

*The Shroud of Turin:
Perspectives on a
Multi-faceted Enigma*
~

The Shroud Science Group
August 14-17, 2008
Ohio State University Campus
The Blackwell Inn
Conference Center

"My White Linen-White Paper"
Dr. Kenneth E. Stevenson

A couple of years ago, a dear friend of mine said to me after reading several of my books, "Ken, you need to write a *White Paper* on the Shroud." And in typical fashion I said, "What's a *White Paper*?" And he told me in no uncertain terms; so, when I was asked to present something for this conference, without even thinking about it, I told Joe, "I'm going to do a White Paper." After I looked at it, and researched it, and studied it, I didn't know which was worse: the hubris to think that I could write a White Paper, or that I could squeeze thirty-two years into thirty minutes. I don't know which is more difficult. But actually Rex did a great job last night of trying to do a White Paper if you look and listen to what he said, because he was able to... I don't know how he got so much information into that presentation! If you weren't here for it, get it, because he said all the things I would have liked to try and squeeze into thirty minutes. I think it was a wise man who said, "*Too much coincidence is no coincidence.*" Everybody that's getting up here is stepping on things I wanted to say. Thank you, Pete! You said a lot of things I wanted to say.

I arrived here last night and I have a new grandchild. Mary was supposed to travel with me, but she went to be with Jejchelle. Jejchelle is our first-born and in the beautiful pictures that Barry put up last night, she was the lovely little girl with my wife and two sons. Jejchelle just gave us a beautiful baby girl. Pete, as you said, GOD is in everything, and I'm going to tell you, the doctors said she was going to be a problem, the doctors said that Jejchelle was going to have a problem because of her age. We said not so, and now she has a beautiful, beautiful baby girl, and mother and daughter are doing fine, but Mary went to be with them. So, having said that, let me try to get started.

I really wanted to bring to your mind the idea that we need to have a totally new paradigm, a totally new concept where Shroud studies are concerned, and I think there's a reason for that. Yves Delage was right! An issue has been needlessly made, to make the Shroud religious. Notice I didn't say "Christian," I didn't say "Jewish..." I said "religious." As a spokesman and recording secretary, for STURP, I was told clearly, "You don't have the luxury of a personal opinion, because you're speaking for us." And I said "Fine." Did I not, Barry? Barry's a witness. I said, "Fine." When we were done with our research, all bets were off and my personal opinion came out. Some people didn't like that. Ken Weaver refused to put my name in *National Geographic* because he said, "You're a Christian and therefore you can't

possibly be objective." Question: What makes an agnostic or an atheist any more objective about their "religion" or lack thereof than a Christian? Josh McDowell, who used to be one of my favorite apologists heard about my research, called to get an interview with me; interrogated me for three hours and said, "You're emotionally involved in this thing. You can't possibly be objective." My own supervisor in the Air Force-it's the reason I got out, by the way-said, "Drop the Shroud and I'll give you the rating you've earned." And I said to him, "You already own my life twenty-four-seven! You're NOT going to control my spiritual destiny!" The rest, as they say, is history.

But how do I put thirty-two years of a magnificent obsession into thirty minutes? I'm not sure it can be done. How do I get all of these different fields of expertise and... you know, Pete, you were right, that whole technical thing, I've got an engineering degree, I took all kinds of engineering courses at the Academy, it will put you to sleep, it really will. But the fact of the matter is, at the end of the day we've got to take all of that technical jargon and we've got to translate it so that people can read it and reach some kind of an understanding of what this thing we call the Shroud is really all about. After all that is precisely what STURP asked me to do from the very beginning. It is MY area of expertise. With my BS in engineering and Master's in English, it is what I was trained to do.

We sat in New London, CT for what was to be the final STURP conference. At that conference, reporter after reporter after reporter said, "I know you don't want to say this, but what is your personal opinion?" You never heard so many PhD's going, "hummina, hummina, hummina" in your life! These were the same guys that I carpoled with, that we broke bread together, that we prayed together- that I can tell you all kinds of vignettes and stories, and Barry could and Dee could... we could all share with you things that happened that we know were the hand of GOD. And when they were faced with making a personal comment: "Do you think it's Jesus?" They lost their minds! I love them. Don't get me wrong! As an Air Force Academy graduate let me tell you about the "whole man concept." We used to jokingly call it the "man-hole concept." Now, whenever I'm there, they call it the "whole person concept." But the idea was we educate cadets physically, mentally, and spiritually, because if they're going to be officers some day, they've got to have moral fiber, and morality does not exist in a vacuum. You've got to have a commander that knows how to make a decision on the battlefield, especially when men's lives are at stake, and he can stand up for the decision he made without simply saying, "Well, I was ordered to do it, so I did it."

