image.

Because of time constraints, did the Chief of the Archangels elect to use the process of dematerialization as it was quicker to effect?

They did however, have time to fold the napkin. Was this done in order to disguise the Sudarium? Or was it deliberately set aside to be collected as a separate piece of evidence to one day be scientifically linked to the Shroud? It is now the subject of a separate discovery and separate scientific analysis.

*By this hour there was just enough of the dawn of a new day to enable Mary to look back to the place where the Master's body had lain and to discern that it was gone. In the recess of stone where they had laid Jesus, Mary saw only the folded napkin where his head had rested and the bandages wherewith he had been wrapped lying intact and as they had rested on the stone before the celestial hosts removed the body. The covering sheet lay at the foot of the burial niche. [2026:0]*

'The recess of stone' indicates that the niche was part of the solid rock of the tomb. There was not a separate slab of stone in the niche.

The fact that the bandages rested 'on the stone' is intriguing. We know the body was still wrapped in the linen sheet, just as Joseph had laid it to rest, at 3:02 am. (See 2021:1)

It is possible:

1. The sheet was never wrapped under the body, but around the top and sides.
2. The sheet was removed first and the body wrapped in bandages was put back on the stone before being taken out of the tomb.

They were the first humans to enter the tomb since the stone was rolled across the entrance on the Friday afternoon. Assuming the covering sheet was still in place after the morontia resurrection, it was moved during the process of the material dissolution of the physical body.

The bandages were intact and still defined the body outline and shape. And the napkin was still where the head had rested. An image would have had to pass through the bandages and the napkin if it was to be imprinted on the sheet. Or perhaps the bandages, napkin, and sheet were all imprinted. An image would not be distinguishable on the bandages when they were gathered up. The sheet may have been moved to the foot of the niche to prevent anyone noticing an image. The image may have been quite faint and difficult to detect in the dawn light.

Does the wording 'removed the body' refer to removing it from the bandages or removing it from the tomb?

*... she saw that Jesus' body was gone and in its place only these grave cloths, and she uttered a cry of alarm and anguish. All the women were exceedingly nervous; they had been on edge ever since meeting the panicky soldiers at the city gate, and when Mary uttered this scream of*

*anguish, they were terror-stricken and fled in great haste. And they did not stop until they had run all the way to the Damascus gate. [2026:1]*

Again we are told cloths were in the shape of the body.

Mary was the only one brave enough to deal with issues regarding the tomb.

The tomb was sufficiently near the Old City that people could run to the Damascus gate. Somewhere between ½ and 1 kilometer?

*All five of the women then sat down on the stone near the entrance and talked over the situation. It had not yet occurred to them that Jesus had been resurrected. They had been by themselves over the Sabbath, and they conjectured that the body had been moved to another resting place. But when they pondered such a solution of their dilemma, they were at a loss to account for the orderly arrangement of the grave cloths; how could the body have been removed since the very bandages in which it was wrapped were left in position and apparently intact on the burial shelf? [2026:3]*

Statements of 'in position' and 'apparently intact' refer to the bandages. The sheet had been moved but still placed with care in an orderly fashion. All cloths were accounted for, that is, intact. However the napkin is not specifically mentioned.

When Peter and John inspect the tomb, statements about the orderly arrangement are given as 'peculiarly arranged', 'orderly', and 'apparently intact'.

The revelators are not sure that the cloths are intact, as they specifically include the word "apparently" in two instances.

The napkin previously tied about the face of Jesus was now folded. The interesting aspect here is the meticulous care taken by the midwayers in arranging the cloths, napkin and bandages. Prior to the dissolution of the body, they could have so arranged the sheet to ensure it would capture the most accurate and detailed image during the material dissolution.

This event could have taken place on the rock outside the tomb – the one various people sat upon. The women sit on this rock, then Peter and John. The rock was large enough to accommodate five adults. The rock was therefore large enough to accommodate the prostrate body of Jesus when outside the tomb. The sheet could now be more easily arranged under and around the body. The rock was evidently flat and at a convenient seating height.

And no doubt all other visitors to the tomb in the weeks to come would see this rock. Yet history records no miraculous effect on a rock. (Perhaps the midwayers

removed the rock as it did reveal an image? Where to? The absence of the rock would have been noted but unlikely to be recorded.) Perhaps an image exists on a rock but needs to be exposed by a modern scientific technique.

There are now various and inconclusive possibilities regarding an image:

- There may be an image on this outside rock (from the action of dissolution).
- There may be image(s) on the sheet and napkin (from seraphim and/or morontia action).
- There may have been an image on the bandages, presumably abandoned.
- There may be an image on the ledge (from morontia action).

## Final but crucial pieces of information

### Example 1

*How is it, then, that you would have me turn aside from my work for the gratification of the curious and for the satisfaction of those who seek for signs and wonders? [1635:5]*

*... Jesus, looking at the father of the sick boy, said: "How long shall I bear with you? The power of God is in your midst, but except you see signs and behold wonders, you refuse to believe." [1644:4]*

The need for some people to adhere to the Shroud story may just be an indicator of the need for signs and wonders.

*The Master desired that his followers should have nothing material to associate with his life on earth. He wanted to leave mankind only the memory of a human life dedicated to the high spiritual ideal of being consecrated to doing the Father's will. [2008:1]*

Who, even celestial personalities, would have dared to countermand this desire of Jesus and allowed the cloths to survive as relics of his life? Or are we to read into the wording to conclude there is a difference between the times of life on earth and the time after his death?

### Example 2

*To the end that you may not unnecessarily contribute to the creation of subsequent stereotyped systems of Urantia religious beliefs or other types of nonprogressive religious loyalties, we advise you still further: Leave no writings behind you on the planet. Refrain from all writing upon permanent materials; enjoin your associates to make no images or other likenesses of yourself in the flesh. See that nothing potentially idolatrous is left on the planet at the time of your departure. [1330:2]*

Following consultation with Gabriel, Michael's Creator Brother Immanuel proffered the above counsel to him prior to his incarnation as Jesus, and in relation to 'minor phases' of his life.

Jesus had resurrected and his body remained in the tomb. This is made clear at quotes previously given at 2021:1 and 2021:6. Hence, the prebestowal advice of Immanuel was not contravened. No image would have been on the burial cloth while he was still 'in the flesh' and 'at the time of your departure'.

Relic worship could be considered a stereotyped system. But did Jesus directly contribute to it? And could a Shroud be called a nonprogressive religious loyalty?

Could the Most Highs (Refer back to 2022:5 and 2023:1) overrule the advice from Gabriel and Immanuel?

And nowhere in the Six Great Decisions of Jesus (Pages 1516-1523) is there allowance for a Shroud. (Especially see quotes 1523:1 and 1523:3)

Jesus left no permanent writing during his lifetime. (1514:3) His earthly associates did not make the images on the cloths.

Could there be debate about 'the time of your departure'? Perhaps Immanuel was not to know how Jesus would depart, and expected the bestowal would be terminated by a normal death and resurrection.

Jesus had no control over potentially idolatrous relics neither at the time of his physical death (departure) nor his morontia departure. And this command was not given to the Midwayers. Perhaps it is possible, but unlikely, that they were acting under a different authority, particularly in relation to the dissolution of the physical body.

The question needs to be asked, 'Why would the angels leave these relics behind?' And not just leave them behind. They folded them neatly and placed them carefully. And apparently the angels did something mysterious in relationship to the bandages because *The Urantia Book*, a book known for being both precise with language and consistent in story line, twice refers to the bandages as 'apparently intact', and also refers to them once as simply 'intact'.

The possible scenarios about the Shroud then range from one extreme: it is not a genuine relic, to the other extreme: it exists because God so willed it.

### Example 3

*The soldiers first bound the Master's arms with cords to the crossbeam, and then they nailed his hands to the wood. When they had hoisted this crossbeam up on the post, and after they had nailed it securely to the upright timber of the cross, they bound and nailed his feet to the wood, using one long nail to penetrate both feet. The upright timber had a large peg, inserted at the proper height, which served as a sort of saddle for supporting the body weight. The cross was not high, the Master's feet being only about three feet from the ground. [2006:5]*

The basic biblical story about the crucifixion is not at odds with the expanded narrative in *The Urantia Book*.



For centuries, artistic tradition has shown nails going through the hands of Jesus. This accords with the biblical and the Urantia writings.

The Shroud however, shows a stain from the only wrist visible. The translation of the Greek word 'cheir' pertained to all features in proximity to the hand, and thereby did not differentiate between hand and wrist. The most likely explanation is the nail entered through the front of the hand and was diagonally driven through the heel of the hand to emerge through the wrist bones to strengthen the attachment to the timber. A nail only through the hand would have not held and torn the palm. Some say nails were primarily to keep the hands and feet in place.

Other injuries to Jesus, for example the impact of the crown of thorns and the piercing by the spear, are recorded on the cloth. If done by a forger from the biblical descriptions many centuries after the actual death, why did the forger not follow the biblical evidence of nails through the hands?

In this regard, *The Urantia Book* reveals crucial pieces of additional information. It mentions a large peg at the seating level to offer some support of the body on the cross. This is historically recorded as a practice. And his arms and feet were bound to each timber with cords. It was the procedure to both bind and nail. The well practiced executioners knew nails were inadequate by themselves.

### [Jesus requested that we glorify only his spiritual truths](#)

To further illustrate that the above-mentioned request of Jesus may be considered absolute, there are two more pieces of evidence relating to Jesus that have been subjected to destruction.

The location of the family home of Joseph and Mary in Nazareth can be located with some certainty following descriptions given in *The Urantia Book*. The site has been preserved but not the home itself.

Additionally, the tomb of Jesus, based on evidence provided in the Urantia Papers, is none of the three touted as possibilities in and around the Old City of Jerusalem by presumably well-meaning people.

It is clearly a site at around one thousand meters north of the Damascus Gate. A first century tomb in this location was at one time identified, but has since been demolished.

Can we assume the burial cloths were intentionally assigned a similar fate?

## FIRST EVENTS AFTER THE RESURRECTION

*These human eyes were enabled to see the morontia form of Jesus...  
[2027:1]*

This statement about the morontia appearance of Jesus shows that morontia form can be made visible. But can the morontia form impact upon material things. In morontia form, Jesus would not let Mary Magdalene touch him. It seems unlikely that the morontia form could be touched. The other example to consider is when the brothers Cleopas and Jacob handed bread to Jesus. He vanished from their sight as he was about to break it.

*After these women had recovered from the shock of their amazement, they hastened back to the city and to the home of Elijah Mark, where they related to the ten apostles all that had happened to them; but the apostles were not inclined to believe them. They thought at first that the women had seen a vision, but when Mary Magdalene repeated the words which Jesus had spoken to them, and when Peter heard his name, he rushed out of the upper chamber, followed closely by John, in great haste to reach the tomb and see these things for himself. [2027:3]*

Allowing for the run to the Damascus Gate and the return of the four women, the first appearance of Jesus would have been around 3:50 am. Their first reaction of the women is to tell the apostles. Peter reacts to his ego and his guilt. John was by Jesus side throughout the trial having being assigned by the Roman captain according to law. When Jesus was on the cross, John carried out his requests. And he was one of the men who carried the body of Jesus to the tomb.

*The women repeated the story of talking with Jesus to the other apostles, but they would not believe; and they would not go to find out for themselves as had Peter and John. [2027:4]*

None of the other apostles visited the tomb. Mary Magdalene departed after Peter and John.

*John, being younger than Peter, outran him and arrived first at the tomb. John tarried at the door, viewing the tomb, and it was just as Mary had described it. Very soon Simon Peter rushed up and, entering, saw the same empty tomb with the grave cloths so peculiarly arranged. And when Peter had come out, John also went in and saw it all for himself, and then they sat down on the stone to ponder the meaning of what they had seen and heard. And while they sat there, they turned over in their minds all that had been told them about Jesus, but they could not clearly perceive what had happened. [2027:6]*

The men might arrive at 4:15 am at the latest, given the women hastened to the Mark home and the two men rushed out in great haste. The Mark home is directly south of the Damascus Gate.

The arrangement of the cloths aroused the curiosity of the two men. This was no doubt discussed as they sat on the stone. They decide to take a closer look.

The phrase 'they could not clearly perceive what had happened' may mean that they could not clearly discern, as 'they sat there', that an image had been imprinted on the very rock they were sitting on.

More likely it refers to the things Jesus told them about his death and resurrection.

*Peter at first suggested that the grave had been rifled, that enemies had stolen the body, perhaps bribed the guards. But John reasoned that the grave would hardly have been left so orderly if the body had been stolen, and he also raised the question as to how the bandages happened to be left behind, and so apparently intact. And again they both went back into the tomb more closely to examine the grave cloths. As they came out of the tomb the second time, they found Mary Magdalene returned and weeping before the entrance. Mary had gone to the apostles believing that Jesus had risen from the grave, but when they all refused to believe her report, she became downcast and despairing. She longed to go back near the tomb, where she thought she had heard the familiar voice of Jesus. [2027:7]*

Peter and John may have noticed any imprint from their closer look at the cloths. They had this opportunity to tell Mary Magdalene of any discovery. It seems nothing of this nature transpired. She remained downcast.

Mary Magdalene was emotionally connected to the tomb and given to lingering about it.

The five women and now Peter and John have seen inside the tomb.

*As Mary lingered after Peter and John had gone, the Master again appeared to her, saying: "Be not doubting; have the courage to believe what you have seen and heard. Go back to my apostles and again tell them that I have risen..." [2027:8]*

The time is likely to be prior to 4:30 am. Mary Magdalene lingered and had this encounter with the morontia Jesus. (The morontia resurrection was at 3:02 am. The initiation of Jesus into the morontia world took more than one hour. During that time Jesus stopped proceedings to twice visit earthly friends, which included the second appearance to Mary Magdalene.)

We are not told she inspected inside the tomb at this time. She would have responded to her Master's request to go back at once to the apostles. The whereabouts of Peter and John during this time and subsequent to their thorough inspection of the grave cloths is not revealed.

*Mary hurried back to the Mark home and told the apostles she had again talked with Jesus, but they would not believe her. But when Peter and John returned, they ceased to ridicule and became filled with fear and apprehension. [2028:1]*

Peter and John returned after Mary Magdalene even though they left the tomb before her. There is a slight time gap here. Perhaps Mary Magdalene hurried while the men no doubt engaged in much discussion as they walked. Did Mary pass them on her way or did they go by another road, perhaps the longer way via the lower road by the cliffs? Or through different lanes in the Old City? It is highly unlikely that they had the time or motivation to go to the home of Nicodemus.

*Mary had become a woman of great circumspection, so that her boldness in speaking to a man whom she considered to be the caretaker of Joseph's garden only indicates how horrified she was to find the tomb empty. It was the depth and agony of her love, the fullness of her devotion, that caused her to forget, for a moment, the conventional restraints of a Jewish woman's approach to a strange man. [2029:5]*

Her circumspection (and great consternation) may have caused her to follow the temple guard who removed the grave cloths. For the Shroud to be authentic, someone had to follow this guard. (Otherwise we have to accept superhuman intervention was involved.) Mary was not afraid to do so. Her devotion was such that she could have remained for hours in the vicinity of the tomb. She would have been horrified at seeing the grave cloths taken by the captain of the temple guards. They were the very people who mistreated Jesus.

