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with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Is the Shroud of Turin the Burial Cloth of Christ? With Dr. Gary Habermas

(November 12, 2024)

FRANK:

The Shroud of Turin, ladies and gentlemen. Is it legit? Is it really the burial cloth of Christ? Well, Dr. Gary Habermas is going to tell us about that today. In fact, you know, Gary Habermas is the top guy in the world on the Resurrection.

I just received his second thousand page volume, 'On the Resurrection.' He's got two more that are going to come out over the next year. Gary is one of my favorite people in the world. But a lot of you might not know this, that Gary's bestselling book of all time, I think it's still true.

Of all time to this point, was a book he wrote way back in 1980 with another author called 'The Shroud.' And Gary has kept up with the research on the Shroud since then. What's that, 44 years ago? Gary's in his 70's now and he is an expert on the Shroud of Turin. And he'll give you all the pros and cons as to, you know, is this really the burial cloth of Christ?

We're going to get into it in a minute. Before we do, I want to mention. If you're listening to this on Tuesday, November 12th, we're at LSU tonight, Louisiana State University for Why I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. If you're anywhere near Baton Rouge, you can come. It's free.

Just go to our website for details, crossexamined.org. And if you can't see it in person, you can see it tonight. It'll be on our YouTube channel and our other social media sites, including X. So, you can check it out there. I also want to mention that if you like the events, we do on college campuses, please consider giving us a tax deductible donation because we don't charge students anything to go to a college campus.

When they show up, they come in for free. It's all funded by you. A hundred percent of everything you give goes to ministry. Zero percent goes to buildings. We don't have an office.

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We all work out of our homes. We go to you wherever the students are. And we go to college campuses because it's one of the darkest places in America for Christianity.

So many untruths, and mistruths, and deceitful things are taught on a college campus that we feel like we need to go in there and throw students a lifeline. And that's why we do it. This is going to be our last one this year. We've been to several already. But LSU tonight, November 12th. Check it out. Also want to mention that this Saturday I'll be in Austin, Texas with my friends Alisa Childers and Natasha Crain for the Unshaken Conference.

If you want to be a part of that, go to UnshakeConference.com and you can sign up for it there. See it there. Also want to mention next Monday the 18th of November, we're going to do Part 2 of 'If God, Why Evil?' just north of Charlotte, North Carolina here at Freedom House Church. Everyone's invited to that as well. Starts at 7:30.

If you can't be there, it will be live streamed. 'If God, Why Evil? This is Part 2. We did Part 1 a week or two ago. So, if you want to see that, go to our YouTube channel or come up to Freedom House Church. All the details are on our website Crossexamined.org. Okay. My friend and board member Dan Hodges, who is also, he's a former F16 pilot and he is on our board at CrossExamined.

He is also a Biola graduate and is a longtime friend of Gary Habermas, as I am. But Dan's going to take the interview from here. Here he is, the great Dan Hodges along with Dr. Gary Habermas.

DAN:

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to CrossExamined podcast and the rest of you viewers other than the ladies and gentlemen. I have with me today, Dr. Gary Habermas. Dr. Habermas is a distinguished research professor at Liberty University for a number of years has written more than 50 books, or contributed, or edited those, spoken at over 2,000 lectures, and over 100 universities, colleges, et cetera.

An expert on the resurrection, having written the magnum opus. The second book has just come out. I believe the third is submitted to the editors and you've got a little time to get the

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fourth out there. What people don't know about Gary, he's an excellent bass fisherman. He's a close personal friend and has a better half, Eileen. And they've been up at the farm with Ginger and I and, and I have personally bass fished. And yes, you're far better than I am. I'll concede that publicly.

GARY:

I could say it the other way around. I think you've all caught me, outbassed me.

DAN:

Well, I can do it daily. But still, your techniques are better than mine. Today's podcast we're going to cover, though not the resurrection. But Gary is also, I believe, correct me if I'm wrong, you were on a council or a committee on the Shroud and we're going to cover the Shroud of Turin.

It's one of the subjects, along with near death experiences, and the resurrection that Gary is considered expert in. So, Gary, someone comes up to me or you and says, well, that Shroud of Turin seems like it's perhaps one of those other relics that have claims about it that just, you know, it can't be true.

I mean, who's going to have something, a burial shroud that Jesus was wrapped in after He was crucified and is buried. How can that possibly still exist? So, how would you explain that to somebody? When you think about it, it's a reasonable question.

GARY:

Because one of the first things you think is if this is Jesus, you're talking about 30 A.D. dying, that's about exactly 2,000 years ago. How in the world can a piece of linen cloth survive for 2000 years? Now, when you say something like, well, you know, we have mummy cloths from much older than that, or we have other cloths in the museums from that time, it's not that rare a thing.

