

He Is Risen

By T.W. Tramm

APRIL 15, 2017, marks the Day of Firstfruits on the biblical calendar.¹

It was on this day, about 2,000 years ago, that Jesus rose from the grave, leaving behind an empty burial shroud and, many believe, photographic evidence of His resurrection.

The Shroud of Turin is an approximately 4' x 14' piece of linen bearing the faint likeness of a crucified man. What is remarkable about this likeness is that, when photographed, the negative shows a *positive* image so replete with details that new ones are continuously being discovered. The image on the Shroud has thus been described as a "perfect photographic negative," which is baffling because even skeptics acknowledge that the relic existed centuries before photography was invented.

But there's more.

In 1976, a team of researchers discovered that a photograph of the Shroud produces a three-dimensional image when placed under a NASA (VP8) Image Analyzing Computer. What this means is that, unlike any known regular photograph, drawing, or painting, distance imaging information was somehow encoded into the image on the Shroud at the time of its formation. The photograph of the Shroud is the *only* known two-dimensional image on Planet Earth that displays this amazing property.²

And that's not all.

A recent study of high resolution images of the Shroud has revealed a phenomenon similar to "action photography" in which superimposed views of one of the hands, a foot, and certain inanimate objects fixed to the body indicate that there was movement during the few seconds that consecutive bursts of energy (light and/or radiation) presumably projected the image onto the linen.³

In addition to the remarkable images, other factors bolster the authenticity of the Shroud. For instance, human male blood of the type "AB" is present on the linen. Dr. Baima Ballone of Turin notes that type AB is rare in Europe and most of the world, occurring in about 3.2% of the population. However, around 18% of Jews from the North are type AB.⁴ What is more, the bloodstains were apparently deposited *before* the image was made. This is significant because it's precisely what one would expect in a scenario in which a bloodied corpse was covered by a cloth, creating the stains, before whatever resurrection-related process projected the image.⁵

Last but not least, analysis of dust on the Shroud shows traces of dirt and limestone matching that found in tombs in Jerusalem, as well as dozens of types of pollen that are specific to this location during the

spring. There is also an abundance of human DNA. This is not surprising, considering that the Shroud has been handled by various caretakers and pilgrims visiting the relic throughout the centuries. However, the vast majority of the DNA traces to people groups from the Middle East, specifically those that dwell in the region stretching from Turkey to modern-day Israel.⁶ DNA from mostly Middle Easterners is *not* what one would expect to find on a medieval forgery created and displayed in *Europe*, as skeptics claim the Shroud to be; it does, however, jibe with the origin and travel route of the Shroud, according to the traditions that hold it's the legitimate burial cloth of Jesus.

While a radiocarbon test in 1988 dated the Shroud to only around 1260-1390 AD, it has since been shown that the analysis was flawed, as the sample was taken from an area of the cloth that had been repaired with newer materials during the Middle Ages.⁷

Further undermining the notion that the Shroud was created around the 13th century is the existence of what is believed to be the companion cloth mentioned in the Gospel of John.⁸ Known today as the "[Sudarium of Oviedo](#)," this smaller cloth has blood stains matching the type, shape, and location of those present on the Shroud, indicating that they covered the same bloodied corpse. Unlike the Shroud, however, the Sudarium has a traceable history going back to at least 570 AD.

For these reasons and others too numerous to mention here, millions are convinced that the image on the Shroud is a picture of Jesus Christ at the moment of His resurrection. It's as if the Lord, perhaps in consideration of the doubting Thomases who must *see* in order to believe, provided photographic evidence on a piece of linen.

Assuming that the Shroud is what many believe it to be—a miraculous "snapshot" of Jesus' resurrection—let's get back to the *day* the image was created, the day of the biblical Firstfruits offering.

The Day He Rose

Observed on the day after the Sabbath following Passover (Lev. 23:11), Firstfruits was, in ancient Israel, a celebration of the first grain harvest of the year. On this day, the priest would appear before the Lord at the Temple and wave a sheaf of the first harvested barley as an expression of thankfulness and in anticipation of the larger harvest to come.

The year of Jesus' resurrection, however, an *ultimate* firstfruits offering was made: the Lord rose from the dead on this same day and presented *Himself* before the Father as the firstfruits of the "harvest," or resurrection, to come.

Paul confirms that Christ is the firstfruits and that the resurrection of believers is to follow:

"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep [And so] all shall be made alive [resurrected]. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15:20, 22, 23).

The question is: *when* will the resurrection of believers occur?

One plausible theory is that the resurrection next in order might happen around the *harvest* next in order, namely *Shavuot*, or Pentecost. This would make sense because Firstfruits and Pentecost have a unique relationship. Not only are both *harvest* festivals, during which every man was required to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem,⁹ they are linked via the 49-day countdown (Omer) that begins at the former and ends at the latter.¹⁰ Additionally, the rituals of both Firstfruits and Pentecost center on a wave offering: at Firstfruits a sheaf of the first grain is waved before the Lord, while at Pentecost two loaves of leavened bread (made from the grain) are waved. Notice that the latter wave offering (bread) depends on the former (grain). This is analogous to how the Church's resurrection depends on Jesus' resurrection: without the Lord being raised up as the firstfruits there would be no raising up of believers.

It's also interesting how the 49-day countdown spanning Firstfruits to Pentecost parallels the 49-year countdown to the Jubilee. In both cases, the *fiftieth* (day/year) indicates completeness, or a culmination, raising the question of whether a Pentecost within a Jubilee—a "50 within a 50"—may have some special prophetic significance.

Could the resurrection of believers occur around Pentecost—fifty days from the anniversary of Jesus' historical resurrection?

It could.

It could also occur sooner, or in the fall, as some propose.

While the date remains a mystery, the most critical things do not: Jesus is REAL and He is RISEN. He died for our sins on Passover and was raised on the Day of Firstfruits, granting believers the gift of eternal life:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Two millennia later, the Lord is set to return. When He does, we will experience the incomprehensible burst of light and energy that created the image on the Shroud—what is perishable will become imperishable, and what is mortal will become immortal!

Are you ready?

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NOTES:

1. Feast dates: <https://messianicsabbath.com/2013-feast-dates/>
2. Three-dimensional properties of the Shroud: <http://www.freechristianteaching.tv/the-three-dimensional-properties-of-the-shroud>
3. Video discussing the “action photography” effect, indicating movement of the body during the creation of the shroud image: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCtDqCuhWNM>
4. Blood on the Shroud: <http://shroudofturin.weebly.com/blood-evidence.html>
5. Imagine a forger trying to place all of the blood stains in the correct anatomical locations, mimicking appropriate blood flows based on body angle, etc., *before* creating the image of the body they emanate from. This is another reason the forgery explanation seems implausible.
6. DNA on the Shroud: <http://www.unknowncountry.com/news/dna-evidence-more-shroud-turin-proof>
7. Flawed radiocarbon testing: http://www.loamagazine.org/nr/the_main_topic/fatal_flaw_in_the.html
8. The existence of a companion cloth is related in John 20:6, 7, which reads: *“Simon Peter, following him, also came up, went into the tomb, saw the linen cloth lying on the ground, and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloth but rolled up in a place by itself.”*
9. The Bible designates three annual harvest feasts: The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Firstfruits), the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles (Ex. 23:14-17; 2 Chron. 8:13).
10. Lev. 23: 15, 16.

MISCELLANEOUS:

BBC Documentary on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVXXZcN8RVI>

Shroud website: <http://www.shroud.com/>

Article: <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/434153/shroud-turin-jesus-christ-blood-relic-sudarium-oviedo>