The high priest saw to it that Jesus was convicted and killed. Mary Magdalene would certainly have followed the guard for such effrontery and insensitivity to the memory of the Master. But would she have been intent on recovering them after seeing them discarded?

Perhaps there was someone else who is not mentioned in this part of the narrative, who could have observed the unfolding events and retrieved them?

Recent research indicates that in the first century, the Kidron Valley was 16 meters lower than today's level. Today, the only likely place for the disposal of the cloths still exists and the area below is about 25 meters lower than top of the ridge above, making the drop about 40 meters at the time. And perhaps then, the base of the cliff was rocky and jagged similar to the area of Judas' demise.

(1998:5) No doubt the body of Judas was recovered so presumably the cloths could also have been easily recovered.

*When the apostles refused to believe the report of the five women who represented that they had seen Jesus and talked with him, Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb, and the others went back to Joseph's house, where they related their experiences to his daughter and the other women. And the women believed their report. Shortly after six o'clock the daughter of Joseph of Arimathea and the four women who had seen Jesus went over to the home of Nicodemus, where they related all these happenings to Joseph, Nicodemus, David Zebedee, and the other men there assembled. Nicodemus and the others doubted their story, doubted that Jesus had risen from the dead; they conjectured that the Jews had removed the body. Joseph and David were disposed to believe the report, so much so that they hurried out to inspect the tomb, and they found everything just as the women had described. And they were the last to so view the sepulchre, for the high priest sent the captain of the temple guards to the tomb at half past seven o'clock to remove the grave cloths. The captain wrapped them all up in the linen sheet and threw them over a near-by cliff. [2030:1]*

The home of Joseph is not far from the home of Nicodemus. Joseph and David are the eighth and ninth persons (that we know of) to go inside the tomb. They may have arrived as early as 6:30 am, allowing less than half an hour for travel. Joseph and David did not speak to John and Peter. Mary Magdalene had previously returned to the tomb and saw Peter and John soon after 4:00 am, possibly as late as 4:15 am.

At this time, the inside of the tomb would have been somewhat filled with light from the east and all visitors, including the captain of the temple guard, would have had a clear view of the state of affairs.

The dependable David had proved to be balanced and faith committed to Jesus. Joseph was of high standing, committed to Jesus and prepared to admit to it.

The cloths had not been removed, but David and Joseph possibly moved the cloths to inspect them because they were the last 'to so view the sepulcher'. The guard did not so view the sepulcher after 7:30 am.

It was wise to let the guard remove the cloths. People of the Jewish community knew the cloths were there. At least the guard could now say that all trace of Jesus had been removed, providing some temporary comfort to the authorities. He gathered them up in the sheet and he would not be looking for any markings. Regarding the grave cloths, it states that 'the captain wrapped them all up in the linen sheet'. This indicates the napkin and bandages were bundled into the linen sheet.

The action was specifically entrusted by Caiaphas to no one less than the captain of the temple guards and it all seems highly illegal. (Caiaphas was instrumental in the prosecution of Jesus.) The body was given to Joseph with full authority. The tomb belonged to Joseph. And would not Caiaphas need authority from Pilate to take such action? He knew Pilate would not agree to it.

Any image on the shelf might now be exposed. There is no reaction from the temple guard. And Joseph and Nicodemus did not notice any image during their earlier visit to the tomb when they moved the cloths from their resting place.

Other possibilities:

Joseph owned the tomb and would have been able to make any changes he wished to the structure and closure of the tomb. What was the future use of the tomb? Was it locked away for generations or centuries? Did it contain archaeological evidence? Was it used as a dwelling place by cave dwellers?

If David and Joseph had seen Mary Magdalene on this occasion would the revelators have included it?

David and Joseph may have discovered the image and taken the sheet home to Joseph's place and brought back the first sheet. They had an hour before the temple guard arrived at 7:45 am so it could have been done in that time. Then there is no need to retrieve the sheet discarded over the cliff. However we are told they went straight to the Mark home.

It seems unlikely that David and Joseph would have waited more than an hour to see the guard who would have arrived from the temple mount at about 7:45 am.

David and Joseph may have followed the guard, retrieved the cloths, and then returned to the tomb. From there they could go immediately to the Mark house.

Maybe David and Joseph did not notice a morontia induced image on the ledge until after the temple guard removed the cloths. This may have prompted them to retrieve the cloths.

The cloths may have been retrieved from below the cliff by Joseph and David who wanted to keep them in reverence for their Master. Upon noticing an image on the cloth, it would be likely they would then inspect the ledge to see if an image had also burnt onto the surface. Would they have inspected the rock in front of the tomb?

Alternatively, Joseph and David may have first noticed an image had burnt into the ledge and so retrieved the cloth to see if it also had an image scorched onto it.

Joseph and David would have inspected both items and would have felt it necessary to keep both safe and away from the authorities. The Jewish leaders would have made sure all such evidence of the Master's life was destroyed.

These same reasons for secreting and preserving the cloth would have applied to the ledge. The cloth was stored. Could the ledge be hidden by closing up the tomb?

David could have arrived back at the home of Nicodemus by 8:15 am. We are not told where Joseph goes. Did he go to see Pilate?

*From the tomb David and Joseph went immediately to the home of Elijah Mark, where they held a conference with the ten apostles in the upper chamber. ... David would not argue with them, but when he left, he said: "You are the apostles, and you ought to understand these things. I will not contend with you; nevertheless, I now go back to the home of Nicodemus..." ... On his way from the upper chamber he dropped the bag of Judas, containing all the apostolic funds, in the lap of Matthew Levi. [2030:2]*

The ten apostles were at the Mark house when David and Joseph arrived, so Peter and John did not follow the guard to the cliff face. Given the times, it would not have been possible for Peter, John, David or Joseph to follow the captain as he disposed of the cloths. But it would have been possible for Mary Magdalene.

There is no indication that anyone had noticed any images. They allowed the temple guard to gather the cloths up and dispose of them.

If David and Nicodemus did notice imprints, David could have recruited one of his loyal and discreet messengers to deliver the grave cloths to anyone anywhere. The messengers were soon to arrive at the home of Nicodemus. For example, they could have been sent in total secrecy to Abner at Philadelphia.

It seems the bag of Judas had been stored at the Mark home. Though unlikely, the linen cloth could also have been entrusted by Mary Magdalene to Mark.

## THE RETRIEVAL OF THE GRAVE CLOTHS

There is one person in particular who could have collected the cloths and that is John Mark. There are a surprising number of detailed references to his undercover scouting behavior.

*Throughout the few remaining hours of Jesus' earth life John Mark never permitted the Master for long to get out of his sight. Always was the lad in hiding near by; he slept only when Jesus slept. [1921:4]*

*John Mark had followed them all the way into the city, and after they had entered the gate, he hurried on by another street so that he was waiting to welcome them to his father's home when they arrived. [1935:2]*

*It was about ten o'clock this Thursday night when Jesus led the eleven apostles from the home of Elijah and Mary Mark on their way back to the Gethsemane camp. Ever since that day in the hills, John Mark had made it his business to keep a watchful eye on Jesus. John, being in need of sleep, had obtained several hours of rest while the Master had been with his apostles in the upper room, but on hearing them coming downstairs, he arose and, quickly throwing a linen coat about himself, followed them through the city, over the brook Kidron, and on to their private encampment adjacent to Gethsemane Park. And John Mark remained so near the Master throughout this night and the next day that he witnessed everything and overheard much of what the Master said from this time on to the hour of the crucifixion. [1963:1]*

When the apostles Peter and John hurried down these same stairs after Mary Magdalene announced she has seen the morontia Jesus at the tomb, John Mark would have been alert and again followed them, this time to the tomb, all the while in hiding as was his method. (See 2027:3)

*The apostles were greatly shocked when they returned to their camp and found Judas absent. While the eleven were engaged in a heated discussion of their traitorous fellow apostle, David Zebedee and John Mark took Jesus to one side and revealed that they had kept Judas under observation for several days, and that they knew he intended to betray him into the hands of his enemies. [1966:1]*

*Only David Zebedee and John Mark understood that the enemies of Jesus were coming with Judas that very night. [1967:4]*

This shows the closeness, wisdom, and friendship that existed between David and John Mark.



*When David had gone up Olivet, John Mark took up his vigil near the road which ran by the brook down to Jerusalem. And John would have remained at this post but for his great desire to be near Jesus and to know what was going on. Shortly after David left him, and when John Mark observed Jesus withdraw, with Peter, James, and John, into a near-by ravine, he was so overcome with combined devotion and curiosity that he forsook his sentinel post and followed after them, hiding himself in the bushes, from which place he saw and overheard all that transpired during those last moments in the garden and just before Judas and the armed guards appeared to arrest Jesus. [1967:7]*

*Jesus sat down, alone, on the olive press, where he awaited the coming of the betrayer, and he was seen at this time only by John Mark and an innumerable host of celestial observers. [1971:5]*

These paragraphs are further evidence of the stealth characteristic of John Mark.

*When Jesus had been bound, the captain, fearing that the followers of the Master might attempt to rescue him, gave orders that they be seized; but the soldiers were not quick enough since, having overheard the captain's orders to arrest them, Jesus' followers fled in haste back into the ravine. All this time John Mark had remained secluded in the near-by shed. When the guards started back to Jerusalem with Jesus, John Mark attempted to steal out of the shed in order to catch up with the fleeing apostles and disciples; but just as he emerged, one of the last of the returning soldiers who had pursued the fleeing disciples was passing near and, seeing this young man in his linen coat, gave chase, almost overtaking him. In fact, the soldier got near enough to John to lay hold upon his coat, but the young man freed himself from the garment, escaping naked while the soldier held the empty coat. John Mark made his way in all haste to David Zebedee on the upper trail. [1975:2]*

This episode would have made John Mark extremely cautious in retrieving the burial cloths after their disposal by the Roman guards. He would have avoided detection from any authorities for fear of repercussions.

This may be an amusing anecdote with a touch of irony: The Roman guard took John Mark's garments off him, and then there is perhaps some retribution in the following days with Mark's contrasting experience where he may have collected the grave cloths left by the Roman guards.

*He suspected the guards were going to take Jesus to the home of Annas, the high priest emeritus; so he skirted around through the olive orchards and was there ahead of the mob, hiding near the entrance to the gate of the high priest's palace. [1975:3]*

This is another deliberate inclusion and further evidence of John Mark's ability to skirt the city and the authorities.

*As Mary lingered after Peter and John had gone, the Master again appeared to her, saying: "Be not doubting; have the courage to believe what you have seen and heard. Go back to my apostles and again tell them that I have risen... [2027:8]*

It would be reasonable to assume an omission here by the revelators, for surely John Mark is witness to this morontia appearance of Jesus. (Jesus speaks to him as an old friend upon seeing him at the later morontia appearance at the Sea of Galilee. And John Mark confidently invited himself along to Galilee. See below.) Mention of him on this occasion would have been a clear indicator of him retrieving the cloths.

*Mary hurried back to the Mark home and told the apostles she had again talked with Jesus, but they would not believe her. But when Peter and John returned, they ceased to ridicule and became filled with fear and apprehension. [2028:1]*

John Mark may have remained in hiding during this time.

*Joseph and David were disposed to believe the report, so much so that they hurried out to inspect the tomb, and they found everything just as the women had described. And they were the last to so view the sepulchre, for the high priest sent the captain of the temple guards to the tomb at half past seven o'clock to remove the grave cloths. The captain wrapped them all up in the linen sheet and threw them over a near-by cliff. [2030:1]*

*From the tomb David and Joseph went immediately to the home of Elijah Mark, where they held a conference with the ten apostles in the upper chamber. [2030:2]*

John Mark would not have been in the house if indeed he was retrieving the grave cloths from the base of the near-by cliff at the time. The only people who knew the approximate location of the cloths were the Roman guards. The only other possibility is the Mark lad. So the most likely recipient of the cloths would be the Mark lad or Claudia who would also have been able to source them via her husband Pilate.

*Their isolation had much to do with their troubles. John Mark kept them in touch with developments about the temple and informed them as to the many rumors gaining headway in the city... [2037:3]*

More evidence of the prominent role played by John Mark. At this time, the grave cloths may well have been in the possession of the Mark family.

*Early this Monday morning when the apostles departed for Galilee, John Mark went along. He followed them out of the city, and when they had passed well beyond Bethany, he boldly came up among them, feeling confident they would not send him back. [2045:4]*

*By this time John Mark was up and, seeing the apostles coming ashore with the heavy-laden net, ran down the beach to greet them; and when he saw eleven men instead of ten, he surmised that the unrecognized one was the risen Jesus, and as the astonished ten stood by in silence, the youth rushed up to the Master and, kneeling at his feet, said, "My Lord and my Master." And then Jesus spoke, not as he had in Jerusalem, when he greeted them with "Peace be upon you," but in commonplace tones he addressed John Mark: "Well, John, I am glad to see you again and in carefree Galilee, where we can have a good visit. Stay with us, John, and have breakfast." [2046:2]*

Is the morontia Jesus saying to John Mark that it is good to see you again, knowing that they had seen each other at the tomb? It is also worth noting the familiarity in John Mark's greeting to the morontia Jesus and the ready recognition each gave to the other.

### **The role of the Mark family**

Mary Mark was involved in the work of the Mark lad:

*... as Jesus started off alone, John Mark came forward with a small basket containing food and water and suggested that, if he intended to be away all day, he might find himself hungry. The Master smiled on John and reached down to take the basket. [1920:4]*

It is not stated how the relationship between Jesus and the Mark family came about. Jesus spoke highly of the parents:

*You are the product of a home where the parents bear each other a sincere affection... You have enjoyed that parental love which insures laudable self-confidence and which fosters normal feelings of security. But you have also been fortunate in that your parents possessed wisdom as well as love... [1921:6]*

Jesus had a close relationship with the Mark family:

*After receiving the greetings of welcome extended by the father and mother of John Mark, the apostles went immediately to the upper chamber while Jesus lingered behind to talk with the Mark family. [1936:4]*

Mention is made of those who were at or near the foot of the cross during the crucifixion. The Mark lad would have been somewhere nearby. He would have known of the decision by John to send people to his mother's place.

*Standing near the cross at one time or another during the crucifixion were Mary, Ruth, Jude, John, Salome (John's mother), and a group of earnest women believers including Mary the wife of Clopas and sister of Jesus' mother, Mary Magdalene, and Rebecca, onetime of Sepphoris. [2008:3]*

*When the Master finally breathed his last, there were present at the foot of his cross John Zebedee, his brother Jude, his sister Ruth, Mary Magdalene, and Rebecca, onetime of Sepphoris. [2011:6]*

*After the death of the Master, John sent the women, in charge of Jude, to the home of Elijah Mark, where they tarried over the Sabbath day. [2011:6]*

If Elijah and Mary Mark had the cloths (Elijah Mark died approximately 4 weeks after the crucifixion) they would have confided in Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea who were family friends. It is likely they would be interested in the cloths and they would know that the Mark family had a special bond with Jesus.