Well, they stop, and they'll go, well, I hadn't thought about that. But at first thought it seems like it's too old to, it's too long to be making a difference. But it is here. And one of the main

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theories that might help us a little bit is that the Shroud was kept hermetically sealed, you might say, in a wall for several hundred years on its journey.

And it was hidden from icon destroyers on the way from between Israel and up to Western Europe, where it's been for hundreds of years. So, with a few hundred years of safekeeping and the fact that other cloths are of comparable length and still in good shape, that puts that question down.

But I would just say in general, the question is not is that another relic? How many times have we been wrong? Those are fair questions, but they're not the questions. To me, the question is, where do the data go? We always have to make these kinds of decisions based on the data.

So, here's what happens. Over the years, probably hundreds of people, I've met them in engagements, and they'll say, well, I started out, everybody starts out skeptically because it doesn't seem like it could be that long.

And then if it is, how about some poor crucifixion victim and not Jesus? Those are good questions. But as the pieces start coming together, what they say to me is, you know, I don't think there's any chance. But the more time I spend on this, it looks better and better. And now today? Wow.

DAN:

So, the Shroud itself, I understand, went through a fire, but I also heard in your lecture yesterday there are what, 300 marks, lashings that can be counted on the cloth, is that correct?

GARY:

Yeah. First of all, it's gone through two fires now, one way back in the time of the Renaissance. But just recently, like in the last 20-25 years, they barely got it out of the cathedral. And in both cases, it could have been destroyed pretty easily. But let me see your other question you're asking about...

DAN:

Yeah, so there were lashes on it. There are--

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GARY:

300, yeah.

DAN:

And the spear mark, that would indicate something was speared.

GARY:

Yes, several major wounds, one in each wrist. Now, you can't see the one in the left wrist because the right hand is over it, but you can see the blood flow that's going up the arm from the wrist, and the flow on the left side is just about exact, and you can't see the hole.

So, presumably two wrist holes, two in the feet with the left foot twisting toward the right a little bit. So, it's often thought that the left foot covered the right foot, and a single nail went through both. So, it's two wounds, but one nail. And then the side wound that you refer to. You've got what looks more like a, not a crown of thorns, but like a skull cap of thorns.

He's pierced throughout, not just a little wreath let, but throughout that on his head. But these whipping marks are over basically every inch of his body with the exception of his face, his forearms and his feet. All the rest are covered. Now, if...

And this is the most common supposition. If the flagrum, the Roman tool that had these strips of rawhide was sometimes a bone or pieces of metal connected, it looks like there were three with each lash. You go, how would they know that? Because the groupings on the Shroud are often in threes.

So, you say 300 times. You divide by three, perhaps. And some of those are estimates because the Shroud was in a fire. So, the shoulders burned out, and other parts are burned. You have to estimate that the same amount of marks that are now, how many would there be probably in the areas that are charcoal right now, that are burnt through?

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And so, if you do it that way, you'd have to divide by three. If there are 300, that's 100 lashes. That's probably still too many, but I would say 40 or 50 lashes is fair, with each time being hit by three pieces of. And what's on the end are like dumbbell-shaped pieces of lead.

They look like little, tiny weights that you would lift, a single weight that you'd lift up and down with one arm. Their small close ups show little, tiny... Like I said, they look like a dumbbell. Three of them. So, you get hit with three of those every single time. Sometimes they sharpen the edges. So, it gouged. It was designed to gouge human flesh upon contact. It was really a nasty instrument and it's a nasty death.

DAN:

I noted yesterday as well. You mentioned that in the 1980's it was carbon-14 dated, and it came back Middle Ages. Subsequent to that, another expert with his team looked at it and said, well, yeah, because you dated the wrong part of the Shroud. There were patches, there were other threads sewn into it as a repair done by the nuns or assumedly nuns and others that had care of this, maybe even at the San Giovanni Battista Cathedral where it was held in Turin for so long. Correct?

GARY:

That is correct.

DAN:

Now, one of the things you said that was compelling to me is you showed artwork that was consistent with the appearance that was on the Shroud.

GARY:

There's some very strange things in the Shroud that when somebody paints a living pre-crucifixion Jesus, He's not been beat up, but He's got the same wounds in the same places, including two wrinkles at the bottom of the beard that are in the original cloth.

In fact, one of them we know is in the cloth because the wrinkle is just up further under the chin and blood is down the wrinkle. So, we know it's an ancient wrinkle. But below that there's two wrinkles.

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I mean, here's the supposition. This is Jesus, for crying out loud. I'm picturing Him. And if this is Jesus and there's two lines below the beard, well then, I have to put two lines below. There's a triangle shape, looks like a, some kind of watermark or wound between the eyes and a line that goes across the forehead. And darned if they don't put the line that goes across the forehead. And what's a triangle doing between the eyes? What's the line doing down here?

