

# Independence-Dependence Day

**“The Battle Hymn of the Republic”** by Julia Ward Howe / John William Steffe / Peter Knight

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

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  
The 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

Glory, Glory, hallelujah!  
Glory, Glory, hallelujah!  
Glory, Glory, hallelujah!  
His day is marching on

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel  
“As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal”  
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel  
Since God is marching on

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 fee!  
Our God is marching on

Glory, Glory, hallelujah!  
Glory, Glory, hallelujah!  
Glory, Glory, hallelujah!

His God is marching on

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

Glory, Glory, hallelujah!  
Glory, Glory, hallelujah!  
Glory, Glory, hallelujah!  
While God is marching on

“The Story behind the Song” by Sean McCollum & The Kennedy Center  
“Patriotic songs have the power to bring people together in a musical celebration of unity and love of country. But what do people sing when their country tears itself apart? That was the unhappy circumstance during the American Civil War, which lasted from 1861 – 1865. For four years, the fate of the country hung in the balance as two parts of America took aim at each other.

“For the victors, one song came to represent all they were fighting for. To the conquered, it was a musical slap at their honor and pride. Here is the story behind “Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

### **Battle Lines Being Drawn**

“In 1860 American voters elected Abraham Lincoln as president. Although he personally hated slavery, Lincoln promised not to interfere with the slave system in southern states.

“Most Southerners, however, were fighting mad about Lincoln’s election. They were convinced his true goal was to end slavery and control the South. One by one these states seceded, or broke away, from the United States to form the Confederate States of America. As president, Lincoln felt duty-bound to fight to keep “the Union” together; the South vowed to fight for its independence.

“On April 12, 1861, a Confederate cannon fired on Union forces at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, igniting what northerners referred to as the Civil War Between the States. It started April 1861; ended April 1865. Eleven southern states seceded from the U.S. for fear the national government would interfere with their rights – especially the right to own slaves. The states that remained in the Union went to war to end the rebellion.

### **Writing Fighting Words**

“In November 1861, a woman named Julia Ward Howe and her husband visited Washington, D.C. While there, Howe, a published poet, heard Union troops belting out a well-known marching song called “John Browns Body,” after the famous abolitionist, John Brown. A preacher standing with Howe encouraged her to write new lyrics to the tune.

“I replied that I had often wished to do so,” Howe later wrote.

*I awoke the next morning in the gray of the early dawn, and to my Astonishment found that the wished-for lines were arranging themselves in my brain. I lay quite still until the last verse had completed itself in my thoughts, then hastily arose saying to myself, I shall lose this if I don't write it down immediately. I... began to scrawl the lines almost without looking.... Having completed this, I lay down again and fell asleep, but not before feeling that something of importance had happened to me.”*

“That “something of importance” proved to be the words to the “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” In February 1862, she sold her poem to the *Atlantic Monthly*, a well-known magazine for five dollars.

“The new song spread quickly through the Union armies and was adopted by Union supporters who wanted to teach the southern rebels a lesson. (Oddly, it had been a southerner named William Steffe

who had written the original music.). Howe's version was packed with Biblical imagery and phrasing.

"Howe took dead aim at slavery in her lyrics. She and her husband were strong anti-slavery activists, called abolitionists. Included in one verse of the hymn were the words "let us die to make men free" – to fight to end slavery, in other words. Howes new words also angered southerners. Not only did the song sing for an end to slavery, this "hymn" – a holy church song – claimed that God was on the North's side."

"But the song was beautiful music to former slaves – black children, women and men now tasted freedom."

**Lev. 25: 8-12 NKJV** *"And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. 9. The you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. 10. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim **liberty**\* throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a **Jubilee**\*\* for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. 11. That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine. 12. For it is the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field."*

**\*V. 10 liberty**, Heb. *deror*; Strong's #1865: Freedom, liberty, release, setting free. Lev. 25:10 is the verse inscribed on the Liberty Bell: "Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land Unto all the inhabitants thereof." *Deror* is also the Hebrew word for "swallow," a bird swift in flight. In this reference, the details about the Year of Jubilee are given...indicating that *deror* is a technical term for the release of slaves and property every 50 years. The Lord Jesus in His first sermon

quoted Isaiah 61:1, which states that the Messiah's anointing and divine commission enables Him to "*proclaim liberty to the captives*" (Luke 4:17-19)."