Joseph's daughter Rebecca was involved with messages from Mary Magdalene about the morontia appearance at the tomb and was probably amongst the women who witnessed the fifth morontia appearance at the Joseph's home. She was also a member of the women's evangelistic corp. (See 1679:0)

Followers stayed in home of the Mark family, Nicodemus home, and that of Joseph of Arimathea. This is further evidence that these three families knew each other well.

*Mary the mother of Jesus, with Ruth and Jude, returned to Bethany to join their family this Saturday evening just before sunset. David Zebedee remained at the home of Nicodemus, where he had arranged for his messengers to assemble early Sunday morning. The women of Galilee, who prepared spices for the further embalming of Jesus' body, tarried at the home of Joseph of Arimathea. [2014:6]*

In the following incidents, John Mark was acting on behalf of his parents:

*Late Saturday night, John Mark summoned the eleven apostles secretly to come to the home of his father, where, just before midnight, they all assembled in the same upper chamber where they had partaken of the Last Supper with their Master two nights previously. [2014:5]*

On this occasion John Mark was acting on behalf of his mother:

*John Mark did all he could to comfort his mother and, speaking for her, invited the apostles to continue to make their home at her house. And the eleven made this upper chamber their headquarters until after the day of Pentecost. [2051:2]*

The Master's ninth morontia appearance (the first to the apostles as a group, ten of them) and the eleventh (the second to the group of apostles, eleven of them) took place in the upper chamber at the Mark residence.

The close contact with the apostles is interesting, as the Mark family may not have divulged details of the cloths to them even when they spent time under the same roof.

If Mary Mark was the custodian of the cloths to whom would she have given them? And when? It is unlikely she would have been alive in 70 AD when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans.

Who visited the home of Mary Mark in the years after the death of Jesus? Who became her religious associates and confidants? For example, did people from Abner's group stay there when visiting Jerusalem. Could that have resulted in them being given the cloths by Mary Mark in her later years?

## OTHER EVENTS RELATING TO RETRIEVAL

*It was about half past nine o'clock when the last of David's twenty-six messengers arrived at the home of Nicodemus. David promptly assembled them in the spacious courtyard and addressed them... [2030:3]*

David and Joseph left the tomb at say 6:45 am and visited the apostles for a conference. From there David went to the home of Nicodemus to receive messengers early on this Sunday morning. He could have arrived at 7:15 am. He could have met with Mary Magdalene then. She could have left for the tomb at 7:30 am, the same time the captain of the guards was dispatched from the temple mount by Caiaphas. The home of Nicodemus and the mount are in the Old City and similar distances from the tomb. Mary could have arrived around the same time as the guard.

Joseph may then have gone to Pilate as a follow up to being granted custody of the body of Jesus, and told him about the cloths, arriving at say 7:20 am. This would have alarmed Pilate who feared the Jewish leaders who wanted to dispose of the body of Jesus and would not want any trace of Jesus to remain. So Pilate would have been able to tell the Roman commander at the fortress Antonia that the cloths needed to be collected and disposed of.

Any such visit to the tomb would have occurred after the captain of the temple guards visited the tomb. A Roman guard would have reported back to Pilate the cloths were missing. Pilate may have investigated and learnt from Caiaphas what had happened. Joseph of Arimathea or Pilate may then have wished to retrieve the cloths from below the cliff.

The messengers of David may have started to arrive from 7:30 am, or perhaps from 8:30 am.

*"... I have talked with Mary Magdalene and four other women, who have talked with Jesus. I now disband you, bid you farewell, and send you on your respective assignments, and the message which you shall bear to the believers is: `Jesus has risen from the dead; the tomb is empty.'" [2030:4]*

Mary Magdalene and David spoke before his talk to the assembled messengers at 9:30 am. David could only have seen Mary Magdalene at the tomb around 6:30 am, around 7:15 am as shown above, at around 8:15 am, after she returned from the tomb. Mary Magdalene would have been able to retrieve the grave cloths at say 8:00 am, after the captain of the temple guards arrived at 7:45 am, left the tomb at 7:50 am (or even earlier), and threw the cloths over the cliff at 7:55 am.

Were the other four women (from the first morontia appearance) still at the home of Nicodemus at 8:15 am, having arrived soon after 6:00 am, or had they returned to the home of Joseph? Does it matter?

Mary Magdalene's circumspection would probably have caused her to return the cloth to Joseph of Arimathea at 8:15 am. (Would Joseph have given it to David?) It is less likely Mary would have given it to Nicodemus. Or John. Or kept it for herself.

Rebecca is another possibility. She loved Jesus, followed him loyally and was present when he died on the cross, and then followed the men to the tomb. Her father Ezra was a wealthy merchant and trader.

*And so, shortly before ten o'clock this Sunday morning, these twenty-six runners went forth as the first heralds of the mighty truth-fact of the resurrected Jesus. And they started out on this mission as they had on so many others, in fulfillment of their oath to David Zebedee and to one another. These men had great confidence in David. [2031:0]*

These messengers took word of the resurrection. It does not read that David dispatched an article with any of them.

*These twenty-six were dispatched to the home of Lazarus in Bethany and to all of the believer centers, from Beersheba in the south to Damascus and Sidon in the north; and from Philadelphia in the east to Alexandria in the west. [2031:2]*

It is possible that David could send something to Abner in Philadelphia.

*In about one week from this time John Zebedee took Mary the mother of Jesus to his home in Bethsaida. James, Jesus' eldest brother, remained with his family in Jerusalem. Ruth remained at Bethany with Lazarus's sisters. The rest of Jesus' family returned to Galilee. David Zebedee left Bethany with Martha and Mary, for Philadelphia, early in June, the day after his marriage to Ruth, Jesus' youngest sister. [2031:4]*

*Accordingly, sometime after the resurrection and also after the death of his mother, David betook himself to Philadelphia, having first assisted Martha and Mary in disposing of their real estate; and there, in association with Abner and Lazarus, he spent the remainder of his life, becoming the financial overseer of all those large interests of the kingdom which had their center at Philadelphia during the lifetime of Abner. [1869:1]*

James, the brother of Jesus, remained in Jerusalem and had time to secrete any cloths retrieved. James married a woman named Esta. (See 1414:5) So the early custodians of the cloth could descend from the bloodline of Jesus.

Mary Magdalene could have delivered the cloth to the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus in Bethany for it to be given to Ruth and David. Note that David left for Philadelphia within two months. So instead of sending them earlier with a messenger, David and Ruth could have taken the linen cloth with them to leave in the safe custody of Abner and his followers. This could also mean the bloodline of Jesus could be traced back to the earlier owners of the cloth.

They had the numbers for long term custody at Philadelphia. There was also Martha, Mary, Lazarus, and Nathaniel for a year, and those of the seventy.

*The third appearance occurred about noon of this Sunday at Bethany. Shortly after noontide, Jesus' oldest brother, James, was standing in the garden of Lazarus before the empty tomb of the resurrected brother of Martha and Mary, turning over in his mind the news brought to them about one hour previously by the messenger of David. ... Even as James stood before Lazarus's empty tomb, Mary Magdalene arrived on the scene and was excitedly relating to the family her experiences of the early morning hours at the tomb of Joseph. Before she had finished, David Zebedee and his mother arrived. [2031:6]*

This midday visit is the first mention of the whereabouts of Mary Magdalene since David mentioned he talked with her. There was more to her story but she did not get the chance to relate it.

*And then the strange form spoke, saying: "James, I come to call you to the service of the kingdom. Join earnest hands with your brethren and follow after me." [2032:0]*

Jesus spoke of the involvement of James (the brother of Jesus) with Peter in establishing the early church. (See page 2068) While progress was rapid could it really be interpreted as an event 'of the near future' as mentioned below.

*When James perceived that Jesus was addressing him, he started to fall to his knees, exclaiming, "My father and my brother," but Jesus bade him stand while he spoke with him. And they walked through the garden and talked for almost three minutes; talked over experiences of former days and forecast the events of the near future. As they neared the house, Jesus said, "Farewell, James, until I greet you all together." [2032:2]*

To James, Jesus would also have spoken about family matters of the near future and is the likely reason James stayed in Jerusalem.

Jesus may have forecast the handing over of the grave cloths to James by the midwayers. Or he may have forecast the retrieval of the cloths by James as they



had been thrown over the cliffs unnoticed some three and a half hours earlier. This would be intervention by Jesus and would be highly unusual.

If Jesus had wanted to communicate about the cloths he could have made a third appearance to Mary Magdalene anytime between say 4:30 am and midday. But Jesus is organizing his universe and going through the morontia transit as well as planning his earthly appearances.

It might seem a trivial matter for Jesus to be concerned about. However, part of the incarnation instructions was that no written record was to be left by Jesus. This was remembered by Jesus during his life. He specifically and intentionally destroyed his writings at home. It was that important. So then making arrangements about a visual record would be equally (if not more so) important. So it is possible that special steps were taken to deal with what may have been an unexpected legacy of his life on earth.

*James now announced that he would not return to Galilee, and David exclaimed: "He is seen not only by excited women; even stronghearted men have begun to see him. I expect to see him myself." [2032:3]*

James' actions after this meeting are significant. He had reason to remain in Jerusalem but we are not told if the decision resulted from his talk with Jesus. Could it have had something to do with the grave cloths? Did the cloths have to be retrieved before public interest was aroused? But by this time, the messengers of Andrew had broadcast the news of the resurrection to certain people and public interest was commencing. And it would have taken another 30-40 minutes to walk from Bethany to the area of the cliffs.

*And David did not long wait, for the fourth appearance of Jesus to mortal recognition occurred shortly before two o'clock in this very home of Martha and Mary, when he appeared visibly before his earthly family and their friends, twenty in all. [2032:4]*

David had gone from the home of Nicodemus to the home of Joseph to collect his mother Salome and then traveled on to Bethany. Salome was one of the women who went to better prepare the body of Jesus for burial and witnessed the first morontia appearance. The appearance was at 2:00 pm. Twenty people were still at the home of Mary and Martha. Some two hours later Jesus appeared to the women at the home of Joseph of Arimathea.

*They all wanted to rush off to the city to tell the doubting apostles about what had happened, but James restrained them. Mary Magdalene, only, was permitted to return to Joseph's house. James forbade their publishing abroad the fact of this morontia visit because of certain things which Jesus had said to him as they conversed in the garden. But James never*

*revealed more of his visit with the risen Master on this day at the Lazarus home in Bethany. [2032:5]*

James may have needed time to make suitable arrangements concerning the cloths. (Meeting with Mary Magdalene, David, Joseph, or retrieving them himself.) This scenario also means that Mary Magdalene has no knowledge of images on the cloth. To broadcast the news to the apostles and others may have resulted in a flow of people to the tomb and surrounds. And the authorities may have taken action. This would have made any secret retrieval impossible.

Perhaps the image did not fully appear for days or weeks. Then it would not have been noticed and Jesus had to act in advance from the morontia level.

Jesus may have told him the midwayers had already retrieved the cloth.

But in fact, Jesus may never have mentioned the cloths to James at all. Would it be a priority given the momentous events taking place?

*The fifth morontia manifestation of Jesus to the recognition of mortal eyes occurred in the presence of some twenty-five women believers assembled at the home of Joseph of Arimathea, at about fifteen minutes past four o'clock on this same Sunday afternoon. Mary Magdalene had returned to Joseph's house just a few minutes before this appearance. James, Jesus' brother, had requested that nothing be said to the apostles concerning the Master's appearance at Bethany. He had not asked Mary to refrain from reporting the occurrence to her sister believers. Accordingly, after Mary had pledged all the women to secrecy, she proceeded to relate what had so recently happened while she was with Jesus' family at Bethany. And she was in the very midst of this thrilling recital when a sudden and solemn hush a over them; they beheld in their very midst the fully visible form of the risen Jesus. [2033:1]*

Is the secrecy about the fact that James was told something that he could not tell them? Or simply that the apostles were not to know of the fourth morontia manifestation at Bethany. Mary Magdalene was able to tell of the occurrence on the condition that the audience of women kept it a secret.

There was open communication amongst followers up till this time and the limitation was placed by Jesus. It could be that Jesus did not want certain news to go the apostles, particularly Peter. Maybe he wanted to talk with Peter about the same things he spoke about with James. The church? The cloth? The midwayers? The meeting with Peter took place 8 ½ hours after the appearance to James.

*As a result of sending out the messengers during the midforenoon and from the unconscious leakage of intimations concerning this appearance*

*of Jesus at Joseph's house, word began to come to the rulers of the Jews during the early evening that it was being reported about the city that Jesus had risen, and that many persons were claiming to have seen him. [2033:3]*

Word of Jesus' appearances reached the rulers early evening. James had the early afternoon to act in any manner that may have been directed by Jesus. If word had got out, the reports about the city would have commenced early afternoon.

*Peter could not get away from the sight of the grave cloths resting there in the tomb as if the body of Jesus had just evaporated from within. [2037:4]*

Peter was focused on the sight of the cloths as they were. Would he have been preoccupied with an imprint if he had noticed one? Maybe he had inspected the cloths and found nothing unusual. He vacillated emotionally and had some 'peculiar difficulties'. (See 2039:0)

*It was near half past eight o'clock this Sunday evening when Jesus appeared to Simon Peter in the garden of the Mark home. [2039:1]*

*Peter and the morontia Jesus walked through the garden and talked of things past, present, and future for almost five minutes. Then the Master vanished from his gaze, saying, "Farewell, Peter, until I see you with your brethren." [2039:3]*

Paragraph 2039:2 records some of the past and present that Jesus spoke about. Jesus may have spoken to Peter about the existence of the grave cloth. This could have been in the context of past, present and future.

Jesus could have told Peter about the images and asked him to protect them. Or maybe Jesus told him it had all been resolved by midwayers earlier in the day and not to mention these things in his writings.

It is more likely that Jesus would have spoken to Peter about the apostles and events to befall them. And perhaps the formation of the church.

*... he rushed to the upper chamber and into the presence of his Cleopasow apostles, exclaiming in breathless excitement: "I have seen the Master; he was in the garden. I talked with him, and he has forgiven me." [2040:0]*

Is Peter of a mind to rationalize over a message of major significance?

*Shortly after nine o'clock that evening, after the departure of Cleopas and Jacob, while the Alpheus twins comforted Peter, and while Nathaniel*

*remonstrated with Andrew, and as the ten apostles were there assembled in the upper chamber with all the doors bolted for fear of arrest, the Master, in morontia form, suddenly appeared in the midst of them, [2040:2]*

None of the apostles had ventured out except for the brief visit of Peter and John to the tomb.