DAN:

And that piece artwork, I guess the oldest one that you showed was 600 AD, right?

GARY:

The oldest one goes back to 6th century, 500's. And then we got some Roman coins from the late 600's, about 690, and into the 700's. So, up until about 710, 715. So, if the Shroud is thought to be between with the dating plus or minus 1200 to 1500, let's say. But you've got coins--

DAN:

Replicating it.

GARY:

In that little, tiny gold there's different kinds, but there's little tiny gold coins and it would say a picture of Jesus and it'll say King of Kings and Lord of Lords, so you know who they're talking about. One's got what looks like sides of the cross coming behind His head and He's like posed there, almost like in a photograph with this cross behind Him.

And darn if they don't make the gold with the two lines under the neck and the triangle between the eyes. Why are you doing that for a non-crucified, not yet crucified Jesus? Or this one from the 6th century, they have this similar thing and they're looking at something.

Here's the key. A critic could say, well, they thought it was Jesus, right? Yes, but that doesn't mean it was Jesus. Totally true. But you're missing my point. My point is the cloth they were looking at predates the Middle Ages by centuries.

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DAN:

Yes. And I instantly thought, yeah, but I was listening to yesterday. Yeah, Gary, but why couldn't the cloth have been made off the art instead of the art off of the cloth? But when the artwork is sequential from 600, you know, 6th century, clear on up to Middle Ages, that's highly unlikely.

GARY:

Well said.

DAN:

And now you've got, I don't know if you saw that article. I'm sure you did. Italian scientists just recently, I believe, have indicated that they found cloth from 1st century Masada that is identical.

GARY:

And it's a question, by the way, about how could this cloth be so long? Well, we've got this one for the first century, you know, so...

DAN:

Yeah. So, the medieval cloth, when compared, cloths that we have, linens, when compared with the Shroud, they're nowhere near identical. And yet, the linens that we have from Masada from first century compared to this linen, are nearly identical.

So, it does give rise to at least an acceptance. Is it the burial cloth? We don't know. I think you said yesterday, it depends on what side of the bed you get up on in the morning.

GARY:

And I say that, and I don't make the Shroud people real happy. They want me to say, oh yeah, 95 to 100% likely. I don't say that, but I think the evidence is that it's naive to only say it's intriguing. It's highly intriguing. But there's enough data to say it's in the running. And there's some things on there that can't be explained. And some of the ones that can't be explained "look like" some sort of miracle or supernatural evidence for some event of that nature.

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DAN:

And this man that was buried with this cloth between 5'7" and 6ft tall, I believe, had obviously a wound in the side which correlates with the biblical story of the Romans thrusting the spear into His side. And that is, correct me if I'm wrong again, not a normal MO, modus operandi of the executioners in Rome at that time did not. They broke legs instead of actually puncturing.

GARY:

You know, we have records of both. Outside of Scripture now, like a lot of the critics go, well, that's a spear wound, come on. And the broken legs, both are in John. This is a critic talking. John is the least trustworthy book. Why? Because "it's the most theological, and it's the fourth one in terms of time after the cross.

So, John's not your best source." Okay, what if I use some Greco Roman sources that say the same thing? "Oh, you've got some of those?" Yeah. In these massive, huge books that just parts one and two have come out, almost 2,000 pages and two books, I found a number of archaeological cases of nails being placed in the feet of crucifixion victims.

And there's a couple of really interesting things about a coup de grace. Martin Hengel, in his famous little book 'Crucifixion', he says it's not just a spear wound to the side. He said there were several things they would do to people. It's getting late. Starting to rain.

I'm going to go back in the barracks, or I want to go back there, and the guys are having a big card game, or a big dice shoot tonight. I want to get back there. No need for me to stay out here. Let's do something. Kill this guy. Let's get out of here. And he gives examples of them doing things.

One guy was threatened with a bow and arrow. One guy, they crushed his skull, but the breaking the ankles were fairly common. And if you think about it, Ben Shaw and I and a medical doctor friend, MD, PhD, we did an article not proving how Jesus died.

But what do most medical doctors, what do they think happens in crucifixion? All we did was do a head count, and we found three times as many medical doctors who took asphyxiation as took the other half dozen views combined, whatever, I just said twice as many as all the other

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views combined. And now why am I bringing that up? If you could do anything to this guy to make sure he's dead, yeah, you could crush the skull, yeah, you could shoot him with an arrow, you could stab him with a spear.

But if you break the ankles, the benefit is you want him to suffer longer. And that's the whole point of it. You break a guy's ankles or leg bones. And all of us know that if your life depends on doing pull ups, you're not living for very long.

DAN:

Especially me.

