

## A CHIASM OF SEVEN CHIASMS: THE STRUCTURE OF THE MILLENNIAL VISION, REV 19:1-21:8

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Rev 19:1-21:8, the Millennial Vision, constitutes the penultimate division of the revelation given to John.\* The vision is made up of many scenes set in many places—earth, air, abyss, heaven. Some things are seen and some heard; some scenes are stationary and some animated. One of the most obvious features of the vision is that it seems repetitious: What is said once is restated several verses later, then returned to in a later chapter. The repetitious nature of the vision has, in fact, made a sound exegesis of the text difficult and led scholars to lean toward several

In Jon Paulien's "Revisiting the Structure of Revelation," presented Nov. 20, 1997, at the yearly conference of the Evangelical Theological Society, these visions were listed as (1) The Seven Churches [Rev 1:9-3:22]; (2) The Seven Seals [Rev 4:1-8:1]; (3) The Seven Trumpets [Rev 8:2-11:18]; (4) The Final Crisis [Rev 11:19-15:4]; (5) The Seven Bowls [Rev 15:5-18:24]; (6) The Millennium [Rev 19:1-20:15]; and (7) The New Jerusalem [Rev 21:1-22:5]. Kenneth Strand, in "The Eight Basic Visions," on good evidence, divides the seven bowl plagues from the Whore of Babylon/Fall of Babylon passages [*Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, 2d ed. (Naples, FL: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1979)]. C. Mervyn Maxwell, in his comprehensive commentary on Revelation, *God Cares*, vol. 2 (Boise: Pacific Press, 1985), agrees with Strand and offers additional important chiasmic support (see especially 54-62). Whether finding a seven- or eight-part structure more persuasive, all of these authors agree that the Millennial Vision is the penultimate division of the revelation. Differing from Paulien and agreeing with Maxwell, I would extend the Millennial Vision to Rev 21:8, based on the chiasmic structure of the passage, though accepting that Paulien's "duodirectionality" principle allows the passage to fit into both visions (see his "Looking Both Ways: A Study of the Duodirectionality of the Structural Seams in the Apocalypse," a paper presented to the Hebrews, General and Pastoral Epistles, and Apocalypse Section of the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in Chicago, Nov. 19-22, 1988; also, see his "The Seven Seals," in *Symposium on Revelation—Book I* [Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992], 202-204). However, again on the basis of the chiasmic structure of the passage, I agree with Paulien and disagree with Strand and Maxwell in beginning the division at Rev 19:1. Among others who prefer the seven-part structure of visions with prologue and epilogue are William H. Shea and Hans LaRondelle. I would like to thank Dr. Shea for his useful comments as I developed this structure of chiasms. For example, when I had found Chiasms II through VI, he urged me to return to the text and see if there might be two more. His own unpublished work on the chiasmic structure of the Millennial Vision, divided somewhat differently, but beginning and ending at the same place, is outlined in Beatrice S. Neall's "Sealed Saints and the Tribulation," in *Symposium on Revelation—Book I*, 250-251. Maxwell also offers an interesting chiasm for this division (see *God Cares*, 2:483), and the chiasm he finds has certain similarities to what I find, but is much less detailed and misses the "seven-chiasms-in-one" feature which I see in the passage.

distinctly different positions about the chronology of events.

There is, it turns out, a reason for this repetition. The Millennial Vision has a beautifully complex literary structure. It is a large chiasm composed of seven smaller chiasms, the first and last of which are tied together by two sets of passages which serve to frame the whole vision. Once this structure is understood, a number of exegetical difficulties can be resolved. A study of the implications of this chiastic structure will be left to other scholars. In this essay I will simply introduce readers to the shape of the Millennial Vision. It will become apparent that every verse is in its intended position; anything which is out of chronological order is deliberately so.

### *The Thematic Chiasm of the Millennial Vision*

The chiastic order of the entire Millennial Vision is shown in **Figure 1**. Each of the seven smaller chiasms has a theme, and these themes balance chiastically. They are as follows:

A Chiasm I—Rev 19:1-10

Premillennial Announcement of the Inauguration of the Marriage Supper [Old Earth]

B Chiasm II—Rev 19:11-16

Premillennial Appearance of Christ to Judge and Fight the Wicked [Heaven (Sky)]

C Chiasm III—Rev 19:17-21

Premillennial Defeat of Those Who War Against God [Earth]

D Chiasm IV—Rev 20:1-7

Millennial Reign of Christ and His Saints and Binding of Satan [Abyss/Heaven/Abyss]

