

COBBLESTONE AND

MANOR HOUSE MESSAGE

July 4, 2021

Old testament Reading; Joshua 1: 1-9

Psalm Reading; Psalm 51: 1-12

Gospel Reading; John 17: 1-11

Sermon Title;

READY, SET, RESET!

By Rev. Jim Gardner

A vision came to Ezekiel and he saw, "Above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it.

Also, from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around.

Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the

appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.

And He said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you.”

This is from the beginning of the book of Ezekiel and it is a vision that shaped Ezekiel’s life from that point on.

The readings that I brought to you today were a vision of our founding fathers and of our 16th president at the battlefield at Gettysburg. Although the vision of Ezekiel was never verified by the people of the time, that vision shaped the future faith of the Jewish people.

The vision of our founding fathers has certainly never been fully accomplished but it is still a remarkable blueprint for an improved human condition on the face of the Earth. A crazy vision was not only advanced it was deemed to be “self-evident” that ALL men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that include Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. Not only this, but they have a right to a government that honors those rights.

Abe Lincoln, in his address, expounds on this saying, “we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, UNDER GOD, shall have a new birth of freedom—

and that government OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, AND FOR THE PEOPLE, shall not perish from the earth.”

This government that Abe speaks of was never envisioned before the founding fathers of this country advocated it in their Declaration of Independence. Up to this point every country had established its government by the toughest guy bullying his way into power or by “divine lineage”. The Bible advocated the line and lineage of David, and Saddam Hussein had the toughest thugs in Iraq. This was the status quo for ancient history and in many cases our present situation throughout the world.

When the authors of the Declaration envisioned a representative democracy, it was to be like a New Jerusalem, a nirvana, a paradise on earth.

OK, so we have not accomplished that, but let’s not throw out the dream.

When Simone Biles was learning to walk, I guarantee that she fell on her butt several times but her parents did not send her off to foster care because she was a loser. It took time and a lot of effort on her part and patience on the part of her parents for her to accomplish what she has. Simone made a lot of mistakes and used those as learning experiences.

I often say, tongue in cheek, that “Of course I learn from my mistakes. If I wasn’t going to learn from my mistakes, I never would have made them in the first place.” Actually, if I had learned from every one of my mistakes, I would be a genius by now. Any-who. Talking about mistakes, when I was in about the 4th grade I came home from school crying. I had just learned about the abuses of Cortez and that was after learning about slavery and how the native Americans had been treated by early settlers. I told my father that I was ashamed to be white. Dad hugged me and told me, “Don’t do that to yourself. You can’t take the blame of your forefathers. There were many wonderful white men in history. What you need to do is to learn what they did wrong and then make sure you never repeat their mistakes.”

If we do not recognize our mistakes, we can never learn from them. I am pretty computer illiterate, but I know that there is a delete button and also a reset function. We as a country have to decide between delete and reset.

Several years ago, the Ayatollah Khomeini stated that there was never a holocaust. All those death camp pictures were photoshopped and all those Jews were living comfortably in the USA. If he erased history, he did not have to own up to anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, we do the same thing when we tear

down statues and other signs of our past mistakes. If we erase all history of slavery then it never happened. That is a nice scenario when God says that when we confess our sins, He will forgive us and erase the sin from the Book of Life. As far as God is concerned when we confess a sin it never happened. That is all well and good for God because He does not have to learn from mistakes, but we simply do not have equal status with God. We constantly have to face our mistakes and learn not to repeat them.

We have to own up to the past. We cannot succumb to the temptation to say, "Well we are no worse than other countries." We can't say well Cambodia had the killing fields or that Hitler and Stalin executed millions of political prisoners, or that Canada has turned up over ten thousand graves of indigenous children that died in schools designed to unheathen them. We simply are not in the same boat. None of those countries were created to be a role model for the world.

We were designed to set a new standard for the world. We certainly have a long way to go but we are heading in the right direction. More immigrants what to come to America than to all the other countries of the world put together. Just because the left hand abused the right hand does not mean the answer is for right hand to abuse the left. The answer is reset. Stop the

hurt. Don't just redirect it. This might be more difficult, but it is the only way. It is easy to cancel but it does no good. We need to correct not cancel. Don't throw out the baby with the wash. Our forefathers foresaw a wonderful nation. Now it is our duty to realize their dream.

Ain't nothing to but to do it. Let's get busy and do it. Hallelujah and Amen