

Hi Lindsay,

Finally have some time to respond. First, I will list the information I wanted to share with you. Then, I will respond to some of the things you said on the podcast.

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\*I believe the Shroud is authentic based on the accumulated scientific evidence but also because of several mystical experiences I've had, which are described in detail in my book that is mentioned further below.

\*A woman from Columbus Ohio called in the monastery in 1997, wanting some information about the Shroud. We talked about the Shroud and other spiritual matters. Along the way, she told me she had survived childhood cancer, was a 4-time world champion power lifter in the 97- pound weight class and was recently divorced after her husband left her for another woman. I left the monastery in 1998 and moved to Columbus to be with her. We eventually married. We did a significant amount of Shroud research that we would never have been to do if we had not gotten together.

\*Sue wrote her autobiography Strong Woman in 2002, which was republished in 2011. (See:[https://www.amazon.com/Strong-Woman-Unshrouding-Secrets-Soul/dp/0966531221/ref=sr\\_1\\_fkmrnull\\_1?keywords=strong+woman+benford&qid=1555380892&s=books&sr=1-1-fkmrnull](https://www.amazon.com/Strong-Woman-Unshrouding-Secrets-Soul/dp/0966531221/ref=sr_1_fkmrnull_1?keywords=strong+woman+benford&qid=1555380892&s=books&sr=1-1-fkmrnull))

\*We believed the dating was skewed due to repair work in the C-14 sample area. STURP chemist Ray Rogers thought it was nonsense and said he could prove us wrong in 5 minutes. Instead, he ended up agreeing with us.

\*Ray Rogers published in 2005 a paper in the high-end peer-reviewed chemistry journal *Thermochimica Acta* that stated the C-14 sample was not representative of the main cloth and thus not valid for determining the age of the cloth. (See: **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**)

\*Sue and I had a paper published in 2008 in an Italian English-language journal *Chemistry Today* a paper that further supported the idea that the C-14 sample was anonymous. (See: <https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/benfordmarino2008.pdf>.)

\*In 2008 and 2009, I co-authored 2 articles with former NASA scientist Ed Prior titled "Chronological History of the Evidence for the Anomalous Nature of the C-14 Sample Area of the Shroud of Turin" (<https://www.shroud.com/pdfs/chronology.pdf>), which was 40 pages. We then added an addendum of 19 more pages (link embedded in main article.) Prior is agnostic and has no religious agenda.

\*Sadly, Sue passed away from breast cancer on Apr 6, 2009.

\*In 2011, my book *Wrapped Up in the Shroud: Chronicle of a Passion* was published. (See: [https://www.amazon.com/WAPPED-UP-SHROUD-Chronicle-Passion/dp/097894996X/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?keywords=wrapped+up+in+the+shroud&qid=1555381158&s=books&sr=1-1-catcorr](https://www.amazon.com/WAPPED-UP-SHROUD-Chronicle-Passion/dp/097894996X/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=wrapped+up+in+the+shroud&qid=1555381158&s=books&sr=1-1-catcorr))

\*In 2016, I authored a 3 part 75 page article titled, "The Politics of the Radiocarbon Dating of the Turin Shroud." It can be found at: **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

\*If you even just skim the "Chronological History...." and "Politics....." articles, I think you will be able to see that the C-14 test was nowhere near being stringent or rigorous and that the search for truth was a distant second to political backstabbing. So even if our theory or other theories aren't correct, the results can be questioned on the shoddy way the test had been conducted.

\*In March 2019, a peer-review paper appeared in *Archaeometry* that challenged the conclusions of the 1989 *Nature* paper that had proclaimed the AD 1260-1390 results for the Shroud. See attached.

\*There is going to be an international Shroud conference in Ancaster, Ontario in mid-August 2019. I have been asked to give a 75-minute keynote address, titled "The Invisible Reweave and Other Challenges to the Turin Shroud's C-14 Medieval Dating: A Review." (See <https://custance.org/conference/science-theology-and-the-turin-shroud/>.) I have 90 PowerPoint slides with the presentation and I believe I have ultra-compelling evidence that the C-14 area was, in fact, repaired.

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## YOUR COMMENTS

**\*You said the gospels say nothing was left behind in the tomb. Not so.**

Luke 24:9-12 New International Version (NIV)

9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. 12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

John 20:1-10 New International Version (NIV)

## The Empty Tomb

**20** Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. <sup>2</sup> So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" <sup>3</sup> So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. <sup>4</sup> Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, <sup>7</sup> as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. <sup>8</sup> Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

My comments: The "strips of linen" is a translation issue. When Matthew, Mark and Luke 1st mention the burial clothes, they use the word Greek word, "sindon," which would equate to a large linen cloth like our Shroud. John (and Luke in the passage reproduced above) use the Greek term "othonia," which is a generic plural term for burial cloths and which include our Shroud and also the strip used to bind the hands and feet and strips on the outside of the shroud to keep the body more secure. There is a 3 inch strip the length of the Shroud that was apparently cut off and apparently sewed back on at some point. That could have been the strip used on the outside of the Shroud to help keep the body more secure. There is nothing inconsistent with the terms used in the gospels and the Shroud of Turin.

