

# Shroud of Turin: 13 Amazing Facts

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IN THE GOSPEL of John, the writer is inspired to share details about the burial cloths of Jesus:

“Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then 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 do not know where they have laid Him.’ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed” (John 20:1–8).

In view of the emphasis put on the burial cloths, it is fascinating to consider 13 facts around the world’s most studied artifact, an ancient linen cloth called the “Shroud of Turin,” which bears a detailed and anatomically precise image of a crucified man.

#### FACT #1

The image on the Shroud is a photographic negative, meaning that when it is photographed, the negative shows a positive image. This is baffling because even skeptics acknowledge that the relic existed centuries before photography was invented.

#### FACT #2

A photograph of the Shroud produces a three-dimensional image, when viewed via a NASA image-analyzing computer, indicating that distance-imaging information was somehow encoded when the image was formed. The photograph of the Shroud is the only known two-dimensional image that displays this amazing property.

#### FACT #3

A recent study of high-resolution images of the Shroud revealed a phenomenon similar to action photography: superimposed views of one of the hands, a foot, and certain inanimate objects fixed to the corpse indicate that there was movement during the instant in which the image was formed.

#### FACT #4

The Shroud's dimensions correspond to the unit of measure used by first century Jews: it is exactly two cubits wide and eight cubits long. Additionally, though there are traces of cotton found in the Shroud, a by-product of past repairs, there are no traces of wool, a fact consistent with the biblical law that prohibits the mixing of linen and wool (Deut. 22:11).

#### FACT #5

Blood stains on the Shroud are authentic human male blood, type AB, the rarest blood type, representing less than 4% of the population worldwide. This is significant because a study of 68 ancient skeletons unearthed at Jerusalem from around Jesus' time, showed that more than 50% were type AB. If the Shroud is a medieval forgery as skeptics claim, it was an astute forger who knew to use a common blood type for first-century Jews dwelling in Jerusalem, especially since blood types were not discovered until the 20th Century.

#### FACT #6

The location of blood stains on the Shroud image correspond to what is known about the Roman practice of crucifixion. While Christian art from the Middle Ages—the era during which skeptics claim the shroud was made—shows nails piercing Jesus’ palms and feet, the blood on the Shroud indicates that the nails pierced the wrists and heels, matching the actual Roman practice.

#### FACT #7

Traces of dirt and limestone on the Shroud match samples taken from tombs in Jerusalem. Moreover, traces of pollen on the Shroud match flora specific to springtime in Jerusalem, the season and locale of Jesus’ burial.

#### FACT #8

Human DNA on the Shroud matches people groups from the region between Israel and Turkey, corresponding to the tradition that the Shroud was taken to Edessa in Southern Turkey during the first century. Evidence that the Shroud was in Edessa is a writing by Syrian scholar Evagrius Scholasticus about an image of Christ “not made by hands,” which effected the miraculous defense of the city against a siege by the Byzantines in 544 AD. The Image of Edessa, apparently the Shroud, became the model for all Byzantine and Orthodox icon images of Jesus that followed.

#### FACT #9

The Shroud matches the biblical account of multiple cloths and a handkerchief found in Jesus’ tomb:

“And [Peter] went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself (John 20:6, 7).

Close examination of the Shroud shows that a three-inch wide, full-length strip sewn onto the side was part of the original cloth, which was cut off and later sewn back into position. Using life-sized models of the body and Shroud, researchers have shown how the once-separate strip was used to fasten the burial cloth to the body: it was first wrapped around the feet, then the knees, then the torso and, finally, the head, where it was fastened beneath the chin.

Besides the three-inch strip, there is a separate facecloth, or handkerchief, associated with the Shroud. The handkerchief, known as the Sudarium of Oviedo, has both pre-mortem and post-mortem blood stains that match precisely the stains on the face area of the Shroud. Unlike the Shroud, however, the handkerchief does NOT have an image of the face. The lack of an image corresponds to the biblical