*And then, as the Master's form moved over near the head of the table, he addressed them all, saying: "And now go all of you to Galilee, where I will presently appear to you." After he said this, he vanished from their sight. [2043:4]*

The apostles movements continued to be well accounted for. They stayed at the Mark home all the following week and left for Galilee on the following Monday.

*During the week they tarried in Jerusalem, Mary the mother of Jesus spent much of the time with the women believers who were stopping at the home of Joseph of Arimathea. [2045:3]*

This was still the base for the women. Including Mary Magdalene?

*Then said Jesus: "Andrew, if you trust me, trust your brethren more - even Peter. I once trusted you with the leadership of your brethren. Now must you trust others as I leave you to go to the Father. When your brethren begin to scatter abroad because of bitter persecutions, be a considerate and wise counselor to James my brother in the flesh when they put heavy burdens upon him which he is not qualified by experience to bear." [2048:3]*

Jesus specifically wants Andrew to work in association with James (the brother of Jesus). Andrew was a deep and insightful thinker. It is not clear who 'they' are. The three way association of James, Peter and Andrew is a powerful group who are to perform important work. But, is such an alliance to safeguard a cloth a more credible alternative to the people who form around Abner in Philadelphia?

Their involvement in an early church could be the way the Shroud and napkin were safeguarded for centuries prior to being taken overseas. However, evidence suggests the Shroud and the napkin were kept separately.

*I am the secondary midwayer of onetime attachment to the Apostle Andrew, and I am authorized to place on record the narrative of the life transactions of Jesus of Nazareth as they were observed by my order of earth creatures, and as they were subsequently partially recorded by the human subject of my temporal guardianship. Knowing how his Master so scrupulously avoided leaving written records behind him, Andrew*

*steadfastly refused to multiply copies of his written narrative. A similar attitude on the part of the other apostles of Jesus greatly delayed the writing of the Gospels. [1332:1]*

This midwayer and/or his associates were involved in events at the tomb. The midwayers could entrust the safekeeping of the cloth to Andrew. The apostles were extremely cautious about leaving any records of the life of Jesus.

*Because of certain things said to the eleven while they were in conference with the Master on the mount of ordination, the apostles received the impression that their Master would presently make a public appearance before a group of the Galilean believers, and that, after he had done so, they were to return to Jerusalem. Accordingly, early the next day, Sunday, April 30, the eleven left Bethsaida for Jerusalem. [2051:1]*

Prior to this return to Jerusalem, the apostles were locked away in the upper room at the Mark home and too distraught to think about grave cloths. They were more concerned with his burial, frightened by his disappearance from the tomb, and then intent on his morontia appearances. They had doubts, fear of authorities, and fear of traveling. It is unlikely that they would have been required to involve themselves preserving the cloths should that have even been necessary. Their concerns are recorded on pages 2037 and 2038.

*The sixteenth morontia manifestation of Jesus occurred on Friday, May 5, in the courtyard of Nicodemus, about nine o'clock at night. On this evening the Jerusalem believers had made their first attempt to get together since the resurrection. Assembled here at this time were the eleven apostles, the women's corps and their associates, and about fifty other leading disciples of the Master, including a number of the Greeks. [2052:1] "Only tarry here in Jerusalem while I go to the Father, and until I send you the Spirit of Truth." [2053:1]*

Key people were still in Jerusalem on May 5, including the members of the women's corp. At this time the cloth could still be in Jerusalem.

*They all agreed that they must separate themselves from unbelievers; and within one month from the death of Stephen the church at Jerusalem had been organized under the leadership of Peter, and James the brother of Jesus had been installed as its titular head. [2068:2]*

This records the involvement of James and Peter in the formation of the church. Peter and James could be confidantes regarding James retrieval of the cloth. The morontia Jesus may have instructed each of them during the private appearances that the church was to be the ongoing custodian of the cloth. Was it expected that this church had long term survival prospects, and could be expected to survive longer than Abner's group?

Maybe James did not have to retrieve the cloth and the messages from Jesus to James and then Peter referred to acquiring the cloth from the midwayers who had already retrieved it.

If an early church had the cloths would they have ever relinquished ownership and sent them overseas? Except perhaps in exceptional circumstances. They would more likely hang on to them even with the possibility of being overrun and looted.

*Seraphim are able to function as material ministers to human beings under certain circumstances, but their action in this capacity is very rare. They are able, with the assistance of the midway creatures and the physical controllers, to function in a wide range of activities in behalf of human beings, even to make actual contact with mankind, but such occurrences are very unusual. [1246:4]*

The seraphim could certainly have performed this task of retrieval and protection for many an age. When would the midwayers have handed over the cloth? In one day or one year? Or in about 1250 years, the time when the Shroud can be reasonably traced to a definite historical era. This seems most unlikely, as it is not the role of the midwayers.

*Acting upon the instruction of Peter, John Mark and others went forth to call the leading disciples together at the home of Mary Mark. By ten thirty, one hundred and twenty of the foremost disciples of Jesus living in Jerusalem had forgathered to hear the report of the farewell message of the Master and to learn of his ascension. Among this company was Mary the mother of Jesus. She had returned to Jerusalem with John Zebedee when the apostles came back from their recent sojourn in Galilee. [2057:8]*

*About one o'clock, as the one hundred and twenty believers were engaged in prayer, they all became aware of a strange presence in the room. [2059:1]*

This meeting, with the arrival of The Spirit of Truth, appears to be the last time the followers are gathered together. From this time, they disperse.

## **THE FIRST CUSTODIANS OF THE GRAVE CLOTHS**

A little before three o'clock in the afternoon on Friday April 7, AD 30, Jesus gave up the life struggle

At half past seven o'clock on the Sunday morning, the captain of the temple guards wrapped the grave cloths all up in the linen sheet, removed them from the tomb, and threw them over a near-by cliff.

The Romans destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70 with all the inhabitants fleeing.

In the intervening years, the cloths may have been in the possession of Mark since the passing of his mother, (his father died around the time of the crucifixion), or with the families of Joseph of Arithamea or Nicodemus. Or even with James' early church. Peter may have already taken them to the new church in Antioch. They could have been taken by Mark to his church in Alexandria. Or Mary Mark may have given them to Abner and his associates in Philapelpia.

### **There are many individuals who would know of their existence**

- The captain of the temple guards could have arrived to see the burial cloths before the Roman guards. (2023:3)
- Mary Magdalene may have known the whereabouts of the grave cloths. (2029:5) David and Joseph could have returned to retrieve the cloths. (2030:1)
- Pilate's wife Claudia was aware of Jesus from her maid-in-waiting, and the emotional impact from the dream (on both Pilate and Claudia). It is possible Pilate arranged to have the cloths recovered in order to present them to Claudia. He no doubt felt guilt and remorse for his actions and this may have been an attempt to appease others, particularly his wife.
- Joseph of Arimathea who provided the cloths for the burial. His home was often used as a meeting place.
- The educated, intellectual and altruistic Nicodemus whose home was sometimes used as a meeting place. (2001:1; 2025:3; 2030:3) The sixteenth morontia appearance of Jesus occurred in the courtyard of his home. (2052:1)
- The women believers who were staying at the home of Joseph of Arimathea. (2045:3)
- The apostles or family members of Jesus.
- Visitors to the home of Mary Mark.

## Was it Pilate's wife, Claudia Procula?

There are many quotes that tell of Claudia's belief in Jesus and her courage in support of him.

*Since the Jewish authorities had no such force of armed men under their jurisdiction, they went at once to the fortress of Antonia and requested the Roman commander to give them this guard; but when he learned that they intended to arrest Jesus, he promptly refused to accede to their request and referred them to his superior officer. In this way more than an hour was consumed in going from one authority to another until they finally were compelled to go to Pilate himself in order to obtain permission to employ the armed Roman guards. It was late when they arrived at Pilate's house, and he had retired to his private chambers with his wife. He hesitated to have anything to do with the enterprise, all the more so since his wife had asked him not to grant the request. [1973:1]*

*Pilate knew something of Jesus' work among the Jews... [1990:1]*

*It was a few hours previously, shortly before midnight and after he had granted permission to use Roman soldiers in effecting the secret arrest of Jesus, that Pilate had heard further concerning Jesus and his teaching from his wife, Claudia, who was a partial convert to Judaism, and who later on became a full-fledged believer in Jesus' gospel. [1990:2]*

*Pilate knew Jesus was innocent of the charges brought against him, and had he been a just and courageous judge, he would have acquitted him and turned him loose. But he was afraid to defy these angry Jews, and while he hesitated to do his duty, a messenger came up and presented him with a sealed message from his wife, Claudia. [1994:1]*

*When Pilate opened this letter from his wife, he read: "I pray you have nothing to do with this innocent and just man whom they call Jesus. I have suffered many things in a dream this night because of him." This note from Claudia not only greatly upset Pilate and thereby delayed the adjudication of this matter... [1994:2]*

As a partial convert to Judaism, Claudia was not influenced by being a follower of Jesus at the time. The dream is therefore independent to her belief and can be considered somewhat genuine.

Pilate had authority over the body. And therefore he may have also had the official rights to the burial cloths. Even the rich had to get permission to dispose of the body so would they have had any 'rights' to the cloths?



*... Joseph and Nicodemus arrived on the scene with an order from Pilate authorizing them to take possession of the body of Jesus. [2011:6]*

Pilate might want to collect the cloths (and destroy them) due to his superstition or to prevent any further adoration of Jesus and possible unrest. Or his wife Claudia may have had some sort of premonition. But Pilate had washed his hands of it all.

Claudia had a spiritual experience with her dream and her Thought Adjuster may have utilized its connection to impress upon her the need to safeguard the cloths and to entrust her with them. So even if Pilate did not retrieve the cloths, Claudia may have made it her business to acquire them from say the Mark lad or whoever had them in their possession.

Claudia would then have been able to take them to Rome with diplomatic immunity if it were needed, and then to Lausanne with her husband Pilate. A subsequent church or a wealthy family may have acquired the cloth.

*... the legatus of Syria ordered Pilate to Rome. Tiberius died while Pilate was on the way to Rome, and he was not reappointed as procurator of Judea. He never fully recovered from the regretful condemnation of having consented to the crucifixion of Jesus. Finding no favor in the eyes of the new emperor, he retired to the province of Lausanne, where he subsequently committed suicide. [1989:0]*

*After the death of Pilate, Claudia became prominently identified with the spread of the good news. [1989:1]*

Did Claudia accompany Pilate to Lausanne and care for him, as she did not commence her outreach work in places like Jerusalem, Alexandria and Greece, until after his death? Or did she remain in Jerusalem while Pilate retreated to Europe in disgrace?

As Claudia became a believer in the gospel it is likely she had some association with the Abner group. She may have given the cloths to them. Claudia did not leave Jerusalem (if indeed she did) with her husband at least until late AD 36 as Tiberius died in March AD 37. Therefore there was ample time to become a firm believer with many associates prior to departure.

The first 'official' owner of the cloths is recorded in early 1300. It is possible that the cloth was in Europe from the time of Claudia and the Edessa type references were to a copy made from the original.

A mountain located in Switzerland (Mt Pilatus), towering nearly 7000 feet, southwest of Lucerne, is said by some to be named after the Roman Procurator Pontius Pilatus. Turin is a short journey over the Alps from Lausanne.

### Was it The Romans?

Jesus did win adherents from the Roman people. One of the guards at the cross became a follower. So did Celta.

Joanna, the wife of Chuza, the steward of Herod Antipas was a member of the women's evangelistic corps. And so was Celta, the daughter of a Roman centurion. (See 1679:0)

The guards at the cross even divided up the clothing of Jesus. The authorities were not interested in such 'artifacts'. They disposed of the cloths as ordered and that would seem to be the end of the matter.

### Was it any of the apostles?

The loyal friends of Jesus are unlikely to be concerned about the cloths as this most devastating moment in their lives. Followers were unlikely to have the interest or presence of mind to gather up the cloths. And *The Urantia Book* indicates their subsequent lives were quite unsettled.

**Andrew:** *When the later persecutions finally scattered the apostles from Jerusalem, Andrew journeyed through Armenia, Asia Minor, and Macedonia and, after bringing many thousands into the kingdom, was finally apprehended and crucified in Patrae in Achaia. [1550:3]*

**James:** *And as concerns James, it was literally true--he did drink the cup with the Master, seeing that he was the first of the apostles to experience martyrdom, being early put to death with the sword by Herod Agrippa. [1553:4]*

**John:** *Of all the twelve apostles, John Zebedee eventually became the outstanding theologian. He died a natural death at Ephesus in A.D. 103 when he was one hundred and one years of age. [1556:0]*

**Philip:** *Philip, the onetime steward of the twelve, was a mighty man in the kingdom, winning souls wherever he went; and he was finally crucified for his faith and buried at Hierapolis. [1558:1]*

**Nathaniel:** *Nathaniel's father (Bartholomew) died shortly after Pentecost, after which this apostle went into Mesopotamia and India proclaiming the glad tidings of the kingdom and baptizing believers. ... Nathaniel died in India. [1559:4]*

**Matthew:** *He was lost to the knowledge of his former apostolic associates, but on he went, preaching and baptizing, through Syria, Cappadocia, Galatia, Bithynia, and Thrace. And it was in Thrace, at Lysimachia, that certain unbelieving Jews conspired with the Roman soldiers to encompass his death. [1560:6]*

**Thomas:** *And Thomas continued preaching and baptizing until he was apprehended by the agents of the Roman government and was put to death in Malta. [1563:1]*

**Alpheus twins:** *Soon after their Master was crucified, they returned to their families and nets; their work was done. [1564:5]*

**Simon:** *He went to Alexandria and, after woring up the Nile, penetrated into the heart of Africa, everywhere preaching the gospel of Jesus and baptizing believers. Thus he labored until he was an old man and feeble. And he died and was buried in the heart of Africa. [1565:8]*

**Peter:** *Peter's wife was a very able woman. For years she labored acceptably as a member of the women's corps, and when Peter was driven out of Jerusalem, she accompanied him upon all his journeys to the churches as well as on all his missionary excursions. And the day her illustrious husband yielded up his life, she was thrown to the wild beasts in the arena at Rome. [1552:3]*

**Judas:** *When the sordid and sinful business was all over, this renegade mortal, who thought lightly of selling his friend for thirty pieces of silver to satisfy his long-nursed craving for revenge, rushed out and committed the final act in the drama of fleeing from the realities of mortal existence - suicide. [1567:6]*

*This left but six of the original twelve apostles to become actors on the stage of the early proclamation of the gospel in Jerusalem: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, and Matthew. [2058:4]*

*And then broke out the new and relentless persecutions by the Jews, so that the active teachers of the new religion about Jesus, which subsequently at Antioch was called Christianity, went forth to the ends of the empire proclaiming Jesus. [2068:3]*

### **There are many organizations that would have known of their existence**

*Philadelphia was really the headquarters of the early church in the south and east as Antioch was in the north and west. [1831:6]*

*Abiding faith in the resurrection of Jesus was the cardinal feature of the faith of all branches of the early gospel teaching. In Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Philadelphia all the gospel teachers united in this implicit faith in the Master's resurrection. [2029:4]*

### **Was it the new church in Jerusalem?**

This church group surely would have venerated and protected the cloths.