GARY:

Hey, I'm putting myself in there too. And so, you know, a lot of people, they can do one, okay. So, you pull up and when you pull up, you free the lungs. This is the theory. The intercostal pectoral duct muscles around the lungs, you free them, and you can breathe, but you can't stand it because the direct pain in your feet, it's way too much and gravity pulls you down, and you take some big gulps and slump back down again.

And if you're hanging in the low position for any amount of time, in the actual experiments, German experiments during World War II, they experimented with this. And in one of the experiments, the men in the experiments volunteers to be crucified.

Now all they did was tie their wrists to 2x4's and let them hang a little bit off the ground. Now, I realize it's not the same as crucifixion, but it's close. These guys were losing consciousness in a maximum of 12 minutes. So, it's going to be over quickly if it was only that. Well then why was He on the cross for hours?

Well, he's pushing up. He's gagging, gasping, going back down. And that's just one of the reasons crucifixion is so nasty. Not to mention the pre beating, not to mention, you know, you can't move, cramps in your legs, cramps in your arms. But if you smash the ankles, the guy can't pull up. And it makes a lot of sense to break ankles. But we also have references to piercing the body.

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And one Roman source says very, very helpful statement. When a guy is dead on the cross and the family wants the body to bury it, the centurion may take the dead body down and give it to the family to bury after one final crushing blow is delivered to the corpse. And the word that's used in Latin is a military term. And the instrument that's used in this process is used of a sword, a spear, or an ax.

So, you might crush the chest with an axe, stab with the spear, pierce with the sword, and it makes sense. Why did they do that to Jesus? "Yeah, so it was the Gospel of John." But maybe John got it right. They went to each of the men, broke their ankles. Didn't break Jesus' ankles. You go, well, where'd they get their MD? Johns Hopkins? No, you don't have to have an MD.

An experienced centurion would know if you're hanging on the cross. If the guys are passing out in this one experiment in 12 minutes, you were probably passing out in 12 minutes ish. All right, so let's say he's been hanging there really quietly for a half hour, 45 minutes. You surmise, and probably rightly so, he's dead. You can't fake death by asphyxiation.

DAN:

Can't hold your breath for 30 minutes.

GARY:

You can't hold your breath for 30 minutes. Very well said. So, on top of that, the centurion takes the body down, uses a Latin word, a death... Well, it's not a death blow. The guy's a body. It's a body. You're dead. One more blow. So, we have a double pointer to this person's death, and they go bury the body. And that's what they did. Now, if that's not a good backup to the Gospel of John from archaeology, and we have other references there, and as I said, other references to broken ankles.

DAN:

Right. Fantastic information to have. The Shroud itself I wanted to dive a little bit down this because this fascinated me with a physics and aerospace background. And the image on the Shroud was not just one of blood hitting the cloth, body fluids perhaps, you know, in a state of decay causing stains on cloth.

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It was a very different imprint on this cloth. So, if we know that it is not recent, that it correlates best with experts both with re-dating and with chemical analyses, that it is very old, possibly probably first century, that it has all the marks on it that one might expect from gospel stories. We're left with, could it have been painted on? Or could they have killed some poor sap, you know, in an effort to, you know--

GARY:
Mimic?

DAN:
Yeah. When Constantine's mother, you know, was bringing all these relics and assigning values to certain things in the Levant area, couldn't this have been one more thing that they just decided, you know, to do just as a, you know, coup de grace against any skeptics for this new religion that Constantine had put together or brought together of both pagan and Christian religions? But if one is thinking all that, it's a reasonable thought. But tell me about the, as you mentioned yesterday, radiation. What sort of event could have imprinted that on it? And why is that really the only explanation?

GARY:
Several on all those things: paint, dye, or powder. There is no...

Now, you're talking to these scientists, by the way. You're talking about your military background. Most of these scientists that did the seven day investigation were from the Los Alamos Laboratory, from the Jet Propulsion Lab, and from places that worked on, I think worked on the nuclear bomb that was dropped in Japan. Right? Was it Los Alamos?

DAN:
Yes.

GARY:
I'm trying to remember. Well, these guys are, Ray Rogers, the chief chemist, there was a major chemist at Los Alamos, Sam Pellicori, a skeptic, not a believer who's doing the physics work on the Shroud was from the Jet Propulsion Lab.

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These guys have this same kind of background you're talking about. And here's what they say on the surface. They look at it with electron microscopes. They're trained to do this. No paint, dye, powder on the surface, which can account for the surface image. But one reason for that is if you take a fibril...

Let's take a thread that's as big as my finger. That's going to have to be blown up to be that chubby. But if I take a thread that's as big as a finger and it could have as many as 200 fibrils as part of the thread. The image on the Shroud is on the top fibril only.

