

TURIN SHROUD, COULD BE A MIRACLE PERHAPS, BUT IS IT JESUS?

The Turin Shroud is the most famous relic in the world. Millions believe that it is the burial cloth of Jesus Christ bearing his crucified and bloodied image. The cloth is kept at Turin in Italy. The cloth is an enigma. Many say it is a miracle.

The Shroud might be a fake and depict somebody other than Jesus.

The Shroud is made of linen. People who won't get their facts straight say it must be the winding sheet of Christ when it never rotted. But we have linen dating from 2000 BC. Keeping linen dry is the secret. That broadens the chance that it is not Jesus' cloth.

Fr Raymond Brown says, "It should be noted that those opposed to Christians sometimes "obliged" Christians by executing them in the manner of Jesus. P.A. Gramaglia has argued that between A.D. 540 and 640 funeral wrappings from Palestine were numerous and crucifixions were used to mock Christians. Christians even crucified Jews for revenge. According to Gramaglia, a Shroud of a man crucified as Christ could have come from a Palestinian context in the 600s" (Biblical Exegesis and Church Doctrine, page 149). One of these victims could have put a strange image on a Shroud just like a man who died in a Liverpool hospice in 1981 left the outline of his buttocks and his hand on the sheets. It is not that hard to create an image that shows up clearer in the negative like the Shroud does.

Joe Nickell made images like that for his book Looking for a Miracle which tackled the issue of the authenticity of the Shroud among other things. Many others have done the same. Ian Wilson agrees with Nickell's work but says it still does not explain the Shroud image because it is more subtle in the negative than Nickell's creation (page 47, Holy Faces, Secret Places). But the subtlety could depend on other factors. We do not know what combination of substances could have been employed in the iron oxide that the shroud maker may have used as Nickell did. Then Wilson argues that the blood marks are too anatomically correct (page 48). They are correct from one point of view, where the blood would be if you are taking a picture of a body. But they should have been distorted if they came from a body so they are not correct at all.

Hoare in The Turin Shroud is Genuine made objections to the idea that the Shroud man is somebody other than Jesus. Let us examine them.

He says the Arabs would not have mocked Christianity by killing anybody the way Jesus was killed for they thought of Jesus as a great prophet. But they were not mocking Jesus but a story about Jesus that they considered to be blasphemous lies for they held that Jesus was not crucified or killed. A Christian will say that the Jesus of the Mormons who was not God but an exalted man with many wives who was born of a sexual union between God and Mary and who died on the cross to atone for Adam's sin alone is not his Jesus following the logic in 2 Corinthians 11:4 and so could mock and blaspheme the Mormon Jesus. Arabs sometimes use the same logic.

He says nailing to wood would have sufficed but a burial was necessary to mock the resurrection which the Arabs would have despised more than the crucifixion for the Christians upheld it as the supreme refutation of other religions.

Hoare says they wouldn't have known to use a sedile or to nail through the wrists. They would soon have learned to if they had crucified a few people. The sedile would have been needed when they nailed the hands and was carried over when wrists were used just in case.

What about the use of the expensive burial cloth? The size matching the ancient standard 8 by 2 cubits is no miracle for a feasible Shroud in one piece had to be about that anyway. The Christians probably provided the Shroud in an attempt to create a new relic and it turned out to be more successful than they ever could have expected.

The image was intended for display for the cloth had to be loose to get the right print off the body if it was ever on a body.

The Shroud is certainly no miracle. If it could not be explained by science then it would have to be the product of alien technology for it isn't from God. And to ascribe it to Satan would be to insult his intelligence. If Jesus was a long unnaturally thin alien we could say that the image was distorted though it looks human. It is certain that if everything on the Shroud is genuine then his body was not human for it does things that human beings cannot do. For example, the continued and profuse bleeding from certain parts and not others.

It has been suggested that the Shroud man had Marfan's Syndrome which gives a person very long arms and legs (page 26,

Looking for a Miracle). If Jesus had this disease we would be reading in the gospels how the Jews were saying his healings were faked for he couldn't heal himself. Anyway, the image looks like an example of the gothic painting style of making Jesus look unnaturally elongated more than somebody with Marfan's Syndrome. This is an indication of a medieval origin (page 24,26, Looking for a Miracle).