*Stephen, the leader of the Greek colony of Jesus' believers in Jerusalem, thus became the first martyr to the new faith and the specific cause for the formal organization of the early Christian church. This new crisis was met by the recognition that believers could not longer go on as a sect within the Jewish faith. They all agreed that they must separate themselves from unbelievers; and within one month from the death of Stephen the church at Jerusalem had been organized under the leadership of Peter, and James the brother of Jesus had been installed as its titular head. [2068:2]*

*Abiding faith in the resurrection of Jesus was the cardinal feature of the faith of all branches of the early gospel teaching. In Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Philadelphia all the gospel teachers united in this implicit faith in the Master's resurrection. [2029:4]*

The Orthodox Church claims to trace its development back through the Byzantine or Roman Empire, to the earliest church established by St. Paul and the Apostles, with the first Churches appearing in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, then in Antioch, Ethiopia, Egypt, Rome, and Alexandria.

### **Was it Mark and the Coptic Church in Alexandria?**

There is some early evidence that St. Peter came to Rome in AD 42, Mark perhaps accompanying him. But Acts raise considerable difficulties. On the assumption that the founder of the Church of Alexandria was identical with the companion of Paul and Barnabas, we find him at Jerusalem and Antioch about AD 46 (Acts xii, 25), in Salamis about 47 (Acts, xiii, 5), at Antioch again about 49 or 50 (Acts, xv, 37-9), and when he quitted Antioch, on the separation of Paul and Barnabas, it was not to Alexandria but to Cyprus that he turned (Acts, xv, 39). (<http://www.ewtn.com/library/MARY/09672C.htm>)

There is nothing to prove absolutely that all this is inconsistent with Mark being Bishop of Alexandria at the time, but seeing that the chronology of the Apostolic age is admittedly uncertain, and that we have no earlier authority than Eusebius for the date of the foundation of the Alexandrian Church, we may perhaps conclude with more probability that it was founded somewhat later. There is an

abundance of time between AD 50 and 60, a period during which the New Testament is silent in regard to St. Mark, for his activity in Egypt.

Mark the Evangelist is considered the founder of the church in Alexandria in AD 60 and the first Bishop of Alexandria. According to tradition, St. Mark was arrested during a festival of Serapis in AD 68 and martyred by being dragged through the streets. He was buried under the church he had founded. He died in the eighth year of Nero. (Wikipedia)

*The Gospel by Mark. Mark wrote this record at the instigation of Peter and on the earnest petition of the church at Rome. Knowing how consistently the Master refused to write out his teachings when on earth and in the flesh, Mark, like the apostles and other leading disciples, was hesitant to put them in writing. But Peter felt the church at Rome required the assistance of such a written narrative, and Mark consented to undertake its preparation. He made many notes before Peter died in A.D. 67, and in accordance with the outline approved by Peter and for the church at Rome, he began his writing soon after Peter's death. The Gospel was completed near the end of A.D. 68. [1341:4]*

Did Peter take the 'Christian' church to Antioch before the destruction of Jerusalem? Is that why the gospels record Mark in Antioch?

Mark was central to all that was going on and he had many associates, any one of which could have been the recipient of the Shroud if it were in his possession.

There were connections between Mark and James and Peter.

- After James, Mark was associated with Paul.
- Mark was also a friend of David who was with Abner in Philadelphia.
- Mark followed the later theology of Peter and Paul in opposition to Abner's approach. Additionally, being the person who recovered the grave cloths, Mark would perhaps have resented the face cloth being in the possession of Abner. Rome would have wanted it too.
- Mark was associated with Pilate and his wife Claudia who are both canonized Saints in the Coptic Church which Mark founded. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Eritrean Orthodox Church (Coptic jurisdictions outside Egypt of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria) recognized Pilate and his wife as saints in the sixth century.

### **Was it Abner and the early church at Philadelphia?**

*Thus was Abner compelled to live a life of isolation. He was head of a church which was without standing at Jerusalem. He had dared to defy James the Lord's brother, who was subsequently supported by Peter.*

*Such conduct effectively separated him from all his former associates. Then he dared to withstand Paul. [1832:1]*

*During the later years of Abner and for some time thereafter, the believers at Philadelphia held more strictly to the religion of Jesus, as he lived and taught, than any other group on earth. [1832:2]*

*The Eastern version of the message of Jesus, notwithstanding that it remained more true to his teachings, continued to follow the uncompromising attitude of Abner. It never progressed as did the Hellenized version and was eventually lost in the Islamic movement. [2072:4]*

*Jesus and the twelve were on their way to visit Abner and his associates, who were preaching and teaching in Philadelphia. Of all the cities of Perea, in Philadelphia the largest group of Jews and gentiles, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, embraced the teachings of the seventy, thereby entering into the kingdom of heaven. The synagogue of Philadelphia had never been subject to the supervision of the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem and therefore had never been closed to the teachings of Jesus and his associates. At this very time, Abner was teaching three times a day in the Philadelphia synagogue. [1831:4]*

*The Jews at Jerusalem had always had trouble with the Jews of Philadelphia. And after the death and resurrection of Jesus the Jerusalem church, of which James the Lord's brother was head, began to have serious difficulties with the Philadelphia congregation of believers. Abner became the head of the Philadelphia church, continuing as such until his death. And this estrangement with Jerusalem explains why nothing is heard of Abner and his work in the Gospel records of the New Testament. This feud between Jerusalem and Philadelphia lasted throughout the lifetimes of James and Abner and continued for some time after the destruction of Jerusalem. [1831:6]*

This feud during their lives and beyond may have been exacerbated by the possession of the grave or face cloths in Philadelphia. However the book makes no mention of such, and gives other reasons for their differences.

*It was the apparent misfortune of Abner to be at variance with all of the leaders of the early Christian church. He fell out with Peter and James (Jesus' brother) over questions of administration and the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem church; he parted company with Paul over differences of philosophy and theology. [1831:7]*

## Was it other members of the church at Philadelphia?

Lazarus, Mary, Martha, David, and Ruth (the special sister of Jesus), and later Nathaniel, were associates of Abner at the church in Philadelphia. There is no indication that any of them had the early possession of the grave cloths. (But perhaps the Sudarium. See below.)

The church was the spiritual home of the most trusted allies and dearest friends (and relative) of Jesus who taught the Master's true gospel. They would have been trustworthy custodians of an artifact in memory of Jesus. Mary Mark would have trusted them above any other emerging group or church.

*... what he most wanted was an opportunity to talk with Lazarus and to visit with Martha and Mary. Next to his own family he loved these three most of all. [1404:2]*

This shows the depth of love and friendship Jesus had for these three.

*And so Lazarus took hasty leave of his sisters at Bethany, fleeing down through Jericho and across the Jordan, never permitting himself to rest long until he had reached Philadelphia. Lazarus knew Abner well, and here he felt safe from the murderous intrigues of the wicked Sanhedrin. [1849:6]*

*Soon after this Martha and Mary disposed of their lands at Bethany and joined their brother in Perea. Meantime, Lazarus had become the treasurer of the church at Philadelphia. He became a strong supporter of Abner in his controversy with Paul and the Jerusalem church... [1849:7]*

*Accordingly, sometime after the resurrection and also after the death of his mother, David betook himself to Philadelphia, having first assisted Martha and Mary in disposing of their real estate; and there, in association with Abner and Lazarus, he spent the remainder of his life, becoming the financial overseer of all those large interests of the kingdom which had their center at Philadelphia during the lifetime of Abner. [1869:1]*

*David Zebedee left Bethany with Martha and Mary, for Philadelphia, early in June, the day after his marriage to Ruth, Jesus' youngest sister. [2031:4]*

*Nathaniel differed increasingly with Peter regarding preaching about Jesus in the place of proclaiming the former gospel of the kingdom. This disagreement became so acute by the middle of the following month that Nathaniel withdrew, going to Philadelphia to visit Abner and Lazarus; and after tarrying there for more than a year, he went on into the lands beyond Mesopotamia preaching the gospel as he understood it. [2058:3]*

*During the later years of Abner and for some time thereafter, the believers at Philadelphia held more strictly to the religion of Jesus, as he lived and taught, than any other group on earth. [1832:2] Abner lived to be 89 years old, dying at Philadelphia on the 21st day of November, A.D. 74. [1832:3]*

Abner's center in Philadelphia would have been a safe haven for the Shroud or face cloth and he would have been involved in its future security. His sister congregation was in Antioch and it may have passed on to them at some stage prior to Edessa.



## THE EARLY CHURCH IN ANTIOCH

*The Urantia Book* has provided the hitherto unknown story of the grave cloths up to the times of their disposal. In the above sections, Grave Consequences and The First Custodians of the Grave Cloths, consideration has been given to possible events from the time prior to the disposal, to the following period when the cloths would have initially been in Jerusalem. They could have remained there until AD 70, or gone to one of the newly forming Christian centers. Consideration has been given above to Alexandria and Philadelphia.

Special attention shall now be given to the church at Antioch.

### Theories that the cloths were in Antioch before Edessa

Historian Jack Markwardt provides us with a plausible explanation for how the Abgar legend developed. From early documents, he has theorized that the Shroud was taken, not to Edessa but to Antioch, following the crucifixion and 'Resurrection' of Christ. From Jerusalem, Antioch is two thirds of the way to Edessa.

There it remained until late in the second century when it was taken to the city of Edessa for the baptism of King Abgar the Great. Abgar the great is Abgar the VIII and is not to be confused with Abgar V of the legendary account. Markwardt writes:

*Avircius Marcellus, the Bishop of Hieropolis, was summoned to Rome, where he was introduced to Abgar's wife, Queen Shalmath, that he then travelled to Antioch, where he was joined by Palut and provided with the Shroud, identifiable as the historically-documented sacred Christ-icon which had been taken from Palestine to Syria, and that he then proceeded to Edessa, where he displayed the imaged relic to the king and baptized him into the Christian faith, thereby resulting in the Shroud's commemoration, in legend, as the Portrait of Edessa.*

This fits nicely with a widespread scholarly consensus that Edessa was evangelized and developed as a Christian community at about this time. Scholars doubt that this happened earlier. And it gives us a plausible scenario for seeing how the legend of Abgar might have developed.

Markwardt tells us that the Shroud was then returned to Antioch where it remained until the 6th century. It was, he believes, concealed in a niche above the city's Gate of the Cherubim in 362 where it remained until about 540. The Gate of the Cherubim was so named because, reportedly, according to the

biographer of St. Saint Symeon Stylites, the column sitter, Titus placed the Cherubim he took from the Temple in Jerusalem above this gate.

In 540, this relic, the Christ icon, was again taken to Edessa. This time it was done so to safeguard it from advancing Persian armies. Edessa was attacked by the Persians four years later but Edessa prevailed and defeated the Persians.

### [Credence for Markwardt's theory comes from the account of Sister Egeria's travels to Edessa in AD 384](#)

*This account is given by historian Andrew Palmer: Sister Egeria (circa AD 384) was given a three-day tour of Edessa by the Bishop of the city. We learn from her account of many miracles that saved Edessa from the Persians. And we learn that she was introduced to the legend of Abgar, even shown a copy of Abgar's letter to Jesus. She wrote lengthy detailed accounts of her visit and we might think that had there been an image bearing cloth, she would have mentioned it. She didn't.*

However, it should be noted that Sister Egeria's letters are very damaged and some details may not be fully recorded.

### [The significance of Antioch](#)

According to Acts, Antioch became an alternative center for Christians following the dispersion of the believers after the death of Stephen (c. AD 34–35).

#### ***The Urantia Book records the death of Stephen***

*Stephen, the leader of the Greek colony of Jesus' believers in Jerusalem, thus became the first martyr to the new faith and the specific cause for the formal organization of the early Christian church. This new crisis was met by the recognition that believers could not longer go on as a sect within the Jewish faith. [2068:2]*

#### ***The Urantia Book references to Antioch***

*And then broke out the new and relentless persecutions by the Jews, so that the active teachers of the new religion about Jesus, which subsequently at Antioch was called Christianity, went forth to the ends of the empire proclaiming Jesus. [2068:3]*

*The Christian leaders were willing to make such compromises with Mithraism that the better half of its adherents were won over to the Antioch cult. [2070:4]*

*Within a short time after the destruction of Jerusalem, Antioch became the headquarters of Pauline Christianity, while Philadelphia remained the center of the Abnerian kingdom of heaven. From Antioch the Pauline version of the teachings of Jesus and about Jesus spread to all the Western world; from Philadelphia the missionaries of the Abnerian version of the kingdom of heaven spread throughout Mesopotamia and Arabia... [1869:2]*

It is on record that it was in Antioch that the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. With Antioch the main center, and with the visits by John Mark, the cloths could well have been in Antioch from this early time.

### **Visits by Jesus to Antioch**

*At Antioch the Son of Man lived for over two months, working, observing, studying, visiting, ministering, and all the while learning how man lives, how he thinks, feels, and reacts to the environment of human existence. For three weeks of this period he worked as a tentmaker. He remained longer in Antioch than at any other place he visited on this trip. Ten years later, when the Apostle Paul was preaching in Antioch and heard his followers speak of the doctrines of the Damascus scribe, he little knew that his pupils had heard the voice, and listened to the teachings, of the Master himself. [1492:3]*

*Jesus became sober and reflective as he drew nearer Palestine and the end of their journey. He visited with few people in Antioch; he seldom went about in the city. After much questioning as to why his teacher manifested so little interest in Antioch, Ganid finally induced Jesus to say: "This city is not far from Palestine; maybe I shall come back here sometime." [1480:7]*

It is possible the leaders at Antioch knew Jesus during the two months he spent there. Thus they would have recognized his likeness on the Shroud if indeed it first came to Antioch. Paul and the followers ten years later were unaware of Jesus' visit and evidently were not aware of any Shroud or connection that the leaders may have made between the Damascus scribe and the image.

Many other people from there knew him as well. There was Luke the physician of Antioch.

The comment to Ganid by Jesus that 'maybe I shall come back here sometime' was most likely a polite explanation. Or maybe it was a prophetic reference by Jesus, knowing that he could one day come back to that city in another guise.

### **Morontia reference**

*And then the Master disappeared from their sight. The next day there went out from Tyre those who carried this story to Sidon and even to Antioch and Damascus. Jesus had been with these believers when he was in the flesh, and they were quick to recognize him when he began to teach them. While his friends could not readily recognize his morontia form when made visible, they were never slow to identify his personality when he spoke to them. [2054:4]*

Many who knew Jesus in the flesh recognized him in his morontia form and carried the news back to Antioch. One of them may have been connected to the leaders in Antioch and was further able to connect and verify the image on the Shroud. They could have also realized the image resulted from the process of his transition from the flesh to his new semi spiritual state.

### [The demise of Antioch](#)

In AD 526 during late [May](#), probably between the 20th and the 29th, a major earthquake hit Syria and Antioch, Turkey, killing approximately 250,000 people. The earthquake was followed by a fire that destroyed most of the buildings left standing by the earthquake.

