



# The Smiling Maven

Grace for Grace (John 1:16)  
חסד על חסד (יוחנן א'טו)

March 2007  
Volume 1, Issue 8



## Not According to Human Determination

The world, American Society, Humanism, political correctness is full of human determination. It is characterized by the self-made man, the fulfilling of the American dream, "be all you can be", reality TV shows, Fear factor, Survivor etc, etc. Yet!!!!, that is not the Gospel. That is not the message of the Christmas story that some of us celebrated in December. Y'shua<sup>1</sup>, the Messiah has come because all our human determination combined cannot bridge the gap between our wrongness and the righteousness of God.

Ironically, and sadly, one of the places that the philosophy, and sometimes sacred theology of "human determination" battles the reality of the gospel is in the body of Messiah, the church. All too often, Christians are encouraged in some way that communicates that "victorious living as a believer" is a matter of human determination. If we just pray enough, raise enough money, evangelize enough, read our Bibles enough, praise the Lord enough, pray in tongues enough, influence government enough, etc. etc. etc.,

than the Kingdom of God will go forward. Yet, that is not the gospel of the New Testament. It is not the gospel that gripped and changed the Apostle Peter, the Apostle Paul, and all of the Apostles.

Both Peter and Paul are classic examples of strong individuals full of human determination. Yet, before they were truly ready to share the gospel, they both had to be broken of their own determination. If it was true for them, it is true for the entire body of Messiah. It is part of God's righteous judgments. In 2Corinthians 12:10b, it says, "when I am weak then I am strong". Earlier in 2Corinthians, Paul writes: "For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired of life." They were so burdened, beyond their strength, beyond their capability (like being brought to a river that is not parted for you), so that they despaired of life. That sounds quite unspiritual for the committed, disciplined believer. Maybe they just needed to pray more, have a special prayer

meeting, praise the Lord some more, maybe they needed more funds to evangelize properly. Something must have been missing in their spiritual armory, and with that something, they would have had the resources to overcome their circumstances. No, no, no. The next verse tells us: "Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust ourselves, but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us." We were in these circumstances *so we should not trust ourselves*, but in God who raises the dead. God has delivered us eternally, and will deliver us eternally. And that is not a matter of human determination. Struggles, despair, even failure of our own human determination can bring us to that wonderful place where we do not trust ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.

In the Old Testament, Gideon was taught this important lesson. God slowly and methodically weakened and thinned out Gid-

Continued on page 2

## Apologetics Section The Bones of Jesus?

Would it be possible to find the knife that stabbed president Lincoln? Would it be possible to find the Hummer that President Kennedy was riding in when he was assassinated? Would it be possible to find the airplane named Santa Maria that Columbus flew to America? Correct historical understanding, proper historical method, coupled with common sense would answer all of these questions negatively. Anyone claiming to have found these things would not be given much consideration. It is not possible to find the knife that killed Abraham Lincoln because he was not killed by a knife. President Kennedy was not traveling in a Hummer when he was assassinated, and there were no airplanes when Columbus "discovered" America. One can not discover the bones of Jesus because there are no bones to be found. Proper historical understanding and proper historical method indicate clearly that Jesus' tomb was empty three days after his death (see Smiling Maven, May 2006). There are no bones of Jesus

decaying somewhere on this earth. Jesus rose from the dead, appeared to his disciples, and even to five hundred people at one time<sup>3</sup>. He has continued to influence lives for the last two thousand years. The only bones of Jesus are the ones within the resurrected Jesus.

Yet this recent attack (a claim that Jesus's bones were found in a tomb in a suburb outside of Jerusalem) on the veracity of faith in Jesus is not misplaced. The attack is on the central and paramount point of faith in Messiah Jesus; His death and resurrection. One fighting against the resurrection of Jesus is really fighting against God; it will come to naught. Yet, for those that believe in Messiah, it is important to recognize the opponent's skill in attacking the central issue. Without the resurrection, genuine, properly balanced, and eternally powerful Christianity would be void. "And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty"<sup>4</sup>. Yet, Jesus is resurrected from the dead, and even the strongest skeptic will

Continued on page 2

## The Smiling Maven

The Smiling Maven is a bi-monthly Jewish flavored newsletter sharing God's incredible grace. There is a desire to communicate God's grace with Jews and Gentiles. There is coming a spiritual atomic bomb of that incredible grace. It is an imminent spiritual explosion soon to happen in Israel that will have a wonderfully awesome affect in Israel and all the world.

Life is often hard. Suffering is a very real part of life. Sometimes suffering enables us to see more clearly the reality that God loves us. He loves us unconditionally; it is not based on how we are doing. We may begin to understand the wonder of God's salvation through Messiah Y'shua. Grace might actually be breaking through into our lives. It is the experience of grace that can generate the most genuine of genuine smiles.

Maven is a Yiddish word that means a person with special knowledge or experience. Evidence of God's grace should be characterized by an ability to smile. The Smiling Maven newsletter is an encouragement for all of us to be smiling mavens, smiling people with special knowledge of God's amazing grace.

***Apologetic Section—The Bones of Jesus?***  
*(continued from page 1)*

eventually stand before Him, and therefore stand before the true bones of Jesus.