C' Chiasm V—Rev 20:8-10

Postmillennial Defeat of Those Who War Against God [Earth]

B' Chiasm VI—Rev 20:11-15

Postmillennial Appearance of God to Judge the Wicked [Heaven (Sky)]

A' Chiasm VII—Rev 21:1-8

Postmillennial Recreation of Earth and Consummation of Marriage [New Earth]

This arrangement shows why Rev 20-21 seems to repeat much of Rev 19: Rev 19 is premillennial and Rev 20:8-21:8 is postmillennial. The vision is carefully organized to reveal that though these events are separated by

**D**  
**Chiasm IV**  
 Millennial Reign  
 of Christ and His Saints  
 and Binding of Satan  
 (Rev 20:1-7)  
 [Abyss / Heaven / Abyss]

**C**  
**Chiasm III**  
 Premillennial  
 Defeat of Those Who  
 War Against God  
 (Rev 19:17-21)  
 [Earth]

**C'**  
**Chiasm V**  
 Postmillennial  
 Defeat of Those Who  
 War Against God  
 (Rev 20:8-10)  
 [Earth]

Chronologically,  
 Chiasm II inserts into Chiasm III after Rev 19:18;  
 Chiasm VI inserts into Chiasm V after Rev 20:9a

**B**  
**Chiasm II**  
 Premillennial  
 Appearance of Christ  
 to Judge and Fight the  
 Wicked (Rev 19:11-16)  
 [Heaven (Sky)]

**B'**  
**Chiasm VI**  
 Postmillennial  
 Appearance of God to  
 Judge the Wicked  
 (Rev 20:11-15)  
 [Heaven (Sky)]

**A**  
**Chiasm I**  
 Premillennial  
 Announcement of the  
 Inauguration of the  
 Marriage Supper (Rev 19:1-10)  
 [Old Earth]

**A'**  
**Chiasm VII**  
 Postmillennial  
 Recreation of Earth and  
 Consummation of Marriage  
 (Rev 21:1-8)  
 [New Earth]

Frame B: Summary of Salvation of Redeemed: From "Servants" to "Sons" (Rev 19:5-6 / 21:6-7)  
 Frame A: Summary Preview of Judgment Against the Wicked (Rev 19:1-4 / 21:8)

Figure 1. The Millennial Chiasm

a thousand years, they are similar in form and effect. The relationship between A, B, and C and A', B', and C' is similar to that between the seven trumpets and the seven plagues: they are not the same thing, but they follow a similar order, even to where they occur, alternating low-high-low, earth-heaven(s)-earth. One point of interest is that chronologically, B and B' should be placed in C and C'. On both sides of the chiasm, war against God leads to judgment, which leads in turn to execution, but the scenes of judgment have been separated from the scenes of warfare to emphasize their difference. (An attempt to place B and B' chronologically reveals, however, that they were written to be where they are now, not moved at a later time.) Realizing this should clarify several chronological conundrums.

In looking for parallels, I have found that some of these chiasms are stronger than others. However, even the weakest of them has strong links with its partner on the other side of the millennium. I have noted four types of parallels: verbal (identical or closely related words), thematic (same theme, but different words), synonymous (different words for the same thing), and antonymous (related but opposite words). Verbal parallels are the strongest evidence of deliberate chiasmic structure, even though the repeated words may be in quite different contexts. Each of these seven chiasms has at least one verbal parallel; more often it has three. There are five verbal parallels between each of the paired chiasms (where they need not be at the same level in the chiasms). Also significant is the fact that in a number of cases, words or phrases are found several times in a single chiasm or pair which are found rarely or not at all in the others.

### *Chiasms I and VII: The Marriage of the Lamb*

**Figure 2** portrays Chiasms I and VII, the beginning and end of the vision, as found in the KJV. The tables in **Figure 3** show the parallels in each of the two chiasms and the parallels between the pair. The text that follows comments on these.

A number of points are worth noting about these two chiasms. The chiasmic structure allows Rev 19:1-4 to be recognized not only as a response to the destruction of the whore of Babylon in Rev 18 but, in accord with Paulien's "duodirectionality" principle, as a preview in summary of God's solution to the controversy between Christ and Satan, balanced with the "second death" of 21:8 and the list of those who will experience it. It is the first part of a frame which ties together the seven chiasms; for this reason it is balanced in Chiasm VII rather than in Chiasm I. Where A/A' reveal the fate of the wicked, B/B' reveal the salvation of God's servants/children.

