

# Ray Charles' Greatest Song

Unquestionably Ray Charles' greatest song is *America the Beautiful* – he was far from the first to sing it, but no one sang it better!

People think of this as a song about the beauty of America, but in reality it is a song about the beauty of the One who made and keeps America beautiful.

God shed his grace on thee – the writer of the song understands that only by God's by continuing grace is there hope to mend thine every flaw . . . May God thy gold refine Till all success be nobleness And every gain divine! – what a focus! . . . God shed his grace on thee Till selfish gain no longer stain . . . and the song writer understood there is more beyond even the most beautiful earthly, temporary habitation . . . Till nobler men keep once again Thy whiter jubilee!

It is easy, through nostalgia or the sheer beauty of the melody, to forget *America the Beauty* is a truly beautiful song because the lyrics are so hopeful and inspiring! **God shed his grace** – this is a great prayer for a person and a country!

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD. <sup>Ps 33:12</sup>

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O beautiful for spacious skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet  
Whose stern impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare of freedom beat  
Across the wilderness!  
America! America!  
God mend thine every flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self-control,  
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved  
In liberating strife.  
Who more than self their country loved  
And mercy more than life!  
America! America!

May God thy gold refine  
Till all success be nobleness  
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream  
That sees beyond the years  
Thine alabaster cities gleam  
Undimmed by human tears!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for halcyon skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the enameled plain!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
Till souls wax fair as earth and air  
And music-hearted sea!

O beautiful for pilgrims feet,  
Whose stem impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat  
Across the wilderness!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
Till paths be wrought through  
wilds of thought  
By pilgrim foot and knee!

O beautiful for glory-tale  
Of liberating strife  
When once and twice,  
for man's avail  
Men lavished precious life!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
Till selfish gain no longer stain  
The banner of the free!

O beautiful for patriot dream  
That sees beyond the years  
Thine alabaster cities gleam  
Undimmed by human tears!

America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
Till nobler men keep once again  
Thy whiter jubilee!

The song leaves the listener with the natural question:

Do I have claim to this “whiter [eternal] jubilee”?