Y’shua is coming again soon, very soon. That which can be shaken will be shaken, and that which cannot be shaken will remain<sup>5</sup>. The serpent (Satan) has been busy drawing people away from the truth for thousands of years. His end though is near. This recent attack is really no different. In C.S. Lewis book, The Silver Chair, (part of the Chronicles of Narnia Series) a main character named Puddleglum expresses faith in the midst of a concerted attack and spell of the evil witch. She states that there is no Aslan and no Narnia (allegories to Y’shua, and to His kingdom). Puddleglum, influenced by the spell, yet strong enough to make a stand against her, says “I’m on Aslan’s side even if there isn’t any Aslan to lead it. I am going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn’t any Narnia”<sup>6</sup>.

Puddleglum’s bravery both in stamping out the witch’s spell inducing fire, and this expression of faith, inspire them to stand against the witch. Yet, what makes Puddleglum’s faith securely powerful is the certainty of those things which he does believe in. He was courageous to take the stand that he did, and to express it the way that he did, yet, the ultimate power of his faith actually rested in the certainty of the things that did not seem very clear at the time. There are many people who may believe quite strongly in things without having solid evidence to believe; however, believing those things do not make them true. One can have incredible faith in things that are not true. Atheists have great faith in their atheism. Evolutionists have faith in their elevated theories; faith that there are missing links in the evolutionary scheme, even if there is no evidence of “missing links”. Another powerful example is that of radical Islam. People may even die for things that may not be

true. Yet what raises faith in Messiah Y’shua above all other spiritual beliefs are the certainty of the historical reality of His person, His death and His resurrection. It is not true because we believe it. It is true because it is true. When one clearly looks at the evidence, the historical record, the Bible, the lives changed by faith in Messiah, it becomes clear that there is solid information supporting the historical person of Y’shua, His miraculous life, His death and His resurrection. Even secular archaeologists looking at the information surrounding the current “bones of Jesus discovery”, recognize that there is not anything substantial in the claim. The bones of Jesus are not in a tomb someplace in Israel. They were not in the tomb three days after Y’shua’s death. The Roman and the Jewish leaders could not locate His body at that time. They surely had the human resources, motive, and authority to investigate its absence at the time. They did not find Y’shua’s body because despite all their well planned security methods, well-trained Roman guards and an official seal on the tomb, they could not stop the reality of the resurrection of the promised Messiah. His body, His bones were not there 2000 years ago because He was risen from the dead. His body, His bones are not in a tomb someplace in Israel today because He is still risen from the dead. And is risen forever. Hallelujah!

Happy Passover! Happy Resurrection Sunday!!



***Not According to Human Determination***  
*(continued from page 1)*

eon’s resources: his army. When it was sufficiently weak and unimpressive, God was able to use it to defeat the Midianites. There was no way that Gideon would consider the victory one of human effort or determination<sup>2</sup>. This same process in the light of the gospel is continuing today. The body of Messiah, often experiences the sovereign and methodical weakening of our own natural resources – our own strength.

As Y’shua’s return approaches – the light of His glory, the wonder of His love, will shine in ways like never before. His people, even the most committed (whatever that means), the most prayerful (whatever that means) will in no way be able to say that His return, His victory, His wonderful loving-kindness, etc, etc., has been according to human determination or helped by human determination. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – I am that I am, shares His glory with no one. That is not because He is self-ish, not because He does not love us, not because He does not shine through us, but because He alone is truly worthy. He alone is the Righteous One. He alone is the maker of heaven and earth. He alone is the Savior, King, and Lord of all. Hallelujah! Glory to God, and on earth peace good will to men!

**Suggested Reading on the Certainty of the Resurrection**

Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21

More Specifically:

Matthew 28

1 Corinthians 15:1-21

Luke 1:1-4, Acts 1:1-3, Acts 4:19-20

Evidence That Demands a Verdict

Josh McDowell, Here’s Life Publishers, 1979

Know Why You Believe

Paul Little, Intervarsity Press, c. 2000.

Notes:

1. Y’shua— יֵשׁוּעַ (Hebrew) Jesus
2. Gideon’s Experience is found in Judges 7
3. 1 Corinthians 15:5-7
4. 1 Corinthians 15:14
5. Hebrews 12:27
6. The Silver Chair, C.S. Lewis. Harper Collins 1953. P. 182

**The Smiling Maven**

Editor .....Arthur Weiner  
Someone needing to Smile More

Copy Editor.....Peter Toeg  
Making sure that our newsletter layout, and our use of the English Language keep people smiling.

Production Assistant.....Ruthe Weiner  
Often producing more smiles than her dad.

Quality Control.....Caleb Weiner  
Maintaining smiles, especially when he is playing on the computer.

You can also visit our website at smilingmaven.com. Contact us at smilingmaven@yahoo.com or at The Smiling Maven 2816 Eshcol Avenue, Zion IL 60099. Both current and previous issues of the Smiling Maven are available upon request.

The Smiling Maven Newsletter is a division of Smiling Maven Ministries NFP, a not for profit corporation of the State of Illinois. Smiling Maven Ministries is supported by the gracious gifts and donations of those who have experienced the wonderful grace of Messiah Y’shua.

