

## John 20:1-9 The Empty Tomb

v1 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. v2 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!" v3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. v4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. v5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. v6 Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, v7 as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. v8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. v9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

One of the first images we have as part of the RESSURECTION story is the Empty Tomb. While the Empty Tomb is something we could expect to see, based on the many prophecies Jesus gave that he would rise from the dead, the other COMPONENTS that form part of the story are also highly significant.

## WHY IS THE LINEN FOUND IN THE TOMB IMPORTANT?

### 1 What DID JESUS LEAVE BEHIND?

v6 Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the **strips of linen** lying there, v7 **as well as the burial cloth** that had been around Jesus' head.

TWO PIECES OF MATERIAL WERE LEFT BY JESUS

#### 1. **THE STRIPS OF LINEN**

The Greek word used is "**othonion**" and comes from the Greek word "**othone**" which means "LINEN". These "STRIPS OF LINEN" were often "Off-Cuts" of linen left over from making clothes and torn into long strips to be used either as bandages or strips wrapped around the bodies of those that had died, to keep the spices and herbs close on the body to prevent the smell of decaying flesh to escape before the body was buried.

#### 2. **THE BURIAL CLOTH**

The Greek word used is "**soudarion**". The Greek word has a Latin origin; a *sudarium* (*sweat cloth*), that is, *towel* (for wiping the perspiration from the face, or binding the face of a corpse).

This piece of material was an actual item used in everyday life. The word is used on several occasions in the Bible.

In Luke 19:20 the word is used of a handkerchief used by the servant that hid the money away in the Parable of Rich Farmer who gave money to his servants to use while he was away.

In Acts 19:12 it refers to Facecloths that Paul had used that were used to transfer some of this spiritual power to those who were sick

In John 11:44 it refers to the cloth that covered the face of Lazarus when Jesus raised him from the dead.

Two of the most famous pieces of linen that come from around the time of Jesus are

1. **The Shroud of Turin, Italy**, also known as the Holy Shroud, is a length of linen cloth that bears a faint image of the front and back of a man.
2. **The Sudarium of Oviedo, Spain**, is a bloodstained piece of cloth measuring c. 84 x 53 cm that reportedly covered the face of Jesus.

**Recent research has linked the two pieces of linen as coming from the same person.**

<https://aleteia.org/2016/04/11/new-study-the-shroud-of-turin-and-the-sudarium-of-oviedo-covered-the-same-person/>

## **2 WHY IS THE LINEN FOUND IN THE TOMB IMPORTANT REGARDING THE RESSURECTION?**

v6 Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, v7 as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. v8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.

### **1. THE BODY WAS MISSING**

The WOMEN would have known what had been wrapped around Jesus. After all, they had only put the LINEN on him less than 48 hours earlier. Jesus was buried before 6pm on Friday and now it was somewhere around 7am on Sunday. (Sunrise in Jerusalem is about 6:30am at this time of year).

How could Jesus be in the Grave for 3 Days if this was less than 48 hours since he was buried. The clock ran from Sunset to Sunset. The first day was Friday, because it was before 6pm. The second day was Sabath, 6pm (Friday) - 6pm (Saturday). The third day was Sunday, 6pm (Saturday) - 6pm (Sunday).

**WHATEVER THE CASE, THE BODY WAS MISSING**

### **2. THE CLOTH WAS LEFT BEHIND**

One of the first ways the Devil tried to deny the RESSURECTION was the spread a RUMOUR that THE BODY OF JESUS WAS STOLEN.

*Matthew 28:11-15 While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. v12 When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, v13 telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' v14 If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." v15 So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.*

If you have ever seen a movie or TV show about a robbery, one of the first thing they normally say is: "THE ROOM WAS LEFT IN A MESS AND THERE WERE SIGNS OF A STRUGGLE."

**WHATEVER THE CASE, IF THE BODY WAS STOLEN, WHY LEAVE THE BURIAL CLOTHES, AND WHY FOLD THEM UP BEFORE YOU LEAVE.**

### **3. THE CLOTH WAS FOLDED**

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, one of the first things he told people to do was

*John 11:43-44* When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" *v44* The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. **Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."**

Jesus didn't tell them to take the "STRIPS OF LINEN" OFF  
Jesus told them to take the "soudarion" OFF. The thing that covered his FACE.

**AS JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD, HE REMOVES THE SOUDARION FROM HIS FACE, FOLD IT UP AND PLACES IT TO ONE SIDE. THEM HE REMOVES THE STRIPS OF LINEN AND PLACES THEM ELSEWHERE.**

**JESUS IS THE PERFECT SON, HE EVEN FOLD HIS OWN CLOTHING.**

### **3 WHY IS THE LINEN FOUND IN THE TOMB IMPORTANT REGARDING OUR SALVATION?**

*v5* He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. *v6* Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, *v7* as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. *v8* Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ***v9* (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)**

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LINEN BEING LEFT BEHIND FINDS FULFILMENT IN THE WORK OF THE HIGH PRIEST

**THE ULTIMATE WORK OF THE HIGH PRIEST IS RECORDED IN LEVITICUS 16 WHERE WE READ ABOUT THE DAY OF ATONEMENT**

## **Leviticus 16:1-5 The Day of Atonement**

*v1 The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the LORD. v2 The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover. v3 "This is how Aaron is to enter the sanctuary area: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. v4 **He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on.** v5 From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.*

THE DETAILS OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT ARE THEN DESCRIBED  
IN VERSES 6 TO 22

PART OF THE DAY INVOLVES THE BURNING OF INCENSE, THE SACRIFICE OF THE ANIMALS, THE SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD ON THE ALTAR AND THE LAYING OF HANDS ON THE SCAPEGOAT WHO WOULD CARRY THE SINS OF PEOPLE AWAY.

**AND NOW THE CONNECTION TO THE LINEN LEFT BEHIND  
WHEN THE CHIEF PRIEST HAD COMPLETED THE WORK  
OF THE ATONEMENT, HE TOOK THE SACRED LINEN  
GARMENTS OFF AND LEFT THE LINEN BEHIND**

Leviticus 16:23-24 "Then Aaron is to go into the Tent of Meeting **and take off the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave them there.** v24 He shall bathe himself with water in a holy place and put on his regular garments. Then he shall come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people.

**THE LINEN LEFT BEHIND IS JESUS SAYING  
THE JOB OF ATONEMENT IS DONE!!**

### CONCLUSION

**Hebrews 9:11-12 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. v12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.**