

The Shroud Of Turin And Other “Relics”

Joe Slater

Was Jesus’ body wrapped in a linen shroud before being placed in the tomb? If so, is the “Shroud of Turin,” housed in a Cathedral in Turin, Italy, that shroud? And if it is, should this shroud be venerated as a “holy relic”? The short answers are no, no, and no!

John 19:40 informs us that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea “*took the body of Jesus and bound it in strips of linen, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.*” Jews didn’t use shrouds. They wound the body with strips up to the shoulders, then tied a handkerchief around the face.

Even if Jesus’ body had been wrapped in a shroud, it wouldn’t be the one at Turin. That cloth was first revealed in 1354 and denounced as a fake 35 years later by the local Catholic bishop. Carbon 14 testing says it dates to the Middle Ages (1260-1390), over 1200 years too late to have been used on Jesus’ body.

But again, even if the “Shroud of Turin” could be shown to have been used to wrap Jesus’ body for burial, that would not mean we should venerate it as a “holy relic.” Sincere but misguided souls have long sought for some tangible object to help them connect with God. In the movie, Indiana Jones found the “holy grail,” the cup Jesus used at the last supper. Splinters from the cross, vials of blood from Jesus’ pierced side, and countless other “relics” are also viewed as having miraculous powers. None are genuine. Most border on idolatry.

At God’s direction, Moses constructed a bronze serpent in the wilderness. Its legitimate use brought healing to sinful Israelites bitten by serpents. Centuries later their descendants began worshipping it. Good king Hezekiah destroyed it, calling it “Nehushtan” (a piece of bronze, 2 Kings 18:4). If ever there was a genuine “relic,” surely this was it. But, in reality, it was just a piece of bronze. Just so, the “Shroud of Turin” is a piece of linen, nothing more and nothing less.

Are You Thankful For The Church?

In the letters to the churches of Rome, Corinth, Colosse, and Philippi, the Apostle Paul expressed his deep gratitude for those congregations. He was thankful for their faithfulness, fellowship and spiritual growth. Even though these groups of Christians struggled with temptation and sin, Paul appreciated his relationship with the church.

Can we say the same about ourselves? Are we thankful for the church? If so, how do we express our appreciation? Here are a few ways and reasons we should be eternally grateful for this great institution:

- Jesus Christ Died for the Church - Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:24-25
- The Benefit of a Spiritual Family – Eph. 3:14-15
- Love for One Another is Found in the Church – 1 Peter 1:22
- Forgiveness is Found in Church Fellowship – 1 John 1:7
- Gratitude Shown by Consistent Fellowship - Acts 2:42
- Physical Needs are Met Thru the Church - Acts 4:34
- Peace and Harmony is Found in the Church - Rom. 15:5
- One Can be Worry-Free in the Church – Phil. 4:6-7
- Our Thankfulness is Shown by Giving – 2 Cor. 9:6-8
- Spiritual Support is Found in the Church – James 5:13-16
- Good Works Come from the Church – Eph. 2:10
- Christ is the Savior of the Church – Eph. 5:23

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX)

*God Didn't Bring You This Far To
Leave You Now!*

WHAT IS YOUR PASSION?

"Passion," defined as "a strong and barely containable emotion," is a word we may use about ourselves, but is more likely to be used by others to describe us. Thanks to social media, we can see people's interests, hobbies, and diversions whenever we choose. They post pictures, make comments, and talk about them with great frequency. However, there are some people whose focus is so intent on some topic that their emotion spills over. If anyone else brings it up, they cannot refrain from jumping in "with both feet." Yet, they themselves are always finding and sharing relevant material that supports or upholds their views. Maybe it's guns (for or against), race (Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, et. al.), politics (R or D), illegal immigration (for or against), or some equally charged issue. Have you ever noticed someone whose passion seems to be for being argumentative and disagreeable? Passion is unmistakable.

Not only through social media, but through my every social interaction, my life is declaring what my passion is. Those closest to me are best equipped to say what that is, but everyone who is exposed to me for any period of time can figure it out. What a sobering thought! I know what I would want that to be. Paul said, "*For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*" (1 Cor. 2:2). In Philippians 3:10, he simply says, "*I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings ...*" We have the corpus of Paul's inspired writings, and it is filled with his expressing that passion. We have eyewitnesses to his ministry, especially Luke, who verify that this is what drove him and ignited his passion.

So, what is my passion? I don't get to say what my passion is, simply by thinking about what it should be in some moment of reflection. It is what my life shows that it is. When all is said and done, what will have been the great passion of my life? What about you?

--Author Unknown (via Athens, AL) adapted