

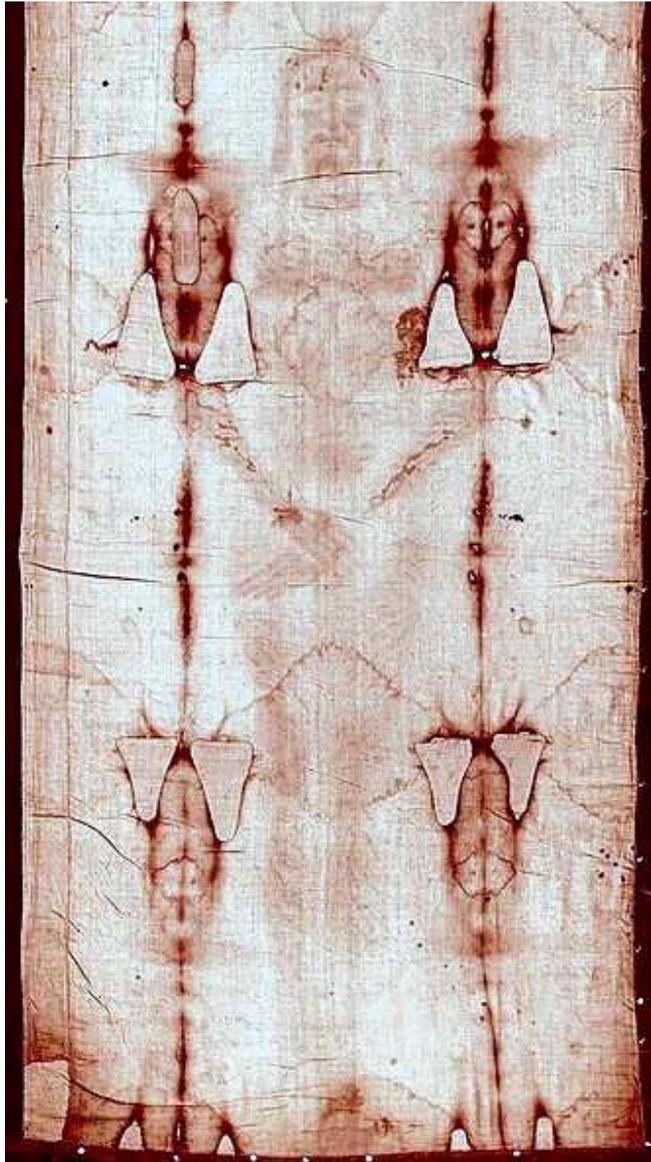
## Q. Is the Shroud of Turin really Jesus' burial shroud?

A. The Shroud of Turin is a 14.3 × 3.7 ft (4.4 × 1.1 m) linen cloth bearing what appears to be the image of a man. The popes of the Roman Catholic Church accept as authentic the claim that the shroud is the cloth wrapped around Jesus Christ at His burial, and that the image was formed at His miraculous resurrection.

The scientific debate over the authenticity and age of the shroud, and the origin or cause of the image, has spanned centuries and continues today. But scientific analysis is not needed to answer the question of whether the shroud is really the cloth in which Jesus was buried.

### **Biblical Evidence**

There is clear biblical evidence that will tell us whether the Shroud of Turin is genuinely Jesus' burial cloth. Let's examine it.



After Jesus died on the cross, Joseph of Arimathea requested and received permission from Pilate to take Jesus' body and bury it.

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Nicodemus assisted him. Then, as we read in Matthew 27:59-60, "Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut out in the rock, and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed."

The word "wrapped" here is from the Greek *entulissō*. "Linen cloth" is from the Greek word *sindōn*, which means "fine linen." The *Apostolic Bible Polyglot*, which is a literal translation, renders this verse, "And having taken the body, Joseph swathed it with pure fine linen."

The parallel account in Mark 15:46 reads, "He bought a linen cloth, and taking him down, wound him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb which had been cut out of a rock. He rolled a stone against the door of the tomb." "Linen cloth" is the same Greek word as is used in Matthew's account. "Wound him," however, is a different word. It is *eneileō*. It means to "roll in" or "encoil." *Thayer's* says, "to roll in, wind up."

Luke 23:53 says this: "He took it down, and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb that was cut in stone, where no one had ever been laid." "Wrapped" is the same word Matthew uses, *entulissō*. "Linen cloth" is again *sindōn*.

John tells us this: "Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred Roman pounds. So they took Jesus' body, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury" (John 19:39-40).

"Bound" in this verse comes from the Greek word *deō*. It means to "bind, fasten, or tie up." "Linen cloths" this time is from the Greek word *othonion*. Specifically, it is *othoniois*, which is the plural. It means "strips of linen bandages." In other words, Joseph and Nicodemus wound Jesus and the spices in tightly bound strips of clean, fine linen bandages.

### **What Peter and John Saw**

After Jesus' resurrection, Mary Magdalene and the other women reported the empty tomb to the apostles. Luke tells their reaction: "These words seemed to them to be nonsense, and they didn't believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. Stooping and looking in, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he departed to his home, wondering what had happened" (Luke 24:11-12). "Strips of linen" is again from the plural form of *othonion*.

John gives us an additional, important detail:

Therefore she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have laid him!" Therefore Peter and the other disciple went out, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran together. The other disciple outran Peter, and came to the tomb first. Stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths lying, yet he didn't enter in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and entered into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying, and the cloth that had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. So then the other disciple who came first to the tomb also entered in, and he saw and believed. For as yet they didn't know the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

John 20:2-10

"Linen cloths" is once again from the plural form of *othonion*—"strips of linen bandages." Peter and John saw these strips of linen bandages lying but without the body in them. But they saw something else. They saw "the cloth that had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself" (verse 7). "Cloth" in this verse is *soudarion*. It means a "handkerchief" or "sweatcloth." It was lying separate from the strips of linen bandages, it was "rolled up" (*entulissō*) "in a place by itself."

What John's account shows us is that, apart from Jesus' torso being bound with strips of linen cloth somewhat like a mummy, Jesus' head was wrapped in a separate handkerchief.

### **Conclusion**

The Shroud of Turin is a one-piece sheet of linen. The image of the body and head is within that one cloth. This does not at all agree with the biblical account of the way Jesus was buried. As we have just seen, Jesus' torso was wound with strips of clean, fine, linen bandages, and His head was wrapped with a separate cloth or napkin.

This evidence from the Word of God proves the Shroud of Turin to not be the burial cloth of Jesus Christ. It also proves the pope to be fallible, and exposes him as someone who rejects the Word of God. As for what the Shroud of Turin really is, we can let the scientists debate about that.