All six references to the wedding of the Lamb in this vision are in

**Chiasm I: Premillennial Announcement of the Inauguration of the Marriage Supper (the whore has been judged by the plagues, leaving the earth in chaos; the Bridegroom is about to appear)**

**A 19:1-4** "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: 2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. 3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia."

**B 19:5-6** "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

**C 19:7a** "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come,"

**D 19:7b-8** "and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

**E 19:9a** "And he saith unto me, Write,"

Write the truth | **F 19:9b** "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Blessing | **E' 19:9c** "And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

**D' 19:10a** "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus:"

**C' 19:10b** "worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

**Chiasm VII: Postmillennial Recreation of Earth and Announcement of the Consummation of the Marriage**

**C 21:1a** "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth:"

**D 21:1b** "for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

**E 21:2** "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Bride-city is | **F 21:3a** "And I heard a great voice out of heaven [thronou] saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them,"

God with us | **E' 21:3b** "and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

**D' 21:4** "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

**C' 21:5** "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

**B' 21:6-7** "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

**A' 21:8** "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Frame A:  
Summary  
preview of  
judgment  
against the  
wicked

Frame B:  
Summary of  
the salvation  
of the  
redeemed:  
from  
"servants" to  
"sons"

Definition of  
worship:  
rejoice &  
honor

Saints and  
brethren /  
righteous-  
ness &  
testimony

New  
creation

Implications  
of old world's  
passing

Figure 2. Chiasm I and Chiasm VII

## Chiasm I—Rev 19:1-10

## Premillennial Announcement of the Inauguration of the Marriage Supper [Old Earth]

"judged the great whore" "avenged the blood" "her smoke rose up" S 1-4	A/A'	[Frame A—see Chiasm VII A']
"a voice came out of the throne" S "his servants" "a great multitude" S "many waters" L 5-6	B/B'	[Frame B—see Chiasm VII B']
"be glad" "rejoice" "give honor" S 7a	C/C'	"worship" 10b
"his wife" "saints" T 7b-8	D/D'	"fellow servants" "of thy brethren" 10a
"And he saith unto me" L 9a	E/E'	"And he saith unto me" 9c

Heart of Chiasm I: Blessing on those called to the marriage supper 9b

## Chiasm VII—Rev 21:1-7

## Postmillennial Re-creation of Earth and Consummation of Marriage [New Earth]

[Frame A—see Chiasm I A]	A/A'	"the lake which burneth" "the second death" 8
[Frame B—see Chiasm I B]	B/B'	"he said to me . . . I am Alpha . . ." "He that overcometh" "my son" "water of life" 6-7
"new" L 1a	C/C'	"new" 5
"passed away" L 1b	D/D'	"passed away" 4
"the holy city" "a bride" S "her husband" S 2	E/E'	"his people" "their God" 3b

Heart of Chiasm VII: God will dwell with the bride 3a

## Chiasm I Parallels Chiasm VII

"the marriage of the Lamb is come" "his wife hath made herself ready" "arrayed in fine linen" S	"a bride adorned for her husband"
"the righteousness of saints" [ <i>bagiōn</i> ] L	"the holy city" [ <i>bagian</i> ]
"write" L	"write"
"the true sayings of God" L	"these words are true and faithful"
"her smoke rose up for ever and ever" S	"the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" "the former things were passed away"
"and he saith" [ <i>kai legei</i> ] L	"and he said" [ <i>kai legei</i> ]
"throne" L	"throne"

L=Linguistic Parallel; T=Thematic Parallel; S=Synonymous Parallel; A=Antonymous Parallel

Figure 3. Chiasm I and Chiasm VII Parallels

Chiasms I and VII. The phrase "And he said" [*kai legei*] occurs three times in Chiasm I, once in Chiasm VII, and nowhere else in this vision. Unique usage of this sort is a strong support for the existence of these chiasms. The word "throne" occurs twice in Chiasm I and twice in Chiasm VII, and elsewhere in this vision, only in the "great white throne" judgment in Rev 20:11-12 ("thrones" occurs in Rev 20:4).

Chiasms I and VII emphasize hearing, saying, and voice, whereas the

other five are primarily visual. (The phrase "I saw," so common in Revelation, occurs only twice in Chiasm VII and never in Chiasm I.) In Chiasms II through VI, by contrast, the word "voice" occurs only once, and the only spoken word is the angel's call to the birds in 19:17-18.