At the beginning of his reign Khosrau I, King of Persia, concluded an 'Eternal Peace' with the Roman Emperor Justinian I (527–565) in 532, who wanted to have his hands free for the conquest of Africa and Sicily. But (according to Procopius) his successes against the Vandals and Goths caused Khosrau I (501-579) to begin the war again in 540.

He invaded Syria and sacked the great city of Antioch, deporting its people to Mesopotamia, where he built for them a new city near Ctesiphon under the name of 'Khosrau-Antioch' or 'Chosro-Antioch'.

By the 5th century Edessa had become the headquarters of Syriac literature and learning. With the destruction of Antioch, the cloth may well have been transported to Edessa in the early 540's as noted by Markwardt with its subsequent surfacing there in 544.

## THE ONGOING TIMELINE OF THE SHROUD

### Early references to a full-length image

Many scholars now believe the Shroud and the Image of Edessa, sometimes called the Mandylion, could be one and the same. The following timeline could then be the early history of the Shroud as it makes continual reference to the Image of Edessa. The accuracy of these accounts is naturally uncertain.

- There is some evidence and a strong tradition that Thomas and Thaddeus Jude (Thaddeus of the 70, Thaddeus of Edessa) went to Edessa as early as **33 CE**. There is a legend that they carried with them a cloth bearing an image of Jesus. In *The Urantia Book*, a Thaddeus is present at the Last Supper in **AD 30**. He was an apostle, one of the Alpheus twins.

*After the wine and the water had been mixed, they brought the cup to Jesus, who, when he had received it from the hand of Thaddeus, held it while he offered thanks. [1938:1]*

- In Edessa prior to **AD 50**, an account given by Thaddeus (= Addai) mentions Hannan, who supposedly wrote at Jesus' dictation. He was archivist at Edessa and painter to King Abgar V (died **c. AD 40**). He had been charged to paint a portrait of Jesus Christ, and brought to Edessa an icon that became an object of general veneration, and that was eventually said to have been painted (or created miraculously) by Jesus himself. So began the legendary growth of the 'Holy Face of Edessa'.
- This poem is from the apocryphal Thomasine literature of Edessa. It is from the 'Hymn of the Pearl', a poem arguably as old as **the first half of the first century**. As a figure of speech, Jesus, in the poem, is musing in the first person:

But all in the moment I faced it  
This robe seemed to me like a mirror,  
And in it I saw my whole self  
Moreover I faced myself facing into it.  
For we were two together divided  
Yet in one we stood in one likeness.

- This legend of King Abgar of Edessa writing to Jesus, was first recorded in the early **4th century** by Eusebius of Caesarea, who said that he had transcribed and translated the actual letter in the Syriac chancery documents of the king of Edessa, but who makes no mention of an image. Instead, the apostle Thaddaeus is said to have come to Edessa, bearing the words of Jesus, by the virtues of which the king was miraculously

- healed. Many scholars considered the letters spurious. Most testimony of the **5th century**, for instance Augustine and Jerome, is to the effect that Jesus wrote nothing. The correspondence was rejected as apocryphal by Pope Gelasius I and a Roman synod (c. **495**). Biblical scholars now generally believe that the letters were fabricated, probably in the **3rd century AD**. The correspondence consisted of Abgar's letter and the answer dictated by Jesus.
- As the legend later expanded, a portrait of Jesus painted from life began to be mentioned. This portrait, purportedly painted by the court archivist Hannan during his visit to Jesus, is first mentioned in the Syriac text called the 'Doctrine of Addai' (Addai = Thaddeus), from the second half of the **4th century**. Here it is said that the reply of Jesus was given not in writing, but orally, and that the event took place in **AD 32**. *The Urantia Book* says there would be no writing left by Jesus (See 1330:2). A portrait could have originated from Hannan viewing the cloths at the Mark home for instance. Hannan was a painter and could have sketched a copy from memory.
  - The story of the 'letter to Abgar', including the portrait made by the court painter Hannan, is repeated, with some additions, in the **mid-5th century** History of the Armenians of Moses of Chorene, who remarked that the portrait was preserved in Edessa. The story was later elaborated further by the church historian Evagrius, Bishop of Edessa (c. **536-600**), who declared for the first time (as far as is known) that the image of Jesus was 'divinely wrought', and 'not made by human hands'.
  - Journalist Ian Wilson has put forward a theory that the object venerated as the Mandylion from the **6th (544) to the 13th centuries** was in fact the Shroud of Turin, folded in four, and enclosed in an oblong frame so that only the face was visible. For support, he refers to documents in the Vatican Library and the University of Leiden, Netherlands, which seem to suggest the presence of another image at Edessa. A **10th century** codex, *Codex Vossianus Latinus* Q 69 found by Gino Zaninotto in the Vatican Library contains an **8th-century** account saying that an imprint of Christ's whole body was left on a canvas kept in a church in Edessa: it quotes a man called Smera in Constantinople: 'King Abgar received a cloth on which one can see not only a face but the whole body.'
  - In **544 CE**, a cloth, with an image believed to be Jesus, was found above one of Edessa's gates in the walls of the city, a cloth that Gregory Referendarius of Constantinople would later describe with a full-length image and bloodstains. There is strong evidence that the Edessa cloth is in fact the Shroud of Turin.
  - The first record of the existence of a physical image in the ancient city of Edessa (now Urfa) was in Evagrius Scholasticus, writing about **AD 600**,

- who reports a portrait of Christ, of divine origin, which effected the miraculous aid in the defence of Edessa against the Persians in **544**.
- Two coins were minted in **692 CE** under the reign of Emperor Justinian II. They were the first coins ever minted with an image of Christ and appear to be based on the Shroud image as indicated by 180 matching points of congruence between the Shroud image and the coin image.
  - In **730 CE**, St. John Damascene, in his anti iconoclastic movement thesis, *On Holy Images*, describes the cloth as an *himation*, which is translated as an oblong cloth or grave cloth. This may be the first mention, among extant manuscripts, of it being a grave cloth.
  - A **tenth century** codex, Codex Vossianus Latinus Q 69 found by Gino Zaninotto in the Vatican Library contains an eighth-century account saying that an imprint of Christ's whole body was left on a canvas kept in a church in Edessa.
  - The Byzantines often tried to retake Edessa, especially under Romanus Lacapenus, and on August 16, **944 CE** the cloth bearing the Image of Edessa was taken from Edessa to Constantinople. On the very day after the arrival of the cloth in the Byzantine capital, Gregory Referendarius, the archdeacon of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, preached a sermon that provides a vital clue. The sermon, which was recently rediscovered in the Vatican Archives and translated from the ancient Greek by Mark Guscini, reveals explicitly that the Edessa Cloth contained a full-length image, one that was believed to be of Jesus. It was received amidst great celebration by emperor Romanos I Lekapenos, who deposited it in the Theotokos of the Pharos chapel in the Great Palace of Constantinople. Not inconsequentially, the earliest known Byzantine icon of the Mandylion or Holy Face, preserved at Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai, is dated c. **945**.
  - There is significant evidence that in Edessa as well as in Constantinople, the cloth was kept folded in such a way that only the face was visible. By folding the cloth, doubled in fours (tetradiplon) that is exactly what results in 'a centered face of Jesus on a horizontal folded cloth' as seen in a **10th century** painting of Abgar V holding a picture that is odd for its horizontal shape as a portrait.
  - In the **11th century**, Greek chronicler John of Skylitzes painted a picture of the same event as part of an illustrated manuscript. It clearly shows the General of the Army presenting a long linen cloth with an image on it to Emperor Romanus I. Following the 4th Crusade when troops from Venice and France looted and burned the city, a letter of protest was written to Pope Innocent III. The letter documents this horrific event and what was

stolen including, *“Most sacred of all, the linen in which our Lord Jesus Christ was wrapped after his death and before his resurrection”*. These and other historical clues provide a history stretching nearly 1500 years.

- In Constantinople, the cloth was sometimes ceremoniously unfurled, raised up like a vertical banner, in a way that showed a full frontal picture of Jesus as though rising from a grave. In **1201**, Nicholas Mesarites, the sacristan of the Pharos Chapel where the Image of Edessa was kept, wrote:

*Here He rises again and the sindon [Shroud] ‘is the clear proof’ still smelling fragrant of perfumes, defying corruption because they wrapped the mysterious naked dead body from head to feet.*

- We know that in **1204**, crusaders looted the treasures of Constantinople and carried away many riches and relics. The Edessa Cloth disappeared along with other priceless treasures. There is some evidence that suggests that the Edessa Cloth, then known as the Holy Mandylion, was taken to Athens. About a year after Constantinople was plundered, Theodore Ducas Anglelos wrote in a letter to Pope Innocent III (**1161-1216**):

*The Venetians partitioned the treasure of gold, silver and ivory, while the French did the same with the relics of saints and the most sacred of all, the linen in which our Lord Jesus Christ was wrapped after His death and before the resurrection.*

- In **1207**, Nicholas d’Orrante, Abbott of Casole and the Papal Legate in Athens, wrote about relics taken from Constantinople by French knights. Referring specifically to burial cloths, he mentions seeing them ‘with our own eyes’ in Athens. Sacred objects were also taken to Venice and France.
- Otto (or Othon) de la Roche (died **1234**) was a Burgundian nobleman from the castle of La Roche-sur-l’Oignon, in the Franche-Comté commune of Rigney, Doubs. He joined the Fourth Crusade in 1204 and became the first Duke of Athens. The historians Geoffroy de Villehardouin and Robert de Clari both relate that Otto captured the Shroud of Turin and gave it to the Knights Templar, who brought it back to France. The first known keeper of the Turin Shroud had links both to the Templars as well the descendants of Otto. Some speculate that the Shroud could have been a major part of the famed ‘Templar treasure’ that treasure hunters still seek today.
- The discovery of a key document in 1993 (Hungarian Pray Manuscript dated from 1192) confirms that the Shroud was in Constantinople and was stolen by Crusaders during the 4th Crusade. This bridges the gap between **1204 and 1356** when the Shroud’s whereabouts was in question.



- Some say it was in possession of the Knights Templar who participated in the 4th Crusade (1202-1204) and they were said to venerate a mysterious image. This finding is monumental because it could validate a historical trail at least back to the year 544 when the 'Image Not Made By Hands' was discovered in Edessa (southern Turkey) and became the genesis for all Byzantine and Orthodox icon images of Christ that followed.

### [Is Thaddeus the link between \*The Urantia Book\* and the early references?](#)

Thaddeus Jude is the earliest person connected to stories about a cloth bearing an image of Jesus. In the uncertain times that followed the death of Jesus, Mary Mark in collaboration with Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, may have decided in AD 32 or 33, to secrete the burial cloth out of Jerusalem with a most inconspicuous person as a decoy unlikely to be challenged by the authorities.

Also it would have been beneficial to have a trusted and loyal person who was familiar with the mortal life of Jesus, and an understanding of the significance of the Shroud. And the royal family in Edessa may have seemed a suitable choice and safe haven for ongoing custodianship. So the Shroud had to be couriered.

Can we link an apostle to this task, namely one of the Alpheus twins, James and Judas, who were the twin sons of Alpheus and fishermen from Kheresa?

We are told (1563:6) that James and Judas were also called Thaddeus and Lebbeus, and given the exactness of the book, surely these would apply respectively. That is, James Thaddeus and Judas Lebbeus.

At the Last Supper they seemed to do much of the serving as no servants were provided to wait upon Jesus and the apostles. (1936:5) And at the Last Supper, Thaddeus who is mentioned as having brought the cup to Jesus, (See 1938:1) was in fact James. For the next course it says that the Alpheus twins brought on the bread and wine. (1940:2)

The name Thaddeus seems to be deliberately included at the Last Supper, perhaps to emphasize that this Thaddeus was an apostle. And the earlier reference does clarify the names given to these two apostles. One was not called Thaddeus Jude. Consider for example, this information on Wikipedia:

*St. Jude was one of the twelve Apostles. Mark's (3:18) and Matthew's (10:3) gospels refer to him as Thaddeus (a surname meaning "amiable or "loving"), possibly in part to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot, our Lord's betrayer! John's gospel refers to him in the last supper as "Judas... not the Iscariot".*

And this also from the Internet: *Jude, also known as Judas Thaddaeus was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. He is generally identified with Thaddeus, and is also variously called Jude of James, Jude Thaddaeus, Judas Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus.*

That Thaddeus may have been a courier is a possible assumption as the twins did demonstrate reliability and responsibility in the tasks allocated to them by Jesus, including the custody of money, as well as supervision of security:

*Andrew assigned them to the work of policing the multitudes. They were the chief ushers of the preaching hours and, in fact, the general servants and errand boys of the twelve. They helped Philip with the supplies, they carried money to the families for Nathaniel, and always were they ready to lend a helping hand to any one of the apostles. [1563.4]*

*... the twins continued their general police supervision ... [1589.]*

In his final admonitions and warnings Jesus said to the Alpheus twins:

*If, for the time being, your work in the outward affairs of the kingdom should be completed, you should go back to your former labors with the new enlightenment of the experience of sonship with God and with the exalted realization that, to him who is God-knowing, there is no such thing as common labor or secular toil. To you who have worked with me, all things have become sacred, and all earthly labor has become a service even to God the Father. And when you hear the news of the doings of your former apostolic associates, rejoice with them and continue your daily work as those who wait upon God and serve while they wait. [1959.3]*

Given their admitted limited abilities, the twins returned to their former work. It therefore might seem unlikely but not impossible, that one of them would have been the Thaddeus who was given the responsibility to courier the Shroud to Antioch. For Jesus did say their kingdom work would possibly have been completed only 'for the time being', and so not excluding the possibly of a further role for them. And they were to work as those who serve 'while they wait'. Yet it is also stated that 'their work was done'.

*But they could not comprehend the establishment of the kingdom. Soon after their Master was crucified, they returned to their families and nets; their work was done. They had not the ability to go on in the more complex battles of the kingdom. But they lived and died conscious of having been honored and blessed with four years of close and personal association with a Son of God, the sovereign maker of a universe. [1564:5]*

If Wikipedia has the name Judas Thaddeus wrong, maybe the traditional account of Thaddeus Jude in 33CE is also the incorrect name.

## Thaddeus of the 70, Thaddeus of Edessa

There is no mention of Edessa in *The Urantia Book*. But it is quite likely that one of the seventy was called Thaddeus, and associated with Edessa, and he may have taken the Shroud to Edessa as related in the historical accounts.