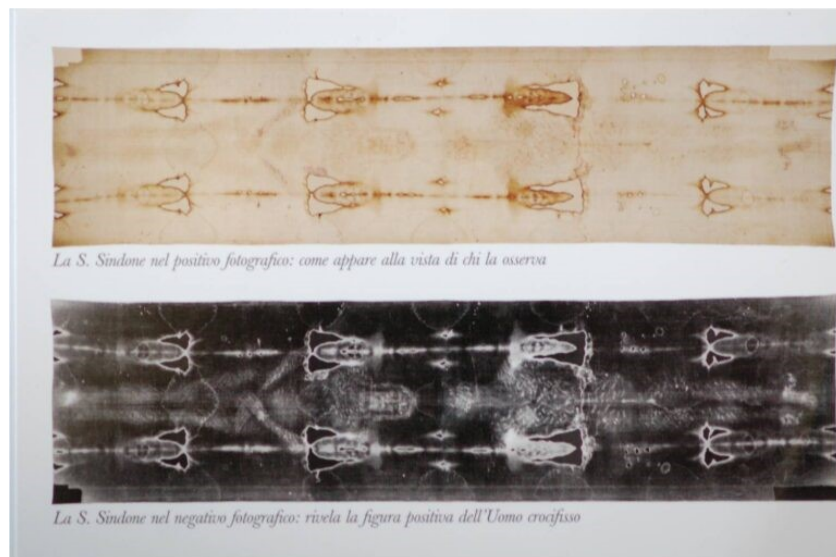
account of the handkerchief being “folded and put aside,” presumably by those who prepared Jesus’ body for burial, before placing it in the Shroud (John 19:38–42).

#### FACT #10

Exhaustive testing of the Shroud image shows no evidence of pigments, dyes, scorching, or any photographic process that would indicate an artistic forgery. Moreover, the image is not the result of natural decay, as no decay products are found on the Shroud. What then caused the image? The most plausible explanation, according to scientists, is that an intense burst of ultraviolet radiation, exceeding the maximum output of any known source, emitted from the body wrapped in the Shroud. The molecular damage caused by the burst of UV light resulted in discoloration to only the outermost surface of the Shroud fibers, giving rise to a faint but precise three-dimensional negative image of the body it covered.

#### FACT # 11

Since the Bible states that the Children of Isreal will be redeemed after 70 Sabbatical “weeks” (Dan. 9:24), it is fascinating to consider a calendar coincidence: The current (2025) Jubilee, or year of redemption, marks 70 weeks since the Shroud was nearly destroyed by a fire in 1532. During the fire in Chambéry, France, a drop of molten silver from the container in which the Shroud was stored burned through the layers of the folded cloth, leaving a symmetrical pattern of holes and scorch marks down the length of both sides.



***Scorch and burn marks on the Shroud***

That the Jubilee marks 70 weeks since the Shroud survived the fire and molten silver is significant because the 70th week is when Israel will pass “through the fire,” to be “refined as silver” (Zech. 13:9; Mal 3:2, 3).

#### FACT #12

Another calendar coincidence is that the first photo of the Shroud, the one that revealed its amazing properties, was taken in 1898. The 1898 date is notable because:

- Strong’s #1898 (Greek) is the word *epeisagoge*, which refers to the act of introducing a new element or concept that enhances what is already present. The 1898 photo enhanced the faint Shroud image that was already present.
- Counting one Jubilee period (50 years) from 1898, we arrive at 1948, the start of the final “fig-tree” generation (Matt. 24:32–34).
- Counting one generation (80 years) from 1898, we arrive at 1978, the year that the Shroud of Turin Research Project, or “STURP,” performed the scientific analysis of the Shroud. Interesting to note about the STURP analysis:
  - The preliminary examination of the Shroud, performed by physicist John P. Jackson, began in a calculated Jubilee, 1976.
  - The number of scientists assigned to the STURP team was 33, the age of Jesus at His death and resurrection.
  - The STURP analysis lasted “about 120 continuous hours,” corresponding to the number of Jubilees in God’s 6,000-year plan, and the number of believers gathered at the Church’s first Pentecost (Barnabas 15:3–9; Acts 1:15).
  - The 120-hour analysis concluded on the Day of Atonement (Oct. 13), the day on which the Jubilee is declared, and which foreshadows Jesus’ atoning death (Lev. 25:9, 10).

#### FACT #13

A final calendar coincidence is that the 1898 Shroud photo was taken during Pentecost, a festival of special significance for Christians.

Consider the unlikely chain of events:

On May 25, 1898, after the opening ceremony of a special exhibition of the Shroud, an amateur photographer named Secondo Pia became the first person to photograph the revered relic. Due to faulty lighting, however, the images taken proved to be unsuccessful.