**\*You said that the Image of Edessa was believed to have originated before Jesus' death.**

My comments: If the Image of Edessa was, in fact, the Shroud, I'm not surprised that a story developed that the image was put on before his death as opposed to after the death. I think it could have been a case of garbled history. I think there is a strong case to be made for the Shroud having been the Image of Edessa and then the Mandyllion, despite there being some inconsistencies of the descriptions of both. When the Emperor's sons saw the Mandyllion in Constantinople in 945, they said the image was "blurred" and another document described as a "moist secretion with any artificial

coloring or stain." Both of those are pretty good descriptions of what the Shroud looks like to the naked eye. Also the Hungarian Pray Manuscript, reliably date to AD 1192-1195, has a portrayal of Jesus' burial that suggests that the artist had seen the Shroud directly. Not to mention that tons of representations of Jesus, all the way back to the 6th century, look like they were based on the Shroud image. I think the argument that the Shroud image was made on the basis of the prevalent image of Jesus in circulation is weak. I recently saw on a blog one of the worst reasons ever devised by a skeptic to show that the Shroud can't be authentic. The person said it can't be real because Turin is in Italy and Jesus never set foot in Italy!!!! But although there is no absolute proof that the Shroud existed before the 14th century, a reasonable case can be made from history and to some degree art history.

**\*You said that one reason you're skeptical is that the Shroud historically surfaced in a period that had lots of forgeries in it.**

My comments: I'll grant you that, but I would argue that there are enough characteristics of the image that argue against it being a forgery of any period. If a lot of counterfeit bills are being passed around in a particular period, it doesn't necessarily mean that the bill you have in your hand is fake.

**\*You say you get frustrated by all the various studies that are debunked by equally credible sources.**

My comments: Not all scientists are created equal. The STURP team was made of Christians, Jews, a Mormon, atheists, and agnostics. They were assembled from some of the finest labs in the country. Most of these men worked in our space and nuclear programs. Most people wouldn't dream of telling these men how to build a nuclear bomb or how better to put an astronaut into space, but people are very comfortable ignoring STURP's almost unanimous conclusion that the cloth was not made by the hand of man. I think those guys and gals) were smart enough to figure out if it were a fake or not. Prominent Shroud skeptic Joe Nickell (has not seen the Shroud) works for an entity whose sole purpose is to debunk paranormal phenomena. He has also said it's possible that Jesus never existed. Do you really expect him to come out and say the Shroud is real? The Blood Pattern Analysis study from a few years ago (by 2 authors that have never seen the Shroud) that claimed that the blood patterns on the Shroud show it to be a fake was funded by an Italian atheist group. Do you really expect the authors to come out and say the Shroud is real? The late Dr. Walter McCrone, the microscopist who said the Shroud was a painting (he never saw it directly but just

examined sticky tapes), ignored the fact that all the STURP scientists said that while there are some paint traces on the cloth (it's known that dozens of artists were allowed to touch their copies of the Shroud to sanctify it) and also ignored the fact that when the Shroud is back lit, one sees the bloodstains but no image. My friend Barrie Schwartz said that a friend of McCrone told Barrie that McCrone's friend said to him, "Why do you keep saying it's a painting when STURP has shown that it's not." McCrone's answer was something to the effect, "They call them STURP but they call me McCrone." In other words, he was making a name for himself because of the claim. Most people that try to debunk the Shroud usually have an agenda and/or are simply afraid of the ramifications of an authentic Shroud vis-a-vis their worldview. The 3 labs that did the 1988 dating refused for 30 years to release the raw data. That's very suspicious. It was only recently released due to a Freedom of Information act--that's mentioned in the info I supplied in the 1st part above. An article about the data is attached, which basically concludes that the results were not valid. Most people that have studied the cloth for decades believe it to be authentic. As of a few years ago, the co-founder of STURP, theoretical physicist John Jackson, alone had spent 40,000 hours in his lifetime studying the Shroud. And unlike many people, he was able to observe and test it first hand.

**\*You mentioned that the C-14 results were given with 95% certainty.**

My comments: Given that they worked with 1 disputed sample, that's nonsense. Barrie Schwartz said he has asked hundreds of scientists if they would claim 95% certainty having used 1 sample and ALL of them said no.

**\*You said you wanted to know why the Vatican allowed doubtful samples to be sent to the labs and how it was discovered that the samples were repaired.**

That's covered in the information I supplied in the 1st part.

**\*You said you think the image looks fake even if there are possibly some miraculous elements.**

My comments: How would you know what an image would look like if a miracle is involved. You can't. But look at some of the Shroud's characteristics:

- \*the image is only the top several thousands of an inch of the threads
- \*the image is uniform front and back
- \*the image is like a photographic negative
- \*the image has embedded spatial encoding (the "3-D aspect)
- \*there are no paints, pigments, stains, dyes that make up the image

- \*the image shows accurate wounds inflicted by Roman flagrum and Roman lancea
- \*there is limestone from Jerusalem
- \*there are pollens from Jerusalem
- \*Dozens of doctors believe the image to be physiologically and anatomically correct. Dr. Gus Accetta told me he asked hundreds of forensic pathologists and surgeons about the Shroud and they all find it to be accurate. I've only run across in the literature a few doctors in over 40 years that weren't convinced

Those are only a few of the characteristics that convince me it's the real McCoy. To me it takes more of a miracle to believe that an artist did it than it's what it's purported to be.

\*You said some people have said the Shroud is possibly in good shape because the Resurrection could have preserved it.

My comments: No supernatural means are needed to preserve ancient textiles. The Egyptian museum in Turin, which I've visited, has textiles 5,000 years old and older. I once handled a 4,000 year old piece of a textile and it was in surprisingly good shape.

Well, I think I've given you quite a bit to chew on. Let me know if you have any questions. I'm happy to talk on the phone as well.

Best,

Joe