*Thomas, one of the twelve apostles, under divine impulse sent Thaddeus, who was also numbered among the seventy disciples of Christ, to Edessa, as a preacher and evangelist of the teaching of Christ. (Historia Ecclesiastica)*

*According to Eastern Christian tradition, Thaddeus of Edessa was one of the seventy disciples of Jesus. He is possibly identical with Thaddaeus, one of the Twelve Apostles. (Wikipedia)*

The seventy differed from the apostles. Any person in the seventy was definitely not an apostle. From *The Urantia Book*:

*The seventy were ordained by Jesus on Sabbath afternoon, November 19, at the Magadan Camp, and Abner was placed at the head of these gospel preachers and teachers. This corps of seventy consisted of Abner and ten of the former apostles of John, fifty-one of the earlier evangelists, and eight other disciples who had distinguished themselves in the service of the kingdom. [1800.3]*

Thomas may well have directed this person called Thaddeus Jude. The apostles of Jesus and the seventy were well acquainted. And as a person, Thomas could be a determined leader. He often rallied the other apostles to commit to and follow the directives of Jesus. He had a superb analytical mind, unflinching courage, and dedicated loyalty.

*In the organization of the twelve Thomas was assigned to arrange and manage the itinerary, and he was an able director of the work and movements of the apostolic corps. [1561.5]*

*He gave wise counsel to the apostles after Pentecost and, when persecution scattered the believers, went to Cyprus, Crete, the North African coast, and Sicily, preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom and baptizing believers. [1563.1]*

And so the Thaddeus Jude (Thaddeus of the 70, Thaddeus of Edessa) who went to Edessa as early as 33 CE, is more likely to have been one of the seventy and not the apostle with the name of Thaddeus.

Wikipedia provides this information:

*Based on various Eastern Christian traditions, Thaddaeus was a Jew born in Edessa, at the time a Syrian city, (now in Turkey). He came to Jerusalem for a festival, and heard the preachings of John the Baptist (St. John the Forerunner). After being baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, he remained in Palestine.*

*He later met and became a follower of Jesus. He was chosen to be one of the seventy disciples, whom Jesus sent in pairs to preach in the cities and places. After Pentecost and the ascension of Jesus, Thaddeus started preaching the gospel in Mesopotamia, Syria and Persia.*

Here then is a key and missing link between the revelation and the historical account. *The Urantia Book* reveals ten members of the seventy were formally apostles of John the Baptist. And the traditional story has Thaddeus of Edessa also with John the Baptist, before joining with the disciples of Jesus.

### [The timeline of recorded history](#)

This period is considered to commence in AD 1350. Prior to its arrival in France the Shroud's history is not clearly documented and therefore critics have alleged it is the work of a medieval artist.

Geoffroi de Charny and his wife Jeanne de Vergy are the first reliably recorded owners, in the fourteenth century, of the Turin Shroud. He was a French knight and author of at least three works on chivalry, and was a knight in the service of King John II of France.

The Hundred Years' War was a series of separate wars lasting from 1337 to 1453 between the House of Valois and the House of Plantagenet, also known as the House of Anjou.

The House of Valois claimed the title of King of France, while the Plantagenets from England claimed to be Kings of France and England. There is nothing to suggest that the Shroud was seized during the Hundred Years' War. There is no record of it prior to the collegiate church in Lirey.

The Shroud of Turin was found and exposed in the collegiate church created by Geoffroi de Charny in Lirey, France between 1355 to 1453, before its transfer to Chambéry, then to Turin. In 1453 Margaret de Charny deeded the Shroud to the House of Savoy.

The location of the Shroud in the 13th-14th centuries is interesting, since the Frankish (French) contingent in the 4th Crusade, which resulted in the sack of

Constantinople, was led by Tibaut of Champagne. Lirey, the first known location of the Turin Shroud, is located in the territory of this count.

Also, there was mention of the Shroud being at Nice. Research revealed that the cloth now known as the Shroud of Turin was kept in Nice from 1537 until 1549. (Wilson 1979, 219, 263)

This was the very time that Calvin was writing his treatise, published in 1543. Therefore, when he wrote of a Shroud at Nice, he was clearly referring to the image-bearing one that is today the subject of such controversy.

If there is any doubt of this, it is dispelled by Calvin himself in his French text (see Higman 1970) where (omitted by his English translator [Krasinski 1870]) he states that the Shroud at Nice was '*transporté là de Chambéry*'. Indeed, the famous Shroud was transported to Nice (via Turin, Milan, and Vercelli) from its home *at Chambéry* (then-capitol of the duchy of Savoy) for protection during the war. (Wilson 1979; Nickell 1998)

Thus it has been in Turin, Italy since 1578, over 400 years. And as mentioned, prior to that it was in France for another 200 years beginning in 1356. Since the 17th century the shroud has been displayed in the chapel built for that purpose by Guarino Guarini.

See <https://www.shroud.com/history.htm> for the detailed and undisputed history of the Shroud. It is set out as a timeline. Important points to note are:

- the involvement of so many people in the top echelons of politics, church, and nobility.
- the Shroud over the centuries has been invariably hidden away.
- the ease with which it finds its way around the countries of Europe and of course particularly France and Italy. This was also the case prior to the documented history.
- the scientific efforts relating to authenticity beginning in 1969 and then more seriously from 1973.
- prior to then the Shroud was revered by its custodian and associates.
- from the time of scientific analysis it has been the subject of conjecture and given various labels from fake, possibly real, and genuine.

### **[Is there any historic connection to the city of Turin?](#)**

Wikipedia provides this information. It is believed that a Roman colony was established in 9 BC under the name of Julia Augusta Taurinorum (modern Turin).

Taurini's country included one of the passes of the Alps, which points to a wider use of the name in earlier times. The number of inhabitants of Turin during those times reached about 5,000, and they all lived inside the high city walls.

In 218 BC, they were attacked by Hannibal as he was allied with their long-standing enemies, the Insubres. The Taurini chief town (Taurasia) was captured by Hannibal's forces after a three-day siege.

Around the 940s the countship of The Contea di Torino was founded and held by the Arduinic dynasty until the year 1050. After the marriage of Adelaide of Susa with Humbert Biancamano's son Otto, the family of the Counts of Savoy gained control.

While the title of count was held by the Bishop as count of Turin (1092–1130 and 1136–1191) it was ruled as a prince-bishopric by the Bishops. In 1230–1235 it was a lordship under the Marquess of Montferrat, styled Lord of Turin. At the end of the 13th century, when it was annexed to the Duchy of Savoy, the city already had 20,000 inhabitants.

The House of Savoy (Italian: Casa Savoia) is a royal family that was established in 1003 in the historical Savoy region, a small county in the Alps north-west of Italy. The County of Savoy was a State of the Holy Roman Empire which emerged, along with the free communes of Switzerland, from the collapse of the Burgundian Kingdom in the 11th century.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, to move to its current center. and was ruled by the Dukes of Savoy and the Bishop of Lausanne.

### **Does Turin have any connection to *The Urantia Book*?**

Though tenuous, there is a connection to Pilate. As previously mentioned, Mt Pilatus in Switzerland may have been named after Pilate and we learn above that there was a pass over the Alps, most likely to Switzerland, in the times of the very early Taurini country.

There is no specific information relating to the birthplace of Pilate but we are told in the book that he died in Lausanne (1989:0), indicating that he may have had family origins and connections in that area.

## **THE GOSPELS AND THE SHROUD**

There is no mention in the New Testament of markings on the Shroud.

John Calvin's 1543 *Treatise on Relics*:

*How is it possible that those sacred historians, who carefully related all the miracles that took place at Christ's death, should have omitted to mention one so remarkable as the likeness of the body of our Lord remaining on its wrapping sheet? This fact undoubtedly deserved to be recorded.*

*St. John, in his Gospel, relates even how St. Peter, having entered the sepulchre, saw the linen clothes lying on one side, and the napkin that was about his head on the other; but he does not say that there was a miraculous impression of our Lord's figure upon these clothes, and it is not to be imagined that he would have omitted to mention such a work of God if there had been any thing of this kind. (238)*

While this is a reasonable question to be asked, *The Urantia Book* comprehensively explains the reactions of Jesus' associates at the time. The cloths were seen in the tomb but that does not mean anyone thought to make a more detailed inspection of them. And there are other reasons.

### **Reasons why the markings were not recorded**

From *The Urantia Book* account of the dematerialization, the marking on the cloth would have been made instantaneously. But perhaps they were only feint at first and became clearly visible over time - hours, days, weeks, or maybe years.

The tomb and cloths were inspected by John and Peter but *The Urantia Book* does not say they saw markings. It says: *And again they both went back into the tomb more closely to examine the grave cloths. [2027:7]* However, it may not have been a detailed examination, including their unfolding. They would hardly have been looking for an image.

Mary Magdalene did not inspect the cloths closely and was more concerned about Jesus himself, and his appearances at the time.

The Roman guards bundled the cloths up and this suggests they were not inspected but merely routinely disposed of.

Any mention of the retrieved burial cloths, let alone an image of Jesus on them, would have meant political and military trouble for the owners. The

apostles had been persecuted and they would not have wanted to reveal what would be a threat to the Roman authorities, even if they knew about it.

The Mark lad may not have noticed any markings when and if he retrieved them. It is likely that Mark's mother would most certainly have noticed them either initially, or subsequently if the image emerged with greater definition over time. She would have taken all the usual measures to look after and store such material. She may have been the first to notice any image.

Non disclosure of the information would have been necessary to safeguard the cloth, initially from the Romans, and even later from those who were spreading the gospel and forming churches. Miraculous events were seized upon, usually misrepresented, and Jesus often requested that they not be mentioned.

Mark's mother Mary, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, would certainly have remained silent about markings. It is not mentioned in any writings of the apostles so it's likely they did not know about it. If they did, surely it would have fitted in with their claims of the bodily resurrection, and subsequent appearances of the risen Jesus.

If it had been in possession of a church, surely they would have used it as part of their proselytizing. If they held it in secret, it would likely have found its way to Rome in due course. This would indicate it was in private hands during these early times, with the possible exception of Abner and his followers.

### **References to the Shroud in the Gospels of the New Testament**

The Gospels of Matthew, [27:59–60] Mark, [15:46] and Luke [23:53] state that Joseph of Arimathea wrapped the body of Jesus in a piece of linen cloth and placed it in a new tomb.

The Gospel of John [19:38–40] refers to strips of linen used by Joseph of Arimathea and states that Apostle Peter found multiple pieces of burial cloth after the tomb was found open, strips of linen cloth for the body and a separate cloth for the head. [20:6–7]

The Gospel of the Hebrews, a 2nd-century manuscript, states that Jesus gave the linen cloth to the servant of the priest.

### **The origin of the main gospels also clarifies the situation**



According to *The Urantia Book*, the New Testament records had their origin in the following circumstances:

### **The Gospel by Mark.**

*John Mark wrote the earliest (excepting the notes of Andrew), briefest, and most simple record of Jesus' life. He presented the Master as a minister, as man among men. Although Mark was a lad lingering about many of the scenes which he depicts, his record is in reality the Gospel according to Simon Peter. He was early associated with Peter; later with Paul. Mark wrote this record at the instigation of Peter and on the earnest petition of the church at Rome. Knowing how consistently the Master refused to write out his teachings when on earth and in the flesh, Mark, like the apostles and other leading disciples, was hesitant to put them in writing. But Peter felt the church at Rome required the assistance of such a written narrative, and Mark consented to undertake its preparation. He made many notes before Peter died in A.D. 67, and in accordance with the outline approved by Peter and for the church at Rome, he began his writing soon after Peter's death. The Gospel was completed near the end of A.D. 68. Mark wrote entirely from his own memory and Peter's memory. The record has since been considerably changed, numerous passages having been taken out and some later matter added at the end to replace the latter one fifth of the original Gospel, which was lost from the first manuscript before it was ever copied. This record by Mark, in conjunction with Andrew's and Matthew's notes, was the written basis of all subsequent Gospel narratives which sought to portray the life and teachings of Jesus. [1341:4]*

### **The Gospel of Matthew**

*The Apostle Matthew did not write this Gospel. It was written by Isador, one of his disciples, who had as a help in his work not only Matthew's personal remembrance of these events but also a certain record which the latter had made of the sayings of Jesus directly after the crucifixion. This record by Matthew was written in Aramaic; Isador wrote in Greek. There was no intent to deceive in accrediting the production to Matthew. It was the custom in those days for pupils thus to honor their teachers. [1341:6]*

*Matthew's original record was edited and added to in A.D. 40 just before he left Jerusalem to engage in evangelistic preaching. It was a private record, the last copy having been destroyed in the burning of a Syrian monastery in A.D. 416. [1342:1]*

*Isador escaped from Jerusalem in A.D. 70 after the investment of the city by the armies of Titus, taking with him to Pella a copy of Matthew's notes. In the year 71, while living at Pella, Isador wrote the Gospel according to*

*Matthew. He also had with him the first four fifths of Mark's narrative. [1342:2]*

### **The Gospel by Luke**

*Luke, the physician of Antioch in Pisidia, was a gentile convert of Paul, and he wrote quite a different story of the Master's life. He began to follow Paul and learn of the life and teachings of Jesus in A.D. 47. Luke preserves much of the "grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" in his record as he gathered up these facts from Paul and others. Luke presents the Master as "the friend of publicans and sinners." He did not formulate his many notes into the Gospel until after Paul's death. Luke wrote in the year 82 in Achaia. He planned three books dealing with the history of Christ and Christianity but died in A.D. 90 just before he finished the second of these works, the "Acts of the Apostles." [1342:3]*

*As material for the compilation of his Gospel, Luke first depended upon the story of Jesus' life as Paul had related it to him. Luke's Gospel is, therefore, in some ways the Gospel according to Paul. But Luke had other sources of information. He not only interviewed scores of eyewitnesses to the numerous episodes of Jesus' life which he records, but he also had with him a copy of Mark's Gospel, that is, the first four fifths, Isador's narrative, and a brief record made in the year A.D. 78 at Antioch by a believer named Cedes. Luke also had a mutilated and much-edited copy of some notes purported to have been made by the Apostle Andrew. [1342:4]*

### **The Gospel of John**

*The Gospel according to John relates much of Jesus' work in Judea and around Jerusalem which is not contained in the other records. This is the so-called Gospel according to John the son of Zebedee, and though John did not write it, he did inspire it. Since its first writing it has several times been edited to make it appear to have been written by John himself. When this record was made, John had the other Gospels, and he saw that much had been omitted; accordingly, in the year A.D. 101 he encouraged his associate, Nathan, a Greek Jew from Caesarea, to begin the writing. John supplied his material from memory and by reference to the three records already in existence. He had no written records of his own. The Epistle known as "First John" was written by John himself as a covering letter for the work which Nathan executed under his direction. [1342:5]*

As the revelators have such incredibly detailed information, they would certainly know what happened to the cloths. But their mandate was to be edifying about the life of Jesus and not necessarily declare somewhat superfluous information.

## WRITINGS ABOUT THE SUDARIUM OF OVIEDO (Main source is Wikipedia)

### Comparisons between the Shroud and the Face Cloth / Napkin

The Sudarium of Oviedo is the name used to describe the napkin or face cloth that covered the face of Jesus in the tomb. The face cloth is mentioned in the bible. The early references to the Shroud and the face cloth are not always clearly differentiated. At times, the Image of Edessa is the Shroud and at other times it is the Mandylion, a small square face napkin.