A few days later, on the evening of May 28, Secondo returned for a second attempt at photographing the Shroud. It was 9:30 pm, just after the sunset marking the start of Pentecost, when he began taking photos.

Around midnight that same evening, Secondo was developing the negative plates in the darkroom when he almost dropped and broke them out of shock of what he saw: a stunningly detailed image of the man on the Shroud that could not be seen with the naked eye.

That the figure on the Shroud first fully appeared around midnight at Pentecost is significant because:

- Pentecost is when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit as a wedding promise to the Church (Acts 2; Eph. 1:13, 14).
- Midnight on or around Pentecost is when Boaz, a type of Christ, vowed to marry Ruth, a type of the Church (Ruth 3:8–13).
- Midnight is when the bridegroom, representative of Jesus, comes to gather the wise virgins to the wedding (Matt. 25:6).

With the above 13 facts in view, it is reasonable to conclude that the Shroud bears the supernaturally imprinted image of the One who:

Healed the sick.

Raised the dead.

Walked on water.

Calmed the storm.

Forgave sinners.

Cast out demons.

Died on a cross.

Rose from the dead.

Ascended to heaven.

Jesus is alive, and He is coming back soon. When He appears, we will become like Him. The same incomprehensible burst of light that emitted from His beaten and bloodied corpse, to produce the image on the Shroud, will emit from those who know Him as Lord. In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, believers will be wondrously transformed and caught up into the clouds (1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:52).

To know Jesus, simply call on His name. Ask Him to be your Savior, and believe that He is the Son of God who died for your sins and was raised from the dead (Rom. 10:9–13).

Do it today.

Time is running out.

#### NOTES:

1. Shroud website: <http://www.shroud.com/>
2. Forensic analysis of the Shroud: [https://whocanhebe.com/Forensic\\_Evidence.html](https://whocanhebe.com/Forensic_Evidence.html)
3. Video discussing the action-photography effect: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgG9m7cq68>
4. Blood on the Shroud: <http://shroudofturin.weebly.com/blood-evidence.html>
5. Blood typing of ancient skeletons from Israel: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/888938/>
6. While a radiocarbon test in 1988 dated the Shroud to only around 1260–1390 AD, these tests are disputed on the basis that they were contaminated by fibers from cloth used to repair the Shroud when it was damaged by the fire in 1532.
7. Image of Edessa: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image\\_of\\_Edessa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image_of_Edessa)
8. Sudarium of Oviedo: <https://www.shroud.com/guscin.htm>
9. Image formation hypothesis: [https://0201.nccdn.net/1\\_2/000/000/174/1a8/how-the-image-was-formed-on-the-shroud.pdf](https://0201.nccdn.net/1_2/000/000/174/1a8/how-the-image-was-formed-on-the-shroud.pdf)
10. God instructed the Israelites to start counting Jubilees when they entered the Promised Land (Lev. 25:2). Since most chronologies have Israel entering the Land in 1406 BC, 2025 is a calculated Jubilee: 1406 BC + 70 Jubilee periods (3,430 years) = 2025.

11. Scripture defines a typical human lifespan, or generation, as 80 years (Ps. 90:10).

12. 1978 Day of Atonement calculation: In 1978 the new moon marking Tishrei 1 would have been sighted on October 3–4. Counting 10 days from October 3–4, we arrive at October 13 (Tishrei 10), the Day of Atonement.

13. 1898 Pentecost calculation: The date of Pentecost is determined by counting seven weeks from the “day after the Sabbath” following Passover (Lev. 23:15, 16). In 1898 the day after the Sabbath following Passover was April 9–10. Counting seven weeks from April 9–10, we arrive at May 28–29, the Day of Pentecost.

14. Coincidentally, the Shroud photographer’s first name, Secondo, means “second,” and his last name, Pia, means “reverent.” It is fitting that a man whose names mean “second” and “reverent” photographed the world’s most revered relic, during the second photo session.

15. More on Secondo Pia and the famous photo session:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondo\\_Pia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondo_Pia)

<https://www.shroud.com/colleg10.htm#:~:text=The%20event%20that%20went%20down,it%20were%20a%20perfect%20negative.>