Now the blood sinks through, but the image is not on the back of the top thread. Now think about what do we know from paint, dye, powder? Oh, how about a dry application like powder? Yeah, well, it's still going to, chemically you're going to flunk the test. And so, it doesn't fit any of these things.

Now the image on the cloth, there's about four reasons to believe this. It's very strange. First of all, I've already said it's superficial. It's only the top fiber. We don't know how to do that today. We can't reproduce that to get it. Well, I suppose if you really had a lot, you could probably get something on top of one thread. But it's just not anything you...

If some guy's dying and you slap a cloth around him, it's not going to be something you're going to do real quickly and just get everything on the surface. But that's superficial. It's non directional. I didn't even mention this yesterday. But non directional. We have a photograph of non-directional in one of our books.

And non directional means picture a coloring book, and you go like this. You get tired. That's direction, that's directionality. There's no directional movement on the Shroud. It just happened. So, what the non-directional photo looks like is it looks exactly like you took a shade off of a lamp and photographed, turned the light on, and the picture looks like this.

It's just a light. It's a light that just shines. Okay, the image is non-directional. Not on the top surfaces. You have to explain the 3D image. I had a fellow stop me here. I think he did have a military background. And the guy that stopped me here and he said, I can't even imagine a 3D

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image coming out of this because we don't have, well, three 3D images and photos and whatnot.

But the image on the Shroud is 3D, which means if the man's on his back and his hands are crossed, and the cloth is coming over like this, the cloth touches the high points, the forehead, the nose, the chin, not the sides of the face, the chest. His hands are crossed in front of him, not his ribcage. The left foot is popped up in rigor mortis.

So, the left foot is up in the air and the right foot is down. Well, guess what? The cloth's going mostly over the left foot, not over the lower knee that's right next to it. But the image is represented equally everywhere, even in areas that didn't touch the clothe. So, something has to jump across space to get under that cloth.

DAN:

I guess the closest analogy I could think of then would be an X-ray machine emanating from internal to the body everywhere at one time, instantaneously.

GARY:

You mean internally coming out?

DAN:

Yes.

GARY:

Well, early in our lectures, my co-author, Ken Stevenson was an Air Force Academy professor and was part of this. He was in a carpool that Sam Pellecourt...

Well, the guy's from, not Sam, but a guy named Dee German who was another agnostic from the Air Force Academy and two scientists, physicists, Jackson and Jumper and Ken, my co-author, they were in a carpool together and that started this thing.

And by the way, they had a machine known then, a VP8 image analyzer which did voyager space shot type things that would do space shot like to Mars and it would do distances.

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So, they wanted the distance information to tell how far and so on. So, now they get this, and they can tell that the image shouldn't be the same on the left knee as on the right knee, but it's all represented. It shouldn't be in the rib cage because it's not touching over there, but it is. Shouldn't be on the sides of the cheek, but the cheeks are there.

Here's something that you can, with all your background. Here's another. The Shroud is full of puzzling, you know, just, you know, here's one for you. The body's flat. The man is about 5'10", 180 pounds. And by the way, he's in pretty good shape. You can see chest and stomach differentiation.

I'm doing this in the crowd. I can't tell you how many times I see the husband elbow the wife and go, huh, huh, huh? And I'll say later, weren't you the guy that...? "Yeah." How tall are you?

"I'm 5'11"?"

What do you weigh?

"170."

He's telling his wife, hey, you got the masterpiece right here sitting next to you. These guys are the same size, but that man, at about 5'10", 180, is lying on the rock, presumably dead. He's lying on the rock and the cloth on top gets laid over him. The edge of the cloth to his feet around the head and back to the feet again. So, it's this way.

Now, which one has the deeper stain, the back or the top? The one that the 180 pounds are on top of, or the one that's lying on top of the 180 lbs.?

DAN:

Obviously, it would pedal towards the base.

GARY:

It's got to be the back, right? They're both the same. There's no difference in the image.

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Now, that you just go, how many of these things do I have to solve to get this thing down? You go, that's why when people say, this is stupid, it's a relic, they're all...

If you have to check all the relics, check all the relics. Now, you may be rejecting a lot of them pretty quickly. But you're not going to reject this one very quickly. Why is the weight? Why is the weight on the cloth, why is the back? That's just a real puzzle. Why is a thread with 200 fibrils only in the top 5 fibril?

How do you get 3D? And we haven't done the biggest one. The main one is, are the shots, the places on the cloth that look like body parts or at least skeletal parts are coming from the inside out. They think you can see. This one's a little more debated.

You can see a backbone through the front, but more clearly you could see the finger bones all the way up. So, for a while, critics laughed, and they said, this dude's fingers are so long, they thought he had Marfan syndrome, which Lincoln had, and had abnormally long fingers.

Well, you don't have to go. I mean, so what? If Jesus had Marfans, Jesus had Marfans. And we don't even know it's Jesus in the cloth.

