

Rev. 19:9-16, The Bridegroom Appears
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Overview

19:1-21:8 is chiastic. The ends and middle summarize the blessings declared earlier in the book (19:9 <-- 16:15, rapture; 20:6 <-- 14:13 death; 21:7 <-- 1:3 obedience)

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| 1. "I Heard" (rest: "saw") | 19:1-5, 6-10 | 21:3-8 |
| 2. Entry of Groom... | 19:11-16 | |
| 3. ... and Bride | | 21:1-2 |
| 4. Lake for the Beast... | 19:17-18, 19-21 | |
| 5. ...and his Armies | | 20:11, 12-15 |
| 6. Satan Imprisoned... | 20:1-3 | |
| 7. ...and put in Lake | | 20:7-10 |
| 8. Millennium | 20:4-6 | |

A. 9, The Invitation to the Wedding

Voice is not identified; probably the same as in v.5.

The language has in mind Matt. 22:1-14, the third of three parables designating the rejection of the Jerusalem Jews in favor of the true believers. (Recall earlier dependence on Matthew's version of the Olivet Discourse.)

1. No other clear biblical antecedent for this language. Only three historical marriage feasts recorded in the Bible, and none of them seems to offer any clear parallels:
 - a) Judges 14:20ff: Samson and the woman of Timnath. (Notable for its emphasis on garments! But hardly worthy of introducing the Lord's return.)
 - b) Esther 2:18, held by Ahasuerus in honor of Esther.
 - c) John 2, Cana of Galilee
 - d) *Cf. the feast in Isa. 25:6. Not distinguished as a marriage feast, but does anticipate the Millennium.*
2. Note emphasis on the invitation in Matthew. The original guests are called 3x (22:3,4), but do not respond. Let us treasure the invitation we have received, and not squander it.
3. Both emphasize the need for wedding garments (22:11-14; 19:8).
4. 22:7 "armies" is same word as 19:14, and occurs only 7x in all in the NT.
5. The application in Matt. (distinguishing superficial from true believers) recalls our insight from 11:8, that Babylon the harlot is Jerusalem after the flesh, superficial religion, while the

Bride is the heavenly Jerusalem, of which only true believers are citizens. Summarized in Isa. 1:21, the faithful city has become a harlot.

B. 10, John's misdirected worship, cf. 22:8

1. Shows the great splendor of the angels. He had beheld the glory of the LJC on earth, "the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father" (John 1:14), but even so the glory of one "made a little lower than the angels" (Heb. 2:7).
2. Most of his commands to "write" were from the Lord (1:19; once to each of the churches in ch. 2-3), and he may have this angel confused with the Lord.
3. The angel's description of himself is calculated to raise John's estimate of his own standing before the Lord.
 - a) The angel is only a servant of God, like John and the other believers who bear witness to Jesus.
 - b) These mere humans who bear witness to Jesus are indwelt by the divine Spirit of Prophecy.
4. If the angel appears so much more magnificent than the Lord in his earthly ministry, how much more magnificent is the Lord in glory, in the next scene. Prepares us for his surpassing majesty.

C. 19:11-16, Entry of the Bridegroom

The Summary anticipates two aspects of the one who appears: his character ("faithful and true"), and his actions ("judges and makes war"). The sequel amplifies each of these, separating them by a description of his army. The whole vision recalls the two previous occasions when John heard a command to write and then saw the Lord, ch. 1 and ch. 14.

1. 11, Summary

- a) Note "and I saw," showing the shift from the "and I heard" opening section.
- b) The white horse is mentioned before Rev. only in Zech. 1:8; 6:3, where it is carries the Lord's observers to report on the sin of the world (1:8) and his Spirit to bring judgment (6:3). Here it carries the Lord himself and (v.14) his army.
- c) His Character: "faithful and true." Cf. 3:14 and 1:5. He has promised to return and bring the final victory. We have this on the word of a gentleman, and he will not fail. Developed in vv. 12-13.
- d) His Actions: "judge and make war." A fearful expectation for those who do not know him, developed in vv. 15-16.

Each amplification

- a) *begins with a characteristic from the vision in ch.1;*

- b) *builds on allusions that begin in the OT and are repeated earlier in the Revelation;*
- c) *ends with a distinctive title for the Lord.*

2. 12-13, His Character

Throughout this section, try to trace the relevance of each detail to the description of the Lord as "faithful and true."

a) 12a, All-knowing.

- 1) This is the link back to ch. 1 (1:14).
- 2) Source of "eyes of fire": Dan. 10:6 via 1:14.
- 3) Re. "faithful and true": He can "see in the dark." He has the complete knowledge and perception needed to be "faithful and true."

b) 12b, All-ruling.