What seems likely is that the cloth called the Image of Edessa was the Shroud, perhaps at times folded to show only the face, while the napkin may be the cloth described in the account given by Oviedo.

There is no clear image on this napkin, clearly differentiating it from the Shroud. Stains are visible to the naked eye, and more is visible under the microscope. Research has also provided further information:

- An overlaid photo of the Sudarium matches the face and head images on the Shroud.
- Each has matching blood and serum stains from the mouth, nose, beard and hair.
- The images show a man who was beaten, crowned with thorns, and killed by asphyxiation.
- The blood on both appears to be type AB, although there is some disagreement.
- The Shroud and the Sudarium contain pollens from a thistle plant that grows only in the Middle East. This plant could have created a cap of thorns. Both cloths contain myrrh and aloes.
- Carbon dating for each is still uncertain and currently does not match.

### The recorded history of the Sudarium of Oviedo

Details are mostly from the **twelfth century** bishop of Oviedo, Pelagius (or Pelayo). His historical works are the Book of the Testaments of Oviedo, and the Chronicon Regum Legionensium.

The Sudarium shows signs of advanced deterioration, with dark flecks that are symmetrically arranged but form no image, unlike the markings on the Shroud of Turin. It measures about 84 cm by 53 cm. Radiocarbon dating has placed the origin of the cloth around **AD 570**.

The face cloth is mentioned as having been present in the empty tomb in John 20:6-7. Outside of the Bible, the Sudarium is first mentioned in **AD 570** by Antoninus of Piacenza, who writes that the Sudarium was being cared for in the vicinity of Jerusalem in a cave near the monastery of Saint Mark.

The Sudarium is presumed to have been taken from Palestine in **AD 614**, after the invasion of the Byzantine provinces by the Sassanid Persian King Khosrau II.

In order to avoid destruction in the invasion, it was taken away first to Alexandria by the presbyter Philip, and then carried through northern Africa when Khosrau II conquered Alexandria in **AD 616** and arrived in Spain shortly thereafter. The Sudarium entered Spain at Cartagena, along with people who were fleeing from the Persians. Fulgentius, bishop of Ecija, welcomed the refugees and the relics, and gave the chest containing the Sudarium to Leandro, bishop of Seville. He took it to Seville, where it spent some years.

In **657** it was moved to Toledo, then in **718** on to northern Spain to escape the advancing Moors. The Sudarium was hidden in the mountains of Asturias in a cave known as Montesacro until king Alfonso II, having battled back the Moors, built a chapel in Oviedo to house it in **AD 840**.

On 14 March **1075**, King Alfonso VI, his sister and Rodrigo Diaz Vivar (El Cid) opened the chest after days of fasting. The event was recorded on a document preserved in the Capitular Archives at the Cathedral of San Salvador in Oviedo. The king had the oak chest covered in silver with an inscription which reads, 'The Sacred Sudarium of Our Lord Jesus Christ'.

### [A possible explanation](#)

The Sudarium may have been with Abner's group from the earliest of times. Mary Mark would have entrusted it to Lazarus. Or a little later to Martha and Mary. Or to David and Ruth. (See 2031:4) Nathaniel went to Philadelphia the month after the crucifixion but it is very much doubted that any cloths would have been given to an apostle who would have been under close watch. So it could have been removed immediately from Jerusalem which was then a dangerous place for followers of Jesus.

Jesus had much earlier instructed Lazarus to leave Jerusalem:

*About seven o'clock on this Tuesday morning Jesus met the apostles, the women's corps, and some two dozen other prominent disciples at the home of Simon. At this meeting he said farewell to Lazarus, giving him that instruction which led him so soon to flee to Philadelphia in Perea, where he later became connected with the missionary movement having its headquarters in that city. Jesus also said good-bye to the aged Simon,*

*and gave his parting advice to the women's corps, as he never again formally addressed them. [1897:1]*

Then there is this more detailed explanation, previously quoted in part:

*Lazarus remained at the Bethany home, being the center of great interest to many sincere believers and to numerous curious individuals, until the days of the crucifixion of Jesus, when he received warning that the Sanhedrin had decreed his death. The rulers of the Jews were determined to put a stop to the further spread of the teachings of Jesus, and they well judged that it would be useless to put Jesus to death if they permitted Lazarus, who represented the very peak of his wonder-working, to live and bear testimony to the fact that Jesus had raised him from the dead. Already had Lazarus suffered bitter persecution from them. [1849:5]*

*And so Lazarus took hasty leave of his sisters at Bethany, fleeing down through Jericho and across the Jordan, never permitting himself to rest long until he had reached Philadelphia. Lazarus knew Abner well, and here he felt safe from the murderous intrigues of the wicked Sanhedrin. [1849:6]*

*Soon after this Martha and Mary disposed of their lands at Bethany and joined their brother in Perea. Meantime, Lazarus had become the treasurer of the church at Philadelphia. He became a strong supporter of Abner in his controversy with Paul and the Jerusalem church and ultimately died, when 67 years old, of the same sickness that carried him off when he was a younger man at Bethany. [1849:7]*

### **This timing fits the picture**

The dating of early AD 600 is interesting. The face cloth may have left Palestine then due to the prevailing demise of Abner's church. The book says Abner's uncompromising emissaries of the teachings of Jesus were overwhelmed by the sudden rise of Islam. (See 1869:2) Most historians believe that Islam originated in Mecca and Medina at the start of the 7th century, approximately 600 years after the founding of Christianity.

Perhaps Abner's followers entrusted the napkin to the presbyter Philip ahead of the invasion by Chosroes II in about the year 614, from which time the relic is on record.

Dates and locations again become of interest, just as they were with the Shroud. It is notable that the Sudarium passed through many hands in many countries yet it was somehow preserved.

## **A RECENT DEVELOPMENT**

### **Second face on the reverse side of the Shroud**

Of particular interest is the recently reported image on the reverse side of the cloth. While this discovery of imaging on the backside of the cloth makes artistic and photographic methods significantly more implausible, it does lend credence to the possibilities that gaseous amines released by the body reacted with the carbohydrate layers. Some gases would have penetrated through the weave of the cloth and reacted with the backside carbohydrate layer. (And it does not rule out miraculous cause or effect).

In 2004, Professors Giulio Fanti and Roberto Maggiolo of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Padua in Italy published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Optics* their study, 'The Double Superficiality of the Frontal Image of the Turin Shroud'. They concluded there exists a second, even fainter face image on the backside of the Shroud of Turin, corresponding but not identical to the face image of the crucified man seen in head-to-head dorsal and ventral views on the front side.

Moreover, Fanti and Maggiolo concluded 'the central part of the fabric was clearly not involved in the creation of the image on the backside. That is, the internal part of the linen fabric does not have an image'.

The researchers, in other words, found a 'doubly superficial' face image on both the front and back sides such that 'if a cross-section of the fabric is made, one extremely superficial image appears above and one below, but there is nothing in the middle'.

The Shroud, therefore, they concluded, was not created by paint soaking through the linen or by a photographic image printing through to the reverse side, because the front and back facial images are not identical and the center fibers show no image creation whatsoever.

Many hypotheses have been formulated and tested to explain the image on the Shroud. According to pro-authenticity authors Baldacchini and Fanti, 'the body image of the Turin Shroud has not yet been explained by traditional science; so a great interest in a possible mechanism of image formation still exists', a conclusion also supported by Philip Ball, the former physical science editor for *Nature*.

In December 2011, Fanti published a critical compendium of the major hypotheses regarding the formation of the body image on the Shroud. He stated that 'none of them can completely explain the mysterious image'. Fanti then considered corona discharge as the most probable hypothesis regarding the formation of the body image. This would have caused a radiant burst of light and

energy that scorched the body image of the crucified man on the topmost fibers of the Shroud's front and back sides, without producing any image on the centermost of its linen fibers.

He stated that it would be impossible to reproduce all the characteristics of the image in a laboratory because the energy source required would be too high.

[This research has been done by J R Corsi.]

### [Artifacts and other documents subject to ongoing interest](#)

There are a number of other items with claims to authenticity:

- The Codex.
- The Ossuary, possible limestone burial box of James, brother of Jesus.
- The Gospel of Judas, perhaps a forgery.
- The gospel of Mary Magdalene, perhaps a forgery.
- Other discovered 'Books' not included in the New Testament.
- Rewritings and translations of texts over hundreds of years.
- Pieces of wood from the cross of Jesus.
- *The Holy Face of Genoa*, kept in the Church of St. Bartholomew of the Armenians in Genoa.
- The Mandylion of Edessa, once kept in the Church of Saint Silvestro in Rome and now kept in the Matilda chapel in the Vatican.
- The family home of Jesus in Nazareth.
- The burial tomb of Jesus.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

*Curiosity - the spirit of investigation, the urge of discovery, the drive of exploration - is a part of the inborn and divine endowment of evolutionary space creatures. [160:1]*

### **Science and the theories**

To this day, the scientific aspects of the Shroud's cloth, image, creation, dating and history, remain the subject of conjecture. A variety of scientific theories regarding the Shroud have since been proposed, based on disciplines ranging from chemistry to biology and medical forensics, to optical image analysis. The scientific approaches to the study of the Shroud fall into three groups: Material analysis (both chemical and historical), biology and medical forensics, and image analysis.

However, today's indeterminate science is automatically less rigorous. It has fewer rules, and all the remaining rules can be adaptable. So there can be a complete lack of discipline in both ideation and argument. Theories can be irrational and facts disregarded. Independent thinkers are excluded. Grants and the shaping of public opinion are paramount.

### **Results of research**

Thus we get conflicting results. No one is sure they are right, and no one yet is proven to be wrong. There are strong opinions based on so-called 'conclusive' evidence both for and against the authenticity of the Shroud. The vehement opposing opinions in the scientific community seem intended to create chaos and confusion. Some do not wish to give any credence to the existence of Jesus. Surely the evidence must have some degree of congruency. But clouding the real issues and generating many conflicting scenarios are standard practices these days in regard to history as well as current events.

Do the Urantia Papers validate the Shroud in any way? The authors of the Papers provide no clear information to confirm the authenticity of the Shroud or face cloth. Nor could they be expected to do so within the context of the book as they bear no relevance to their overall mandate. At best it can be said that the revelation does not specifically exclude the possibility that the Shroud is authentic. But can a trail be followed from the information that is given? Can an explanation be compiled from the many pieces of evidence? From the above analysis, the answer to those two questions is in the affirmative.



To date, details of the material dissolution given in *The Urantia Book* are an accurate description of what current scientific analysis says must have occurred. Perhaps this line of research will provide more conclusive evidence.

**From the revelation, conclusions can be drawn:**

- A detailed explanation is provided about the process of accelerated dematerialization that could have caused the image.
- The burial cloths were not necessarily destroyed.
- They could certainly have been retrieved.
- There were families who would have venerated and preserved them.
- The Mark family would have been pivotal in many matters and much communication between all devotees of Jesus subsequent to his death.
- All of these people would have been able to co-operate and take action with a degree of secrecy.
- There were many people in Antioch who would have recognized the image as that of Jesus from work in his final five years, from his morontia form, and even through to the later times of gospel writings.
- One of the seventy is possibly the Thaddeus of Edessa. He could have taken a cloth bearing an image of Jesus to Edessa with Thomas.
- Edessa would have been a safe haven for a precious cloth, as it was sufficiently distant from Jerusalem, and had not been involved in the turmoil surrounding the authorities during the life of Jesus.

**After the death of Jesus we see a trail of possible evidence:**

- There were organizations which could have passed down the Shroud through the centuries.
- There were numerous and ongoing references to the existence of the Shroud.
- The Shroud and the Image of Edessa could have been separated and kept by different parties over the centuries.
- There was a consistency in the recording of the description over the centuries until documented records were kept.

**The role of families**

The most remarkable aspect is the continuing reference to the cloths by numerous early historians, writers, and travellers, over the earlier centuries.

Similar references have been made about other events in the life of Jesus, some of which have been verified. In particular, consider the early writings and recent findings about the family home in Nazareth, and the new evidence of the tomb.

The extraordinary histories and travels of the Shroud and the Sudarium over the centuries have been noted above. Ownership was prized and challenged, and somehow entrusted to a diverse range of custodians. How could this have been accomplished? Perhaps it is due to the reverence all custodians seem to have had for the Shroud.

It has been inferred by research that the Popes, Kings, Crusaders, Templars, church leaders, Byzantine Emperors, and families of nobility, had some form of common lineage. And many such links have continued to the present day.

### **The role of the revelators**

The revelators would have been aware of the dilemma a genuine Shroud would pose in modern times. As is their way with all of the details outlined in the revelation, the authors would be encouraging us to conduct further research for ourselves. They were not in a position to disclose scientific information that had yet to be discovered by mankind.

Could the human recipients of the revelation have asked for further information about the events recorded in Part 4 of *The Urantia Book*? The short answer is 'no'. In the year 1926, the first Paper was read to the Forum. They went through Papers 1-118 three times over possibly 8 or 9 years. These Papers were completely received by the year 1934.

The members of the Forum submitted questions to the revelators who could assess the clarity of their expressions and gauge the level of understanding by the human mind. Paper 119 was delivered in 1934 closely followed by Part 4 in its entirety, right down to the manuscript being typewritten, justified, punctuated and capitalized. This section was obviously not open to discussion.

The later work of 'The Seventy', the group associated with Sadler during the years 1939 to 1942, mainly related to the training of leaders and teachers.

### **The possible stages**

What were the motivating forces behind the various stages faced by the custodians of the Shroud? The initial stages would have been about the proof of the existence of Jesus and his resurrection. Then there seemed to be an intermediary stage of power and wealth associated with its ownership. In the current stage, it is all coming to a climax of sorts with scientific enquiry, public

awareness, and the Internet. At a future time, if it is widely considered to be genuine, will it be owned by the people?

It is essentially accepted that Jesus did exist, and the record of the events of his life and death are based on relatively accepted factual accounts. How is the battle about authenticity now to be evaluated? What are the motives and gains for those who would wish to indicate the Shroud is a fake? What are the motives and gains for those who would wish to prove the Shroud is genuine?

### **The role of the revelation**

Because of *The Urantia Book*, we can eliminate many fanciful interpretations surrounding the Shroud as many modern day interpretations of events contain arguments that are reasonably repudiated by the revelation. For further enlightenment, we will be dependent upon the discovery of ancient artifacts or documents which is unlikely, or improvements in methods of scientific research.

There is one other way we could find out for sure, and that is through further revelation. Or making enquiries in due course on the morontia worlds.

The quotations from *The Urantia Book* that form the essence of this narrative are but a small part of the book, which is the most wondrous component of all. And in reality, without any uncertainty, the book is where we are advised to direct our studies to comprehend the revelation in its entirety.

This is one final reason why the Shroud may be shrouded in mystery:

*Even the Christian religion has been persistently built up around the fact of the death of Christ instead of around the truth of his life. The world should be more concerned with his happy and God-revealing life than with his tragic and sorrowful death. [1614:5]*