In like manner, you and I are called to proclaim liberty to sin-captive people as well. Jesus told His apostles in **John 20:21-23 NKJV**, "*So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you. As the father has sent Me, I also send you." 22. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."*

**SFLB note** on v. 23: "The disciples are to preach both the way of salvation and the way of damnation explaining how sinners can be forgiven and the danger of rejecting the gospel. Whether or not the hearers' sins are depends on their acceptance or rejection of Christ." **TPT v. 23** reads, "*I send you to preach the forgiveness of sins – and people's sins will be forgiven. But if you don't proclaim the forgiveness of their sins, they will remain guilty.*" TPT note: "Or "*If you forgive someone for their sins, their sins will be discharged, but if you retain their sins, their sins will be retained.*" Jesus was not giving absolute authority to forgive the guilt of sins, for God alone has that right (Mar, 2:7), and the apostles at not time assumed that authority. What he gave them, in the context of being His sent ones, was the authority to proclaim the gospel to the nations. If they refused to go and preach the good news, then people would have no opportunity to believe it."

**\*\*WW Lev. 27:17 Jubilee, yobel:** This word literally means "ram" or "ram's horn"(Josh 6:5). The term is associated with the Year of Jubilee in Lev. 25:10 and Numbers 36:4. The fiftieth year was a "jubilee" year for the Hebrews, marked by the blowing of a trumpet (Lev. 25:9). During this year, the Israelites experienced freedom and liberty: Slaves were freed; debts were canceled; the land was left fallow; family property was redeemed (25:10-17). The fact that Jesus quoted **Isaiah 49:8-9\*\*\*** seems to

indicate that He equated His earthly ministry with the principles of the Year of Jubilee (Luke 4:18-19).” Let’s read **Isa. 48:8-13**

**TPT:**

**\*\*\*TPT “God’s Faithfulness”:** *“Yahweh says: “When the time of showing you favor has come (**TPT note:** “This may be a reference to the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8-13). Believers today are now living in that season of God’s favor (Luke 4:18-19), I will answer your heart’s cry. I will help you in the day of salvation, for I have fixed my eyes on you. I have made you a covenant people to restore the land and to resettle families on forgotten inheritances. 9. You will declare to prisoners, ‘You’re free!’ and to those in darkness, ‘Step out into the light.’ They will be like sheep that graze beside the roads and find pasture on the barren hillside. 10. They will never be hungry or thirsty. Neither scorching sun nor desert wind will hurt them, for He, the Loving One, will guide them and lead them to restful, renewing streams of water. 11. I will level all My mountains as a road for them and raise up My highways. 12. Look! They will come from faraway lands – some from the north, some from the west, and some from the land of Sinim.” 13. Sing for joy, you heavens! Shout, you earth, and rejoice with dancing, shouting, and glee! Burst into joyous songs, you mountains, for Yahweh has comforted His beloved people. He will show tenderness and **compassion\*\*\*\*** to His suffering ones.”*

**\*\*\*\*TPT note:** “The Hebrew word for “*compassion*” is *racham*, a Hebrew homophone for “womb.” The implication is that God has a compassion-ate love for you, greater than a birth mother has for her child. God’s love comes from deep within His innermost being and births living mercy poured out over us. *Racham* can be translated “pity, grace, favor, tender affection, or compassion.” The very core of God’s being is filled with love and compassion for you.”

**Summary:** Independence requires a dependence in order to be maintained. We must be submitted to authority, both earthly and divine,

for our nation to thrive and for we as Christians to spiritually prosper  
and  
grow to full maturity. Let's be grateful and grow in our liberty in  
Christ!