

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of *The Cross and the Shroud*

REFERENCE: Zugibe, F. T., *The Cross and the Shroud*, Exposition Press, Inc. Smithtown, NY, 1982, 219 pp., \$12.00.

With the recent interest developing around the Shroud of Turin this book is a timely addition to a historical subject that has continued to capture peoples' imagination over the centuries. However, while the author eminently utilizes the texts that would concern him most as a forensic pathologist, it would seem to me that he forgets to use the discipline of biblical exegesis which can be just as exacting and demanding as any forensic science. In any biblical study it is necessary to cover the entire passage or passages by carefully examining the words and structure of the historical manuscripts to determine their meaning and to use the entire story as it appears in Scripture. Any other method is called proof-texting, in other words, eisegesis or using scripture to support your point. Dr. Zugibe is to be congratulated on his usage of Scripture in approaching the pathology of the death of Jesus Christ. What I find omitted to a great extent is "the rest of the story."

The author takes us step by step through not only the physiology of a person subjected to arrest, torture, trial, and death, but the psychological effects this type of action produces on the mortal human body. What the author misses in this volume is the *mystery*. Primarily, because he avoids the other issues involved with the story it leaves the reader with gaps which need to be filled.

While I am certain that the vast majority of humanity would succumb exactly as Dr. Zugibe proposes Jesus did, he does not attempt to explain or approach rather interesting biblical passages connected to the narrative which he is delineating as a forensic pathologist.

Normal human reactions to apprehension "in extremis," as in the garden, to subsequent arrest, loss of sleep, exhaustion, trial, and torture, both physical and psychological, would fulfill scientific objective expectations as outlined. Factually, it would be most probable that all of us would be dead before the crucifixion or, if not in a comatose condition, at least rendered completely dehumanized. As the author so aptly describes, the ultimate pain would reduce most of us, even in the most excellent physical and psychological health, to abject disintegration of mind and body. This does not appear to be true in the biblical narrative.

1. In Luke 22:50f., Peter, to protect Jesus, draws his sword and cuts off the ear of a member of the arresting body. Jesus reproves Peter and restores the ear. Having personally witnessed psychological stress under battlefield conditions, and studied and dealt with it as well, the action of Jesus does not fit the usual responsive pattern as described.

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2. His appearance before Pilate and his accusers (Luke 23:1-4) again refutes the psychological disintegration theory. "Art thou the Christ?," and Jesus' response: "You have said so." Is that the reply of a man who has surrendered? I would rather call it the "James Bond syndrome! (defiance)!"

3. The pain and physical exhaustion of scourge, thorn, patabulum, and labored walk are, as the author states further, a means of the reduction of the humanity of Jesus to the absurdity of dying flesh. Yet there is seen in the biblical account not so much defiance as rational acceptance.

4. Ultimately there is the cross, torn flesh, exhaustion, pain unending, and imminent death, and coming in that milieu are the seven last words: (a) to captors and crowd "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34); (b) to the thief "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43); (c) to His mother "Woman, behold your son!," and to John: "Son, behold your mother."; (d) in despair "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34); (e) in humanity "I thirst." (John 19:28); (f) in surrender "It is finished." (John 19:30); and (g) in triumph "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" (Luke 23:46). All are sequential and rational.

The *mystery* remains. Dr. Zugibe has indeed rendered all who study the Gospel a distinct service and one which I hope will be appreciated by the reader. It is a fascinating account and an excellent study which should be read by all who seek to understand not only the mechanisms of pathology and physiology but interpretation of the Gospel of Christ.

One additional comment is necessary for all who are interested in the phenomenon of the Shroud of Turin. The author does not draw any conclusions but treats us with the facts as he has acquired them from the forensic science research currently being done on this amazing bit of possible evidence. To quote from Sir Winston Churchill it still remains: "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."

N.B. Over the years, the vast majority of volumes received have been reviewed by our peer group in the forensic sciences. Upon receipt of the book, my brother, the Reverend James Froede, was aware of it and was quite interested in reading it. It was the editor's opinion that we might like to hear how others outside our peer group might interpret our literature. In this case I asked him to review for the Journal. In my review I found that the possible explanations of injury and death mechanisms and experimental information extremely interesting and possibly helpful in the occasional exotic asphyxial death. Read it and enjoy the review—Book Review Editor.