That's why I think we have to come to a new understanding of where the Shroud really takes us. The fact that the Shroud opens a Pandora's box of spirituality is something to be explored, not something to be ignored.

I refer to a book, because I think it's germane to what I'm going to say today. The book is called *God and the Astronomers* written by Robert Jastrow, and he says when a scientist writes about GOD, his colleagues assume he's either over the hill or gone bonkers. It's the same way with the Shroud. You start saying you think this is Jesus, and they want to relegate you to the ash heap, but the astronomical evidence that these men found in the book led them to believe in the Biblical origin of the world. Amazing! We're talking about people like Einstein, Hubble, and all these men who have given us a look into space, and this is where the evidence pointed them. At the end of the book he says for the scientist who lives by his reason, it's like a bad dream. You climb all the way to the top of the mountain, you reach over the top, and there are the theologians, sitting, waiting on you.

Einstein believed in GOD because the universe was orderly. Let me give you an example as a pilot. Flying a B-52: there are rules, order, technical data and science, but there's also an *art* to making the thing sit behind a KC-135 in a one-foot box. Both of them have to come together. In Shroud studies, we have to get the science, the art, and the spirituality together, and we can't be afraid of what people are going to think about us when we head down that road. One of their colleagues, a man named Shapley, was so governed by a false paradigm, that with all the evidence staring him in the face, he kept saying they were wrong, they were wrong, they were wrong, instead of looking at the facts, and saying, "You know what? Maybe I got it wrong."

I don't remember if it was before the first or second time I had the privilege of being in Alan and Mary Wanger's home, and seeing their work, but somewhere between meeting them and visiting them a few times, someone came to me and said, "That can't be right! All these flowers and stuff, it can't be right!" But when I sat in their home and they showed me the polarization technique, I said, "Wait a minute! Maybe there's something here that I don't understand." And that's the way we have to begin to think if we're going to get to the truth of the Shroud and we're going to be able to do something meaningful with the results.

One of the fields that I want to see people go into, and I've done a lot of it- I don't have the time to go into it today-but I want to give you a taste. Hermeneutics. It's the science and art of Biblical interpretation. Science: because it has rules; science: because it's orderly. Art: because

human communication is flexible; it depends on interpretation, it depends on understanding, it depends on point of view. Let me see if I can give you an example.

The Bible says they took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen as the manner of the Jews is to bury the dead. I can't tell you the number of times I've had people come to me and say, "Well, Jesus was wrapped in linen strips like a mummy," etc. Hogwash! Go to your local Jewish bookstore and pick up a book called *The Code of Law*. Look at what it says and you're going to find some things in here. Just a few that I picked up that might interest you *Shroudies*. Just a few: "It's customary to make the linen, the shroud, of fine, white linen, to indicate our belief in the resurrection of the dead." "If a person falls and dies instantly, if his body is bruised, or blood flows from wounds, or there's an apprehension that his life's blood is absorbed in the clothes; it needs to be scooped up and wrapped with the body."

So we can say that maybe *The Passion of the Christ* got a lot of stuff wrong, but somebody did their homework, because that's exactly what's going on here. They're trying to portray a truth that a lot of people have no concept of. Remember the arguments about whether or not there were coins on the eyes, and so on and so forth. Whether or not there's a phylactery on the forehead... Look here again and understand this: that these codes of laws, the *Torah*, and the *Tanach*, and all the things that the Jewish people live by, traditions, that we Christians have somehow forgotten and kicked to the curb. There are some evidences here, such as, the eyes are supposed to be closed. Such as, the way the body is laid out in death. Such as, the fact that an object on the body is buried with the body? Are you aware that they took Jesus when He was at prayer? Are you aware that Jews of Jesus' day and today wear phylacteries? Here, on the forehead and on the arm. So, therefore if He was murdered and mocked as both a religious leader, and a political figure, those would have been covered with His life's blood, and guess what? They would be buried in the tomb. It answers a lot of questions without a lot of hoopla of people saying, "Well, it can't be!" Or, "I see this..." Or, "This one doesn't see that," etc. We've got to come together and get some kind of consensus on where we're going.

