

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL?

Dear Friend:

You can sing the song without the hymnbook. You have probably sung it since elementary school. That beloved song: *America the Beautiful*. It began as a poem written by an English professor, Kathleen Bates, while she was standing on Pike's Peak. Kathleen was an English professor at the renowned Wellesley College. Ms. Bates had accepted a temporary teaching assignment of summer school in Colorado. As she stood on Pike's Peak, she recalled the beauty of her cross-country trip. As she stood on the peak, she could see the purple mountains in all their majesty. She had recently crossed Missouri and Kansas and she saw all the amber waves of grain. As she crossed the plains she was amazed at the spacious skies. In her eyes America was beautiful, America was blessed.

There is a near parallel passage in Deuteronomy, not about America but about all the blessings the Israelites were about to experience in the Promised Land. I see a lot of similarities between the blessings of the Israelites and the blessings we enjoy as Americans. God promised that the land the Israelites would inherit was productive. Crops, figs, grapes and much more. America is a land of tremendous food production. So much so that we end up throwing away as much or more food than some countries can produce in a year.

Eventually Israel became a nation of great prosperity. America is a land of prosperity. The most prosperous nation in the world. I have said it before: we Americans are so prosperous; some Americans buy things we don't need to impress people we don't like.

A third parallel between America and Israel: God's providence has established us. God promised Abraham that he would establish a nation from him. America is not the result of a promise to anyone, and sorry but we are not "God's chosen people"; however, the Pilgrims and early settlers came to this country to exercise their freedom of religion and to establish a territory where God's Word was the guide of life. Freedom of religion meant not being forced to belong to the church of England.

America the beautiful? Absolutely. Land of the free and home of the brave? Definitely!

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Mike

Prayers: Thank God for blessings, Emilee Smith (National Guard Boot Camp), Melvin Burdette (shut-in of the month, June)