But, I mean, why are you making...?

It's just silly to even make fun of that. Well, we can take a look. One of my shots is a human skeleton of a hand. And you can see all the way up in the hand. Well, these bones go up here. Surprise. You can feel them with your... That's why the fingers look so long.

DAN:

And you also have, as you mentioned yesterday, or showed yesterday, it looks like teeth as well.

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GARY:

And it's not because, I don't want anybody to misunderstand this. It's not because he got hit with one of those blows. Remember I said one of the exceptions, face, forearms, and feet. They didn't whip him in the face. This is not ripped. It's with the mouth closed, the beard intact, you can see the teeth through the beard and through the meat.

And so, what's on the inside is carried out, and you can see teeth. So, in one of my photographs, I have a human skull. This was done by a medical doctor at Duke School of Medicine, Duke University. And half the picture is a human skull, and half the picture is the right side of the Shroud face, and it's lined up so that the two faces, they're...

You know, everybody's head's different size from different people, but they line up very nicely. But the main thing the medical doctor wanted to see was the teeth and the skeleton of the real skull. He took his own picture. He forgot to take his glasses off. I don't know if you noticed that, but the left side of the skull, one side had glasses on.

That's not right for the first century. There shouldn't be glasses there. But the teeth come across on the left side. You can see the teeth and the skull, and they're lined up. They got the picture lined up. So, it goes right. Don't miss a beat. And it goes right around to the teeth and the Shroud. And you see how closely these mimic real teeth.

Now, tell me a Greco-Roman source in the first century, who can't get the thread right, who would use paint, dye, powder, who can't explain the flash, can't explain the superficial,

A) Cares about the teeth, and secondly,

B) is going to get the teeth right.

DAN:

It seems like an explosion of radiation of some sort or light, an extreme light flash from the inside of the body to the outside has imprinted all of these elements onto the cloth. And there really is no other plausible explanation.

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And we can't even do it today to that extent. How could it have been done?

GARY:

It can't be duplicated.

DAN:

So, I'm left with the preponderance of evidence. My opinion is that the Shroud is a genuine shroud. It does represent a crucifixion victim. Is it Jesus of Nazareth, Yeshua, the Jewish rabbi, or is it not? That is the only question, I think.

GARY:

The man is dead. There's another one. He's dead. He's not faking death. I thought about something a very prominent Shroud scholar said to me, and I remembered it. When people came up to me after yesterday's lecture, I quoted this guy.

This guy was a professor at Yale, and he was a physicist at Yale, and he was one of the members on the Shroud team. He's one of the guys who discovered the real blood on the Shroud. And he said to me, with my permission to tape his phone call, he said to me on the phone, he said, the energy that it took to make that image on the cloth, whatever, whoever, whomever, whatever it is, the image that it took to make that, the force, the power to put that on the cloth...

No matter how much I think about this, you'll probably get a kick out of this. He said if that energy were converted to nuclear energy, it would have leveled the city of Jerusalem. A Yale professor, physicist, if that energy were converted to nuclear energy instead of a kindly kind of energy, it would have leveled. It would have been a weapon for the war today in the Middle East.

It would have leveled the city of Jerusalem. And you're thinking, whoa. If, big IF it's Jesus, and if big IF it's the resurrection of Jesus, I think God could speak that into existence. You know, you say we are faced here with a very enigmatic mystery, but it could be. What one guy concluded, an Oxford grad who wrote one of the early books on the Shroud, he said, consider this.

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He ends his book. The Shroud image could be a photograph of the resurrection of Jesus. See, if you break your leg and you go to get an X-ray. You could say to your friend, and everybody understands you. Yeah, I went to the emergency room. They took pictures of my leg, and they determined. And you could use the word pictures. An X-ray is a type of picture. And so, he said, what if this is a photograph of the resurrection of Jesus? That's rather startling.

DAN:

That's something to think about for certain.

GARY:

So is the level in Jerusalem.

DAN:

So, because of your life work, focusing on the Resurrection, is that how you became interested in the Shroud of Turin? Did somebody approach you or did you pick that?

GARY:

I approached them. I had just finished my doctoral dissertation at Michigan State University in 1976, and about a year later, now we're in 77, the stuff is coming out about the Shroud and their interest at the Air Force Academy? Yeah. These are top notch scientists? Yeah. These are the guys that came up with all our weapons and all this stuff?

Yeah. And Jet Propulsion Lab and Los Alamos? Yeah. They're interested in the Shroud? Just that alone, you go, wow. So, I called one of the two best known scientists on the phone. I got his number. Somehow, I don't know how I did it. I called him one night and I said, hey, would you talk to me for a little while?