Let's take another area. What is the meaning? What is the purpose of the Shroud? A lot of people have asked me that over the years. I've come to a different understanding of what that purpose might be. I'm still thinking about the meaning. I haven't reached the end of my journey;

none of us, I think, have reached the end of our journeys where Shroud studies are concerned. I think we've barely scraped the surface, but let me just give you a for instance. How many of you have studied all of the references in Scripture to "white linen?" Or, have studied how white linen figures in to the resurrection of the Messiah, and

figures in to the Feast days of the Jews? Do you remember what they were told consistently in the Old Testament? *Make sure you do it according to the pattern.* Or, let's give a modern version: "Tradition!" There was a reason they were told to do this, and if you understand Biblical Hermeneutics, the reason was: one of the first principles of Biblical Hermeneutics is *prophetic fulfillment*. When you see *this* happen, you can say, "Yes, the prophets of GOD told us it was going to happen that way." So, we come to "linen" and it's why I call this *My White Linen-White Paper*.

Jesus had just completed a Passover Seder. During the Seder there are a number of elements that you use. One of the elements is the Matzoh. If you've never really seen Matzoh up close, as a Christian, you should go get some and look at it. It's flat, leaven-less bread that is pierced and striped; and most Jewish people can't tell you why it is. They'll just tell you, "That's the way we've always made it." Most people can't tell you why they put it in a linen bag called a *Unity*. A white linen bag called a Unity that actually has three pieces in it. Now, if you understand the Biblical term for *echad* - "*Shema, Israel, Adonai Elehenu Adonai echad.*" "*Hear, O Israel, the LORD our GOD, the LORD is One.*" "Echad" is like "one bunch" of grapes. It's not like saying here is one podium... you understand? So when they say this unity, it represents these three pieces of matzoh. What do they do with the middle matzoh? Jesus takes the middle matzoh and He breaks it, and He says, "*This is My body, broken for you*" (1 Corinthians 11:24). And then what does he do? He hides it away. It's very interesting. It's hidden away, and the one who finds it gets a reward, but then having found it, it supposed to be distributed to all.

I've been looking for this certain videotape ever since the STURP dry run in Amston Ct. It's my understanding that CBN, if they haven't destroyed it, have the copy of the tape. I haven't been able to track it down as yet. There was a minister from a small Pentecostal church who stood in front of all these PhD's and their wives, and he was practically shaking in his boots after we did our dry run. He said, "I have to tell you something. I don't know if you can accept it; I don't know if you can hear me. I know you guys all have PhD's and you're all a lot smarter than I am... But in prayer this

week, GOD told me that the information that you're going to get is to be shared with the world, because its information that people would kill or die for. True statement? An absolutely true statement!

When we become afraid of what men are going to say [with thoughts like] "Well, I'll not be considered scientific if I say I think it's Jesus." Or, "I'll not be considered a Jew if I think it's

Jesus." C'mon! We've got to wake up and realize we've been entrusted with this wonderful gift, and there are people out there looking for answers, and we hold all the cards. When we waffle about what we actually think, we become no better than the Centro (Centro di Sindonology) we all kind of complain about. They bring it on themselves! But we become no better than they when we keep the Shroud to ourselves, and it becomes a little cliquish thing that we have over here on the side.

