

of nowhere. It rises from the soul of a people who are not afraid to pay the price. And the same thing is true of a nation. America was, and is, God's gift to the world; but He gave it to those who were willing to walk the wilderness way and mix their sweat, their blood, and their tears in her rich soil.

The Wilderness Today

Our text is from a sermon by Moses. The people had finally made it to the border of the Promised Land; and now they faced the difficult, dangerous task of *taking* the land God had given them. There were hundreds of walled cities with warriors, willing to fight to the death to keep their homeland. Spies sent into the land said these warriors made them look like "grasshoppers" (Numbers 11).

The task was not difficult, it was impossible from a military viewpoint. But as Jesus said years later, "With God all things are possible". To give them the courage to go forward, Moses told them to look back at how God had led them in the *past*.

God's hand of providence is all over the birth of America. In the 1450's the printing press was invented and the first Book printed was a Bible. Forty years later, Columbus discovered America. Nineteen years later an obscure German monk posted some questions for his church (Roman Catholic) about the ways they had departed from the Bible. The "Protestant Reformation" was born with the watch cry, "*When the Bible speaks, God speaks.*" Western Europe, at the forefront of the spread of Western Civilization, now looked to the Bible and not to any church for guidance. When we talk about America being based on the Bible, it all goes back to Martin Luther, a monk in a small German town.

This is the hand of God (providence), and oh how we need it today. Our nation is facing what seems to be a hopeless situation. What our Founding Fathers feared would bring our form

of government down, is all around us. Groups are fighting groups. All kinds of cultures and races that make up America are not only clamoring for their "rights" as Americans, they are angry enough to resort to violence.

The States are fighting the government. Like right wing extremists, many Americans and even the States, see the "enemy" as the "government". Congress, which is the only place we can find help for all of this, is as divided and as angry as the citizens.

We are in a "wilderness" that only God can get us through. Our prayer is for God to preserve the way of life we have enjoyed, with legitimate "rights" being granted to all Americans. But, as always, we must end every prayer with "**Not what I will; but what You will, Father**" (Matthew 26:39). No one knows if it is God's will to spare the America we grew up with, but we must **seek the power of God** and **submit to the plan** of God.

Our duty is always to maintain our faith in God and our faithfulness to God. Habakkuk saw the probable destruction of Judah that did come in 512 BC. After arguing with God about it, he said this is what he would do if Judah did fall:

"Though the fig tree does not blossom and there are no grapes on the vines; though the olive crop fails, and the fields produce no food; though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls; I will rejoice in the Lord. I will find joy in the God of my salvation." The Lord God is my strength!" (Habakkuk 3:17-18)

The Rest of the Story

The Temple was destroyed in 512 BC and the best people were deported. For all practical purposes, the Jewish nation ended. But God brought them back; they rebuilt their Temple and they survived for 400 years under Persian, Greek and Roman rule. After God tore them down, He put them back together and made them stronger and they gave Jesus to the world (See Jeremiah 18).