I'm doing a book on the resurrection. I'd like to put a little something here, maybe an appendix on the Shroud. Can I say something? And the guy I got to know him later, he's a PhD in that field. And he said, I don't think I should be talking to you. I said, what are you talking about?

He goes, we had to sign a three-page, what I call because I got to see it, and I signed it later. Looked like a three-page run-on lawyer sentence saying, we will not divulge this information

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and not talk to the press because they were adamant as scientists that it had to come out in the journals before it came out in the popular press. He said, I think we better end this phone call. I'm not talking.

And I said, hey, look, dude, I'm not a journalist. Yeah, I'm not a reporter. I just finished my PhD on the resurrection of Jesus at a secular university. I mean, that should tell you I'm at least interested on how much is interested. He goes, well, I still don't know who you are, but you sound like a reporter.

Well, you're just telling me I ask good questions. Thank you. He goes, but I'll tell you a guy who will talk to you. He's our editor and spokesperson for our team. His name's Ken Stevenson from the Air Force. And he gives me Ken's number. That night, I called Ken, the same night I talked to the other guy.

DAN:

Like this.

GARY:

That's what I did.

DAN:

Older people will appreciate that.

GARY:

That's correct. And it makes the noise as it's going around. And I got Ken about 11 o'clock at night. And Ken had left the Air Force Academy, and he was a. He was a B52 bomber pilot in Vietnam. And he was the second youngest B52 bomber pilot. He was 26 years old when they were dropping these things and being chased by the MIG, by the Russian made planes.

He's got some really interesting stories. And he had left the Air Force Academy and became a pilot for one of the major... Everybody would know the group. I'm trying to remember which one, down in New Orleans.

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And I called him on the phone, IBM, I think it was. And he flew the executives around in a Lear jet. And I called him, and he goes, did you say you're a Christian? Yeah, Ken, I am. I teach up here. At that time, I was at Tyndale College in Detroit. And you're doing a book on the resurrection, huh? Yeah, Ken.

I just finished his Ph.D. And we just hit it off and that phone call went for three hours until about 2:00 in the morning. And this is an actual... This is what happened in the phone call. In fact, I was just with Ken on a broadcast and Ken shook his head yes while I'm saying this. I said to Ken, hey, Ken, you've gotten some of the results back already? Yeah. Yep.

So, Ken, what possible influence is there on this cloth that would even be relevant for resurrection studies? Ken knew I was taping. He gave me permission to tape the phone call. And he says, turn off your recorder. I turned it off. He answers my question. Here's what we found that might be relevant to the resurrection.

Oh, Ken, that's really neat. Of course it's not recording. Okay, Ken, I'm turning my recorder back on. He says, go for it. Turn it on. Hey, Ken, another question about the resurrection. Turn your recorder off. That happened three times. Turn your recorder off. He didn't want that stuff out just yet.

And he told me some things that really came out in our first book together in 1980 called 'Verdict on the Shroud' by Ken Stevenson and myself. So, he was answering my questions that first night. And Ken was a believer. He was answering my questions about the relationship between the Shroud of Turin and the resurrection of Jesus.

DAN:

So, you've been at this for 48 years if my math is correct.

GARY:

Yeah. Well, yeah, 78. The book came out in 80, so that's 22, 24, 46 years. Yeah. 48. Yeah.

DAN:

Wow.

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GARY:

Yeah. And Ken talked to me the first night, but the first guy I called who put me on to Ken wouldn't talk to me because I sounded like a reporter.

DAN:

So, from 1980 to now, as your 45ish? Percentage wise, what's your gut telling you? Percentage wise in 1980 versus percentage wise 2024, or are you at the same?

GARY:

My first response would be it's gone up since then because there's a lot more discoveries. But my more realistic thing is I was probably more positive in 80. You know why? I was more naive. I knew less material. And when you learn less material, it's almost like you're more willing to jump in with both feet because there's so many things you don't know.

So, I probably was more convinced then, but I have way, way, way more data to back up the amount of... Let's say my convincedness has gone down 10%. Well, if it has, I don't know if that's accurate. But if it has, I think I would take the 10% less backed up by what I know now because there's so much more data since 1980, a lot more data.

And most of the tests take one thing. Most of the tests do indicate that the image on the cloth is some kind of scorch, and it's enigmatic. But I say to people, you know, we know dead bodies don't do much. What is, if it is this, what are X-rays doing coming out of a dead body?

Uniformly, every part of the body, top fiber, enough power to level Jerusalem, 3D. You know, everything. Why is this looking out this way? It just--

DAN:

Very compelling. Very compelling.

GARY:

Yeah. Now, I think the historical...

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I've said this many times. I said it in my first Shroud book. I think the historical evidence for the resurrection is stronger than the Shroud. The science they did is stronger. History is a social science. The science they used was first string, chemistry and physics done in these major labs. Their science was of a higher quality than historical social science.