In the phrases in Rev 21:6, "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," we find in "beginning" an echo of *archē* in Gen 1:1 (LXX) and John 1:1 and support for the idea of "I make all things new," referring to the recreation of an earth cleansed by fire (21:5). The phrase "the beginning and the end" also suggests that the battle between Christ and Satan that began at the beginning is now ended, that sin and suffering are now ended, that salvation is now consummated, that God has vindicated himself and his people and avenged their tears and death. In Rev 12 Christ reveals the fighting in heaven and earth and what God has done about it at the Cross. Here the battle won at the Cross is ended.

The entire structure of seven chiasms is tied together at A in Chiasm I and A' in Chiasm VII with a preview of God's executive judgment against the wicked, the only way sin and suffering can be eliminated. It is also tied together by a second frame, B in Chiasm I and B' in Chiasm VII, a summary of the salvation of the redeemed: Those who have been faithful servants and overcomers are now recognized as sons. In Chiasm I, C and C' reveal a definition of worship: "Be glad," "rejoice," "give honor to him." D and D' reveal the kinship between the angelic hosts and the hosts of the redeemed (or perhaps more specifically those who have received the prophetic gift). In E and E' John is ordered to write the truth, to write exactly what he sees and hears, and in F a blessing on God's holy ones is pronounced. In Chiasm VII, C and C' announce a new creation; D and D' explain the implications of the old world's passing; E and E' reveal that "the holy city" is synonymous with those who dwell in it: both are the "bride" and F reveals God's relation to the redeemed in the new earth. The parallels in the Millennial Chiasms are nearly always illuminating, even when that illumination is peripheral to the central meaning of the text.

At the heart of Chiasm I is Christ's promise that he will marry his bride, and the metaphor of the "marriage supper" suggests that there will be celebration when this occurs. At the heart of Chiasm VII is the promise that God himself will dwell on the recreated earth with his saints. The words "tabernacle" and "dwell" recall God dwelling among the Israelites in the desert and the feast of tabernacles; they also recall John 1:14. The comparison of Chiasm I and Chiasm VII suggests an added dimension, however: God will dwell not only among us but with us, as a husband lives with his wife.

*Chiasms II and VI: The Wicked Judged*

Figure 4 shows the verses of Chiasms II and VI, both dealing with judgment. In Figure 5 one notes the parallels within each chiasm and the parallels between the two chiasms. The text that follows comments on these.

<b>Chiasm II: Premillennial Appearance of Christ to Judge &amp; Fight the Wicked</b>			
A 19:11 "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."			
The King & Lord judges & makes war  He rules & punishes	B 19:12 "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself."	C 19:13 "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."	
	His blood provides purity	C' 19:14 "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."	
	B' 19:15 "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."		
	A' 19:16 "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."		
<b>Chiasm VI: Postmillennial Appearance of God to Judge the Wicked</b>			
A 20:11a "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it,"			
His judgment is executed	The penalty is death	B 20:11b "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them."	
	The dead judged by works	C 20:12 "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God [tou thronou]; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."	
		How is this possible?	D 20:13a "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it;"
		C' 20:13c "and they were judged every man according to their works."	D' 20:13b "and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them:"
	B' 20:14 "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."		
A' 20:15 "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."			

Figure 4. Chiasm II and Chiasm VI

Chiasms II and VI both deal with judgment, though the first is premillennial and the second is postmillennial. The only other chiasm in this vision in which judgment takes place is the central one, Chiasm IV, during the millennium. (In Chiasm I "the great whore" *has been* judged, which points back to Rev 18. According to Paulien's "duodirectionality" principle, it also supports the view that 19:1-4 is a preview of what will happen in the vision, rather than something which happens before Chiasm II.)

The chiasmic structure reveals that both Chiasm II and Chiasm VI are parenthetical digressions or elaborations, set apart to emphasize their parallels as judgments and punishments. Within the chronology of the

**Chiasm II—Rev 19:11-16**  
**Premillennial Appearance of Christ to Judge and Fight the Wicked [Heaven (Sky)]**

“called” S “judge and make war” [the work of kings] T 11	A/A'	“a name written” “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” 16
“His eyes were as a flame of fire” [face as weapon] T “many crowns” [ <i>diadēmata</i> -a ruler’s crown] T 12	B/B'	“out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword” [face as weapon] “he shall rule” 15
“clothed with a vesture dipped in blood” 13 L	C/C'	“clothed in fine linen, white and clean” 14

Heart of Chiasm II: Word of God’s blood makes possible his army’s purity 13-14

**Chiasm VI—Rev 20:11-15**  
**Postmillennial Appearance of God to Judge the Wicked [Heaven (Sky)]**

“throne . . . him that sat” [King sitting to judge] T 11a	A/A'	“not found written in the book of life” [the King judges] 15
“earth and heaven . . . no place for them” T 11b	B/B'	“death and hell cast into the lake of fire” 14
“judged” L “according to their works” L 12	C/C'	“judged” “according to their works” 13c
“gave up [ <i>edōkan</i> ] the dead” L 13a	D/D'	“delivered up [ <i>edōkan</i> ] the dead” 13b

