

Mine Eyes Have Seen...
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During the recent Christmas season,
I was reminded of a popular hymn
That was first penned in the 1860's
Normally called, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic".

A strange hymn to recall on Christmas eve,
Yes, even I will admit the message seems
A little discordant to the image of a manger child
And yet there it was playing in my mind.

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.

Refrain: Glory, glory, hallelujah! Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah! His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch fires of a hundred circling camps
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps;
His day is marching on. (*Refrain ...*)

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat;
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet;
Our God is marching on. (*Refrain ...*)

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me:
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free;
While God is marching on. (*Refrain ...*)

It was a song written in another generation
To inspire and encourage fighters for right
Julia Ward Howe had heard the tune
"John Brown's Body" and thought something wrong
So we penned new words to elevate the cause
The poem was set to the music
To lift up the fight for the Union,
For equality, liberty and justice
Regardless of color throughout the land.

The themes are militant but not just that...
They celebrate the victory and conquest
The victory of the right over the wrong
The victory of God over the forces of evil

The words describe a triumphant vision of glory
It instills a sense of marching forward,
Fighting for the right and
Ultimately experiencing victory
As the battle wages on and on.

Mine eyes have seen the glory –
And our minds think of the glory we have yet to behold.
We long for the day of Victory,
We desire the moments of conquest
We envision the events of the overcoming

Overcoming all of the evil
Defeating all that which opposes
Destroying that which destroys
Being Victors over the vanquished

And believers embrace the themes of the song
Believing that victory is coming
It will be coming in the clouds that will part
It will be evident with the glory of God is revealed
It will be seen when Jesus appears in Victory
It was be experienced when Jesus returns in Triumph.

And yet, this past Christmas Eve,
I found myself wondering
If we have not missed what Simeon had seen
Simeon was a righteous and spiritual man
Who worshipped and longed to see
Victory for his people Israel
He wanted to see his people free
He longed to see a Redeemer.

Jesus was brought into the temple
As an eight day old child
And in a burst of insight
In a shout of triumph
In a declaration of joy
Simeon lifted his voice and proclaimed:

“Mine eyes have seen the Glory!”
(Yes, that’s Don’s paraphrase...”
What the scripture says is
“My eyes have seen Your Salvation” (Luke 2:30)

And yet I wonder if my paraphrase
Isn’t what Simeon thought.
He saw the baby boy and wondered
Here is the one who will bring victory
Here is the child who will forgive sins
Here is the Savior who redeems his people
Here is the Victor who will vanquish the enemy

He is not riding in on a white horse...
He is not commanding a large army...
He is not wearing a royal crown...
He is not wielding an iron scepter.
He is a boy...but also something more.

He is God in the flesh, bringing salvation to his people.
And on Christmas Eve I was reminded:

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory:
Glory revealed not on a battle field
Glory seen not in the parting of the clouds
Glory perceived not in a coming Victor
Glory declared not in a future moment

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory:
Glory seen in the twinkling eyes of a baby boy.
Glory seen in the tiny hands that would be pierced for our transgressions.
Glory seen in the man who was also God in flesh
Glory revealed in “Immanuel”, God with Us.

Instead of marching for the victory,
Instead of being inspired for a battle with lyrics and music,
I have seen the glory of the Lord
Revealed in a little child

And this child reveals
The heart, mind and soul of God.
He promises salvation and victory,
Overcoming and conquest over all enemies.

Yes, on Christmas Eve I was singing to myself
The words of the old Battle Hymn
Not in anticipation of victory that was coming

But in celebration of the child that had come!

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory...I hope you have seen him too!