- 1) Source: Crown is "diadem," the Royal Crown rather than the Victor's Wreath ("stephanos").
 - a> Rev: The word appears only 3x in Rev. The Dragon wears 7 of these (12:3), and the Beast wears 10 (13:1), but our Lord wears "many," outranking them both.
 - b> OT: This particular kind of crown is mentioned in the LXX of the canonical books in only two places: the book of Esther (associated with a pagan king), and Isa. 62:3, associated with the marriage of Jerusalem to YHWH!
- 2) Relevance to "faithful": Thus no one can overrule his promises or hinder their fulfillment; he is on top of the heap.

c) 12c, Unknowable.

1) Source:

- a> Rev: Recall 2:17, which reports that this unknowable name is delivered to the believer as well (cf. 3:12). The basic idea is Matt. 11:27. In rejoicing over how the Lord has revealed himself to us, we must never forget that we can know him only by revelation. He cannot be found out by human wisdom (1 Cor. 1:21; 2:11; cf. Job 11:7).
- b> OT: Reflected in appearances of the Angel of the Lord:
 - 1> Gen. 32:29, wrestling with Jacob
 - 2> Jud 13:18, announcing birth of Samson to Manoah and his wife;

- 2) Relevance to "faithful and true": he is not only an accurate source of knowledge, but the ONLY complete source, since he himself is unknowable.

d) 13a, Victorious. Why blood, if the battle with the beast hasn't happened yet? Because he has already conquered the great whore in ch. 18.

- 1) Source:
 - a> OT: Cf. Isa. 63:1-6, the Lord returning from the judgment on Edom.
 - b> Rev: the image of the winevat in 14:18-20.

- 2) "Faithful and true:" no one can block his promises by opposition. When General MacArthur promised the Philippines, "I shall return," it would only have taken one Japanese torpedo to render his promise ineffective. But no one can defeat the Lord.

- e) 13b, Expressive. Here is the title John gives him in the first chapter of the gospel. Not only is he faithful and true when he does speak, but it is his very nature to speak. He came for the purpose of revealing the Father. He delights to make heaven known.

3. 14, His Followers

A glimpse at his troops, before we turn to his actions.

 - a) "armies," recalling Matt. 22:7.
 - b) "white horses," recalling the Lord's emissaries in Zech. 1, 6.
 - c) "clothed in white linen."
 - 1) From 8b, this represents "the righteousness of saints." The metaphor describes both the IMPUTED and the IMPARTED righteousness of God; cf. the chiasm of imperatives and indicatives in Col. 3:8-14.
 - 2) In comparison with v.8, commonly taken to suggest that this is the Bride, coming with the Bridegroom to celebrate the marriage supper of the Lamb during the Millennium. But
 - a> John is explicit that the Bride is a city, the New Jerusalem (21:2, 9, especially in explicit contrast with the whore in 17:1).
 - b> "clothed" is not the same as "arrayed" (v.8). Cf. Eph. 6:14, "having on [clothed with] the breastplate of righteousness." The army is "clothed"; the Bride (v.8) is "arrayed." There, the emphasis is on righteousness as Adornment, making us attractive in the eyes of the Bridegroom; here, on righteousness as Protection, making us invulnerable to the attacks of the enemy.
 - 3) Conclude: righteousness is extremely important in our daily lives.
 - a> It is our adornment in the eyes of our heavenly bridegroom. Cf. the repeated phrase in the epistles to the seven churches, "I know thy works."

- b> It is our defense before the enemy. Sin on our part not only lets him slander us and the Lord before others, but also enables him to discourage us from further efforts for the Lord.

4. 15-16, His Actions

Like the "Character" section, begins with allusion to ch. 1, builds on antecedents in both OT and Rev, and ends with a distinctive title.

Each piece of the description relates to the summary in v.11, "in righteousness he doth judge and make war."

- a) 15a, He smites the heathen with the sword of his mouth.
 - 1) Source: The imagery is from Isa. 49:2 (one of the servant songs), via 1:16; picked up in 2:12-16, Pergamos.
 - 2) The inverse of Gen. 1. There, he spoke the worlds into existence; here, he destroys with a word.
 - 3) Note how Heb. 4:12,13 combines the two characters of the Lord emphasized here, the fiery sword (4:12) and the piercing eyes (4:13).
 - 4) Obvious relation to judging and warring.
- b) 15b, He rules them with a rod of iron.
 - 1) From Psa. 2, echoed previously in 2:27.
 - 2) "Rule" is "shepherd," but the harshness of the implement and the context of Psa. 2 indicates that judgment is in view.
- c) 15c, He treads the winepress of God's wrath.
 - 1) Source: Like 13a, from Isa. 63:1-6 via Rev. 14:18-20.
 - 2) Relation to judging and warring is obvious.
 - 3) This one is repeated in both halves of the description because we stand between the defeat of the harlot (ch. 18) and the defeat of the beast (ch. 19).
- d) 16, his Title: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
 - 1) Source: Neb's confession in Dan. 2:47, via Rev. 17:14, anticipating this very invasion.
 - 2) Name written on his garment where it fell across his thigh; a visible location for a horseman, and attested on several ancient statues (Charles II p. 137).
 - 3) His ultimate claim to "judge and make war."