

Nazah: The Unveiling of a Hidden Purpose for the Shroud **By Kenneth Stevenson**

From the time that I had the awesome privilege to edit the Proceedings of the 1977 U.S. Conference of Research on the Shroud of Turin, I have argued as often as I can for the inclusion of fields of research other than hard core sciences alone. Since the Shroud does not exist in a technical “vacuum” so to speak, it is my contention that history, art, Jewish tradition and customs and most importantly the Scriptures have a vital role to play in arriving at the “whole truth” about this most enigmatic relic.

At the 1991, St Louis Symposium, in a paper entitled, "The Oppositions of Science", I argued that more research was needed in several specific areas such as the identification and origin of pollen and mites along with cloth weave comparison and analysis to name only two. Today the work of Avinoam Danim has not only confirmed the work of the late Dr. Max Frei, but placed the Shroud in Jerusalem in the month of Nissan purely by his identification of plant imprints. While some might question the very possibility of such imprints are they qualified in the field of botany? If Danin is correct that identification becomes a huge step forward in the case for authenticity. Even more significant was the work carried out by Joseph Marino and the late M. Sue Benford. First presented at Orvieto, their awesome research into the reweaving process that was used on the Shroud is perhaps one of the most important discoveries of recent note. Furthermore their peer reviewed article in Chemistry Today, "Discrepancies In the radiocarbon dating area of the Turin Shroud", July 2008 ultimately led to the late Dr Ray Rogers and one of his colleagues going on to prove that the C-14 date was invalid due to the fact that the sample used was cotton. The most significant area that remains untapped is the Scriptures themselves. At the Ohio Conference, where I presented, "White Linen White Paper" I continued to stress the need to expand research into these important areas. Since that time, I have been using biblical Hermeneutics to study any and all references that have a connection with the Shroud. Taken in conjunction with Jewish customs and traditions a hidden purpose for the Shroud clearly emerges which could give the Shroud a proper place not only in terms of Christianity, but also in terms of Judaism: specifically the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. Finally a pattern emerges in the New Testament which points strongly to a firsthand knowledge of the Shroud and some of its characteristics that correlates to these same Biblical passages.

Hermeneutics

The word *hermeneutics* refers to a process of [scriptural](#) interpretation.

"In its technical meaning, hermeneutics is often defined as *the science and art of biblical interpretation*. Hermeneutics is considered a science because it has rules and these rules can be classified into an orderly system. It is considered an art because communication is flexible, and therefore a mechanical and rigid application of rules will sometimes distort the true meaning of a communication.^[1] To be a good interpreter one must learn the rules of hermeneutics as well as the art of applying those rules."

The [meaning](#) of *hermeneutics* and its range depend strongly on the precision of [definitions](#) of such terms as: [interpretation](#), [understanding](#), [point of view](#).

Prophetic Fulfillment

Amo 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

The primary operative hermeneutical principle in the New Testament is prophetic fulfillment. The [Gospel of Matthew](#) in particular makes extensive use of the Old Testament to demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah. Examples include Matthew 1:23, 2:15-18, 3:3, 21:54, but the other Gospels utilize the same principle as demonstrated by Mark 1:2-3, 4:12, Luke 3:6, 22:37, and John 2:17, 12:15. In Luke 4:18-21, Jesus Himself when quoting Isaiah 61:1 makes the claim that the prophecy is fulfilled in their hearing. The [Pauline epistles](#) employ the same principle, as evidenced by 1 Corinthians 1:19, Ephesians 4:8-10, and Hebrews 8:7-13.

In Acts 8:26-40 Philip the apostle is led to Gaza where he explains to an Ethiopian how Jesus was the fulfillment of a prophecy given by Isaiah. The specific verses cited are found in Isaiah 53:7,8 but taken in context, which is a vital key to proper exegesis of Scripture, the prophetic description actually begins in Isaiah 50. The Ethiopian, a high-level official of Queen Candace's court believes and is baptized. It is in that Biblical context that I found my first indication that there may be prophetic pointers to the Shroud.

Isa 52:13-15 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider.

The Word of God

- Isa 52:13 Behold,2009 my servant5650 shall deal prudently,7919 he shall be exalted7311 and extolled,5375 and be very high.1361, 3966
- Isa 52:14 As834 many7227 were astonished8074 at5921 thee; his visage4758 was so3651 marred4893 more than any man,4480, 376 and his form8389 more than the sons4480, 1121 of men:120
- Isa 52:15 So3651 shall he sprinkle5137 many7227 nations;1471 the kings4428 shall shut7092 their mouths6310 at5921 him: for3588 *that* which834 had not3808 been told5608 them shall they see;7200 and *that* which834 they had not3808 heard8085 shall they consider.995

- nâzâh
- *naw-zaw'*
- A primitive root; to *spirt*, that is, *besprinkle* (especially in expiation): - sprinkle.
- (Zec 13:6) And *one* shall say⁵⁵⁹ unto⁴¹³ him, What⁴¹⁰⁰ are these⁴²⁸ wounds⁴³⁴⁷ in⁹⁹⁶ thine hands?³⁰²⁷ Then he shall answer,⁵⁵⁹ *Those* with which⁸³⁴ I was wounded⁵²²¹ *in* the house¹⁰⁰⁴ of my friends.¹⁵⁷

nazah

BDB Definition:

1) to spurt, spatter, sprinkle

1a) (Qal) to spurt, spatter

1b) (Hiphil) to cause to spurt, sprinkle upon

2) to spring, leap

2a) (Hiphil) to cause to leap, startle

In context then the marred face and body of the Messiah would both startle and sprinkle many nations and kings would see what they had never been told. King Herod was involved in and complicit in the death of Jesus Christ. In Paul's day Kings Festus and Agrippa were specifically challenged by Paul, "for the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner." (Acts 26:26)

Kings future to both Jesus and Paul would see what they had never been told. Nations would see what they had never been told and it would both "sprinkle" (as in the blood of expiation) and "startle." Isaiah's prophecy could only be literally fulfilled if something very much like the Shroud with its startling image and blood exists and becomes known as well as seen by people who had never been told. Furthermore they would "consider" it.

byn

BDB Definition:

1) to discern, understand, consider

1a) (Qal)

1a1) to perceive, discern

1a2) to understand, know (with the mind)

1a3) to observe, mark, give heed to, distinguish, consider

1a4) to have discernment, insight, understanding

1b) (Niphal) to be discerning, intelligent, discreet, have understanding

1c) (Hiphil)

1c1) to understand

1c2) to cause to understand, give understanding, teach

1d) (Hithpolel) to show oneself discerning or attentive, consider diligently

1e) (Polel) to teach, instruct

Other than the Shroud, what could it possibly be?

Resurrection: The Central Truth

Interestingly enough, the Apostle Paul who wrote about 60% of the New Testament more than anyone else focuses on the resurrection. First Corinthians 15, written to arguably one of the most worldly churches of his time, is perhaps the clearest passage on the doctrine of the resurrection in the New Testament. But again taken in context there is more. In Chapter 13 verse 12 we read:

1Co 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

The Greek word translated glass means mirror or looking glass, darkly means obscure, an enigma. So Paul says he is now seeing an obscure mirrored image but then he will see face to face. What mirrored enigma of an image is he referring to in this passage? Could it be the Shroud?

In yet another example, writing to the Church at Rome, Paul again uses the term “firstfruits” (as he did in 1Cor15) in reference to the resurrection.

Rom 11:15-16 For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving of *them be*, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches.

He goes on to add:

Rom 11:25-26 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Again to place this passage in context, Paul in Chapter 10 states that even the initial unbelief of the Jews fulfills Scripture.

Rom 10:16-18 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, *Lord, who hath believed our report?* So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. (emphasis added)

Once again that passage confirms the immediate context of Is 52:15. It is in fact the very next verse Is 53:1. Keep in mind that there are no Chapter divisions in the original text ! Paul a well versed Pharisee connects the resurrection of Christ, to the promised salvation of the Jews ***and*** the prophecy of something visibly startling that is itself tied to the “sprinkling” of expiation. Which brings us to yet another area of consideration.

While the authorship of Hebrews is still debated among Scripture scholars, the general consensus is that Paul is the author. Believing that the author is Paul, I find another intriguing hint toward the Shroud. Once again with specific terminology that is pivotal to the possible connection of with the Isaiah 52 passage. In Chapters 9-12 Paul establishes the case that the Torah based system of blood sacrifice was a “shadow” of things to come. That Jesus fulfilled the payment of the sin of mankind by sprinkling His own blood upon the mercy seat. Twice Paul specifically identifies that the Blood of Jesus IS the Blood of Sprinkling.

First in Hebrews Chapter Nine:

Heb 9:11-14 ***But Christ*** being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but ***by his own blood*** he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: ***How much more shall the blood of Christ***, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

And yet again in Chapter Twelve:

Heb 12:22-25 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And *to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling*, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel*. *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh*. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not we escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven:

In Chapters 9-12 Paul consistently cites Old Testament prophets and prophecies as he makes his case for Christ as the “fulfillment” of the law for all mankind. Because of that it is insightful to take note that Hebrews opens with these words:

Heb 1:1-3 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners *spake in time past* unto the fathers *by the prophets*, *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son*, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, *when he had by himself purged our sins*, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Think about the entire context again. God spoke to the fathers by His prophets, gave them patterns to follow as a type or shadow, but at the right time His only begotten son comes and speaks but then He BECOMES the sacrifice for all sin by fulfilling the very type and shadow that was given. Furthermore His Blood “of sprinkling” continues to speak. Dare we refuse to listen?

First let's read the argument again by Paul:

Heb 9:19-23 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Heb 10:1-10 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering

and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second. By which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

And now revisit the Words that Jesus Himself spoke about this exact thing as recorded by Paul:

1Co 11:23-26 *For I have received of the Lord* that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Plus these Words of Christ were delivered in the context of the Passover Seder Meal. Again a tradition handed down to Moses who is reminded to follow the pattern and teach God's people to do so. For those who have never experienced a Seder allow me to point out just a few amazing connections to the Shroud. The "broken body" is hidden in a "linen" pouch. The cup of "redemption" is equated to the "Blood of Sprinkling". (expiation) There is so much more.