We're no better. I know this much, that three-dimensional statue that you all talked about, (and I was there in Colorado Springs, and I helped as did Dee German, and some of the cadets as well. If you go to the Catholic Chapel, you'll see our pictures there with one of the three-dimensionals that we made, and I have a 3D mock up of the Face, and I've traveled all across this country to speak on the Shroud and I carry that 3D face with me. In fact, I almost brought it here, but in the hullabaloo over our new grandbaby, I forgot it; I apologize. But everywhere I go people take one look at it and they say, "It's Jesus!" There's never any question about the identity of the man. They take one look and they say, "It's Jesus! How did you do that? Where did you get that?" Most researchers would agree that the image of the Shroud is very much like what has become the "traditional" image of Jesus, so why are we embarrassed or ashamed before scientific or historical or whatever kind of society, to say, "We think this is Jesus!"? Why would we be ashamed? My Bible says, *"If you're ashamed of me, I'll be ashamed of you before My Father"* (paraphrase, see Luke 9:26). Now, that may be a little bit heavy for some of you to accept, but you haven't gotten to know me yet, and maybe you will. I'd like that. Everybody who I've ever met that's gotten involved in this, I love them. Barry and I are like brothers. I haven't seen Pete or Joe in years, but it's like we've never lost communication. We went right back and started talking, saying, "Remember this?" And, "Remember that?" Slides that we put up...

I remember being I Ray Roger's home, and he told me through tears, "All my life has been dedicated to weaponry and weapons of mass destruction." He said, "This is one thing that's good, that I want to get right, and it might impact Mankind for the better." I think it's time they need to be

told. I think it's time, whether it's me or whoever it is; if it's all of us together, there's got to be a point where we're willing to stand up and say, "These are the real facts. This is what happened."

Again, some of the things in Scripture: Angels wear white linen; priests wear white linen. The promise of GOD to His people is that we're going to be wearing white linen. Revelation 19 says that the clean white linen is the righteousness of the saints. If I [only] had all the rest of the day to describe to you all the things in Scripture that speak of "white linen." The *karpas* that you eat at Passover is actually a term from the Book of Esther which refers to a white linen garment. If you study Hebrew, if you go into the Torah, and if you sit down with Rabbis, as I have, and you say,

"Explain this to me" they'll tell you the *karpas* represents a door, and the Hebrew, the Jewish person is passing through that door. What door is that? It's the door of Redemption. Wait a minute! What do we say (in the Seder)? *This is the Cup of Redemption*. What do we say? All of these things that they take for granted as part of their tradition, and we Christians are totally ignorant of might be the key to understanding the purpose of this thing called the Shroud of Turin. You know what? If we misuse something, it's because we don't understand the purpose. What guy in here, maybe some ladies too, has not taken a butter knife and tried to use it as a screw driver? It may work, but it does terrible damage to the butter knife, and it might actually damage the screw head in the process. If you don't understand the purpose of a thing, you can destroy it or something else. If we don't understand the purpose of the Shroud, we miss the opportunity to impact Mankind in a positive way.

It's almost time for me to sit down. I haven't even scraped the surface of some of the things I'd like to say. Zechariah: *I'm going to pour out upon the house of David, upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace...* (Zechariah 12:10). If you want to know what those numbers are, it's the Strong's Concordance, and if you look at the Strong's concordance, you can get all the original words. (numbers were on the Power Point presentation) That's a part of Biblical interpretation, the science of interpretation. It's not just because some minister gets up and says, "Well, the Bible says this..." Or, "The Bible says that..." There is a science to it. There is an order to it, and unless you take and look at it in depth, you won't understand it. Zechariah says they're going to look on the one whom they've pierced and mourn for him (Zechariah 12:10), speaking of the Jewish people. Can I ask you a question? Christians, not just Jews in the room, but Christians... If Jesus is coming back as we believe, He's certainly not coming back to be beaten and pierced and striped again. How are they

going to “look” if there’s no “picture?” Why does the Apostle Paul say *we’re looking at an image, like a dim, mirrored image?* “*Through a glass darkly*” is the expression (1Corinthians 13:12). Like a “dim, mirrored image.” Why does Isaiah say that *his face... marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of man would startle?* (Isaiah 52:14-15). In use is the Hebrew term *nazah*, it’s the blood of sprinkling, the blood of expiation; the blood that the priests sprinkled on the altar that got all over his white linen garments. Are you getting the picture? Too much coincidence is no coincidence. There’s a pattern here, and I think it’s a pattern that we, who have studied the Shroud, have the best opportunity to recognize and to say something about.