However, I think history evidence is so much and so much better that you can narrow it down to the facts that atheist New Testament scholars think we could establish. The problem with the science is, being science as you know, there could be an experiment tomorrow that duplicates it. And now we're thrown into, oh, no, I just went from 80 to 40, you know, because someone can duplicate it.

So, that's the problem of having this high science where the history is going to remain a lot, I think, a lot more fluid. Yeah. So, I'll take history if I had to. So, that's how I'd answer the question. I think the data are far stronger today. And shouldn't we count something for the fact that nobody's been able to fake it?

DAN:

Good points, good points.

GARY:

By the way, if I can answer, I wouldn't want the broadcast to be over and not say one thing.

DAN:

We'll never end it before you're done.

GARY:

Oh, okay.

DAN:

Good point.

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GARY:

Here's the one I would add. The outstanding question, you've already said it, and you're right on the money. I think there's more evidence for the science than there is for the history that the man in the Shroud is Jesus. I think that's the loophole if somebody is a Christian hoping this is Jesus.

And the way I'd answer that is this. The man in the Shroud, you said it right at the beginning of the broadcast. A man in the Shroud could have been some poor soul who was beat up. They still crucify people today. I still get color pictures of crucifixions in the Middle East. I just saw one not long ago. And they still go on.

So, we know what crucifixion is even today. You had those West German experiments I talked about, how long does it take for a person to go unconscious? That was 1951, I think, from a German medical doctor. We have this data. We have these data, but that could be falsified if somebody comes up with a certain comeback that explained these things.

Now, everyone's failed so far. That doesn't mean it's going to happen, but it could. Here's my answer. The marks on the Shroud are virtually identical to what the gospels say happened to Jesus. And you could say, well, that's my point. They mimicked it for some poor soul. You say, you know, they're still doing crucifixions today.

They could have killed somebody like that, and mimicked Jesus, and made fun of him. They could have put a buffoon hat on him and it's a smash to Christianity, a blow to Christianity. Here's the problem. First of all, not everything on the Shroud is totally consistent with the Gospels. One is because the Greek word is hand for where their nails went, people assume the nails went through the palm.

In fact, one art historian, Philip McNair, a medieval art historian, he says, I've never seen a piece of medieval art where the nails aren't in the palms of the hands. Got the Greek word for hand. It must be the hand. Okay. Some Greek words are way more exact than English words. Hand is not. I was lecturing one time and a gal who was visiting from Greece came up to me afterwards and she said, I never thought about this.

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She said, we don't have a word for wrist. We don't have that region. This is still called hand in the Greek at the base of the palm. So, it was one. Another scholar showed me about a reference where the word for hand is used is for the upper arm.

So, it's not a very accurate term. But if you're trying to make money by taking the Shroud around in the Middle Ages and you want to show it, why do you put the nails in the wrist? That's a real faux pas. You don't go there because someone's going to say, it's a fake, it's a fake. Look where the nail hole is. That would shoot you right there in the Middle Ages. The wreath let, the crown of thorns is more like a skull cap.

It's throughout a skull. There are things that are different, but this would be my major comeback. It is so close to what happened to Jesus that I think the only theory that makes sense if you can't refute the science, is to go after the history and say they killed some poor soul to look like Jesus. But now you've got a huge problem.

The problem is, how do you explain superficiality? How do you explain non-directionality? How do you explain 3D? How do you explain the image on the cloth? Because dead bodies don't do much. Where's the radiation come from?

Now, how many people in history could have these exact wounds in these exact same places, and all these enigmas that we can't do anything with scientifically? Now you just got yourself close to big science and big history with Jesus. You've got to explain the mysteries.

DAN:

And one last item would be the dates of the Gospels. Where would somebody get the story of Jesus, the actual events of that day, if they did not happen?

GARY:

Now, in all fairness, somebody could say, hey, when did Jesus die? Either 30 or 33 A.D. Okay, what happened in 66 to 70 A.D.? The Jewish, Roman war. What happened in 70? They crucified thousands of people outside of Jerusalem. So, they could go from the crucifixions they knew from their time.

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And so, you could say, oh, we know a lot about crucifixion, and we do. But the more you know about crucifixion, the better the Shroud looks. That's what I think.

DAN:

Right. Well, thanks very much for joining today.

GARY:

Enjoyed it. You have great questions, and your insight shows that you do work in those areas because you asked some very specific things that nailed very specific areas that I won't get for most. I've done a lot of interviews and lectures on the Shroud. Most people don't have the kind of background to ask those kinds of questions. So, that was very good. Did a very good job.

DAN:

Thanks for your insight, and years, decades of experience on this topic.

GARY:

Thank you. I look forward to the next time.

DAN:

Thank you, sir, for joining us.

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