- Matzoh three pieces of matzoh held in a linen pouch is called:
- THE UNITY (SHEMA)
- The middle piece is broken "this is my Body broken for you" and hidden away in a "linen" cloth
- The one who finds the "hidden matzoh" now called Afikomen receives a reward...Afikomen=dessert
- The cup of redemption is lifted "this cup is my blood."
- The Karpas are eaten in yet another rite of passage... where we are passed from death unto life...
- (Act 6:7) And2532 the3588 word3056 of God2316 increased;837 and2532 the3588 number706 of the3588 disciples3101 multiplied4129 in1722 Jerusalem2419 greatly;4970 and5037 a great4183 company3793 of the3588 priests2409 were obedient5219 to the3588 faith.4102

Another fascinating passage of Scripture to look at is found in the writings of the prophet Zechariah:

Zec 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and ***they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him***, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

This is a last days passage that taken in context lines up with current events. Here is the point to ponder: Messianic Jews await a leader to rule as David. Christians also await their ruling King. Why mourn a living conquering King? Again taken in context and without Chapter divisions as we know them, it is interesting to note a few specific verses that follow:

Zec 13:1 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

Zec 13:6-7a And *one* shall say unto him, What *are* these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, *those* with which I was wounded *in* the house of my friends. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man *that is* my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered:

Another confirmation of what we have already read in Romans 11:25-26.

What stands out to me about all of these examples is that they speak to the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies. The New Testament itself confirms that exact truth.

Act 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Act 17:11-12 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

Consistently the fulfillment of Scriptures brings about changed lives. Therefore I believe that a proper understanding of the Scriptural evidence pointing to the Shroud could be connected in a powerful way to the promise of the restoration of the faith among its original adherents: the sons and daughters of Abraham. Furthermore there are other Scriptural patterns surrounding “linen”, along with pivotal traditions in both the Jewish and Christian faith and liturgy that are intriguing to say the least and should be investigated thoroughly.

- Angels wear linen, the priests wear linen, and the promise of God to the saints is connected to linen:
- Rev 19:8) And2532 to her846 was granted1325 that2443 she should be arrayed4016 in fine linen, 1039 clean2513 and2532 white:2986 for1063 the3588 fine linen1039 is2076 the3588 righteousness1345 of saints.40

- The return of the Lord involves linen garments:
- **Rev 19:13** And2532 he was clothed with4016 a vesture2440 dipped911 in blood:129 and2532 his848 name3686 is called2564 The3588 Word3056 of God.2316
- Rev 19:14 And2532 the3588 armies4753 *which were* in1722 heaven3772 followed190 him846 upon1909 white3022 horses,2462 clothed in1746 fine linen, 1039 white3022 and2532 clean.2513

• *Purposes hidden in tradition*

"Karpas"

Vegetables in salt water... to remind of the branch of hyssop dipped in blood to mark the outlines of doors of Israelite houses in Egypt = "placed under protection." (Related to the rite of "Mezuzah" the parchment with the Name of GOD "Sha Da Y" an acronym for Shomer Daltot Yisrael = Guardian of the doors of Israel.)

Karpas therefore is the rite of marking a door.

"Karpas" - a unique word. Only appears once in the Bible: ESTHER 1:6, describing the various rich TEXTILES that King Ahasuerus displayed to show his wealth during celebrations in Sushan during third year of his reign.

A Persian word designating a sumptuous cloth, a veil of wool and WHITE LINEN.

Karpas connected to the Book of Esther, name "Astarte" meaning "Concealment" Therefore, the link between Purim and Pesach.

- Commentary from a Haggadah regarding Karpas.
- This invitation to pass from the text of the haggadah to that of the Book of Esther by this intertextual play is in itself the first commentary on "karpas."
- karpas is liberation by the movement of opening that produces intertextuality. Intertextuality is a doorway onto another context and another imaginary realm.. This "passage" from one text to another is the very meaning of the name "Hebrew" (ivri), which comes from the root, "la'abor" "to pass." The Hebrew is thus a "passer." For the Hebrew, to exist is to become. He is in a constant becoming, a becoming that is a future, a to-coming. The Hebrew person is messianic, if messianism is not only the certitude of the arrival of someone who alters history, but a way of being for every person in his inscription within the becoming of time. Hebrew, the language of passage, is set in motion in the play of intertextuality, this play of coming and going between two texts, and by the existence of a word in common, KARPAS.

While I have limited my focus in this paper to Scriptures which seem to have direct fulfillment in the Shroud there is so much more to the story. The Shroud should never be limited to any one field of research but clearly demands a more holistic approach to arrive at the full truth. Years ago I remember citing a quote from Author Peter Stoner “Who Moved the Stone” that calculated the odds of anyone else in history fulfilling the eight prophecies concerning the death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah as 1×10^{-17} yet ALL eight are fulfilled on the Shroud of Turin. What other truths can be discovered by expanding into other promising fields of research?