Again, I’ve barely scraped the surface of what I found. I started looking into Bible codes, for example, and I didn’t get the popular Bible codes program off of the shelf. I did eventually, but I went and got the Torah Codes program from a Jewish group in New Jersey, and when I put the Shroud in there, I got reams of paper that I can’t even interpret. I’m not a Bible code expert. I’d like to find one, so that I can take those reams of paper and tell him, “Tell me what this means!” Because you see, I believe the Bible IS the Word of GOD so therefore I want to know everything that I can about it.

I heard for years that Dee had made a decision for the LORD. I only heard last night how it actually happened. Maybe he’ll have a chance to share it, but what I can tell you is, in the carpool, before there ever was a STURP, there were four professors at the Academy. Myself in the English department; John Jackson in the Physics department; Eric Jumper in the Aeronautical department; and Dee German in the Electrical Engineering department, and as guys will do, we talked about religion and politics. Remember this, Dee? The question came up, “God, if He exists, gave me this scientific mind, and He will reveal Himself through science.” And John Jackson answered, “Well, what about the Shroud?” And Dee said, “Has it ever been scientifically studied?” I remember pretty it well, and those who were there at the beginning should also !

Here we are thirty-two years later people, and every study that we’ve generated, with the exception of like what Rex said last night, the kooks and oddballs on the outside, everybody that has ever seriously studied it comes away with more and more and more evidence that points toward authenticity. What do we do with it? Do we sit on it? Do we sweep it under the rug? Are we more

concerned with what people will think of us or say about us if we say, "I think it's Jesus"? Or, are we going to say, "I've seen that face! I know that face! That face changed my life!"

I'm going to close with this a few stories. There is a group of Carmelite nuns that we know. For the record, I was a good altar boy growing up and even had thoughts about becoming a priest. As it happens I have a dear friend in the Catholic Church that he lets me preach his Bible study when he's out of town, and we have a running joke that if the Catholic Church had a marrying priesthood, I would probably still be a practicing Catholic. But I also tell him this, I'm not Jonah and I can't swim in the belly of the fish so when GOD called me, I said, "OK Sir, what do You want me to do now?" So I've been privileged to move in both Catholic and Protestant circles. The cloister of Carmelite nuns in Louisiana are part of my prayer team.

Mary and I are among the few civilians who have ever been allowed behind the walls of the cloister, and we've prayed for them and we've ministered to them. I took that three dimensional face in there, and two crying nuns took the 3D picture and they put their hands around it. Then they said, "You've given us the chance to see Jesus." Does that do for you what it does for me? That happened at least twenty years ago, and I still get choked up thinking about it. And then I think about the letters I've gotten over the years from people...

I flew with a guy named William Spears, he was a tanker pilot and I was a B-52 pilot. He happened to be the organist for his little Baptist church. Mary was a Baptist when we got married, so it was not unnatural for us to visit his church. When we talked about GOD, I assumed he was a Christian just from everything he said, everything he did... a sweet couple, we were in their home, they were in our home...I got a letter a few years ago from Willie Spears. He said, "I was on the West Coast and I walked into a little used bookstore and I saw a book with your name on it. I wondered if it could be you and picked the book up..." He was at that time the chief pilot for, I think it's the Paradise Corporation that owns Holiday Inn... He said, "I picked the book up, Ken, and I couldn't put it down. I read it from cover to cover." It was my first book, *Verdict on the Shroud*. He said, "At the end, I put the book down and gave my heart to Jesus Christ." He said, "I want you to know that it's changed my life." I'm stunned, and a few months later he passed away.

What if I had not written that book? What if I told you I have boxes of letters from people who have been to presentations I've made or who found my book somewhere and read and it changed their life? NOT that they worship the Shroud! NOT that the Shroud becomes an article of their faith, but rather that looking at the love of Jesus, as seen through that linen cloth, has transformed their

lives. Might I suggest that each of us, all of us, figure out, for whatever time GOD has ordained for us to be left on this planet, because He has blessed us with the privilege of seeing and handling that love, close up and personal... Can we make a joint and an individual decision that we're going to use it for the betterment of Mankind from this day forward? If so, I will have accomplished My White Linen-White Paper. GOD bless you.

Postscript:

My White Linen-White Paper is a fraction of what I have recently developed on under this subject Heading. My intention is to produce as soon as possible what should be a book length treatise with in-depth discussions of each critical topic area. For those interested in the larger development, I will post the SSG as well as place information on our website. www.everlasting.org