

The Shekinah Glory Of The Lord And The Shroud Of Turin

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Abstract:

In the Targum (the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Bible), Shekinah Glory is described as "...the majestic presence of God." This Divine "presence" always manifested itself through brilliant light, fire, illumination, shining, incandescence, luminosity, etc. In many ancient sacred texts, the writers would often speak of God's physicality as dwelling both "in the light" and "as the light". These references to His physical aspect are meant to be interpreted symbolically and literally. Whether viewed as a cloud of fire by night during the Exodus from Egypt by the Israelites, witnessed to by Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration or seen by Paul in his blinding light conversion on the Damascus Road, the Shekinah Glory of the Lord signified God's "presence" as an embodiment of heavenly radiance. One might offer that He was "enshrouded" by light.

The image on the Shroud of Turin has confounded the world for centuries. Despite the scientific community's best efforts, the Shroud defies a complete understanding and has resisted repeated attempts toward an explanation of the image-formation process. It has been described as "acheiropoietos" (not made with human hands). It has been thought by some to have been formed by a process known as "flash photolysis". Still others believe that the cause for the superficial image seen on the Shroud's uppermost fibrils in the result of a yet-to-be-understood form of radiant energy. As with the Shekinah Glory of the Lord, the image on the Shroud is seen by many as a "presence". May it also be stated metaphorically that etched upon its' linen fabric, this enigmatic burial cloth reflects the image of a man dwelling both "in and as light"?

Using theological reasoning and exegetical arguments, this paper will examine both Old and New Testament passages, together with extra-biblical texts and citations, in order to offer ideas which may advance correlating relationships between what was understood and interpreted as the literal, dwelling place of God, the Shekinah Glory or "light of His presence", as the reason and the catalyst for the abiding image seen on the Shroud of Turin.