Heart of Chiasm VI: The wicked dead will be raised to receive judgment 13

**Chiasm II Parallels Chiasm VI**

“his eyes” “his mouth” [face] S	“from whose face”
“white horse” L	“white throne”
“judge” L	“judged”
“clothed in fine linen, white and clean” [“righteous acts of saints” 19:8 NIV] T	“according to their works”
“smite” “treadeth” “fierceness” “wrath” S	“cast into the lake of fire” “second death”
“written” L	“written”
“And I saw” L	“And I saw”
“he that sat” L	“him that sat”
“eyes like a flame of fire” T	“lake of fire”

L=Linguistic Parallel; T=Thematic Parallel; S=Synonymous Parallel; A=Antonymous Parallel

Figure 5. Chiasm II and Chiasm VI Parallels

vision, Chiasm II should be placed just before the chiastic center of Chiasm III, following Rev 19:18. Chiasm VI should be placed at the chiastic center of Chiasm V, between the two halves of Rev 20:9.

Chiasms II and VI begin with three parallels: “And I saw,” “white,” and “he [or “him”] that sat.” In both chiasms, the face of Christ/God is a weapon: In Chiasm II his eyes are like flames and a sword comes from his mouth (B and B’); in Chiasm VI heaven and earth flee from his face (B). Given these similarities, we might expect a chiastic parallel to IIB in VIB’; the eyes like “a

flame of fire" in Rev 19:12 are balanced with "the lake of fire" in Rev 20:14, suggesting that "the lake of fire" flashes out from God to devour the wicked. The sentence in Rev 20:14, "This is the second death," becomes clear in the light of Chiasm II, where Christ metes out the first death to the wicked still alive at his coming (see Rev 19:21 and 20:9b).

In both C and C' of Chiasm VI we find the phrases "were judged" and "according to their works." In Chiasm VI D and D', the phrase "gave up the dead" occurs twice. All of these parallels are found in the Greek, as well.

The structure of Chiasm VI helps to reveal that the "books" opened in Rev 20:12 are a record of "works," whereas the "book" is the "book of life." Those whose names are not in the "book of life" are judged "out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." The chiasm also emphasizes that it is not the righteous dead, who have been living for a thousand years, who are judged, but "the dead," raised from the first death only to die the second death. The names of the righteous are found in the "book of life," but that seems to be the extent of their judgment: they are "clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

When Christ appears in Chiasm II, he is wearing many crowns [*diademata*] and comes to "judge and make war." This is balanced in A' by the name on his thigh, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." As King and Lord, he is able to judge and make war and punish. Also, in this vision, the word "vesture" [*imation*] occurs twice in Chiasm II, and nowhere else.

In Chiasm II there is a singular concern with naming. Names by which Christ is "called" are given twice, and twice the "name written" on him is mentioned. This occurs nowhere else, though the word "written" is also found once in Chiasm VI.

In Chiasm II, A and A' introduce the King and Lord who comes to judge and make war. B and B' reveal that he has come to mete out executive judgment, to punish, to seek blood, and that the punishment is a natural extension of the wrath seen in his face. This wrath is contrasted in C and C' by his own blood, which has purified the vestments of his holy ones whom he has come to redeem. He is filled with wrath against those who have dared to harm his chosen ones. In Chiasm VI, A and A' reveal the final execution of judgment against all who have not chosen to side with God. B and B' make it clear that the penalty is death. The basis of judgment is revealed in C and C': the wicked are judged "according to their works." In the chiasmic structures of Revelation, several parallels seem to answer implied questions. In response to the implied question, "How can God punish those who are already dead?" D and D' reveal that all the wicked will be resurrected in unglorified flesh to receive their punishment.

The heart of a chiasm should reveal something significant, especially

when it is designed by Christ and given in vision. The heart of Chiasm II reveals Christ as King and Conqueror, by right of his blood, and his armies as "white and clean" because of that same blood. Christ's blood provides purity for those who ride with him, recalling Rev 12:10-11. By contrast, the heart of Chiasm VI reveals that those who have refused that blood must be judged according to their own works, rather than according to his. "The dead" are equivalent to the wicked and to "the rest of the dead" in Rev 20:5a, the center of Chiasm IV. By contrast, Rev 20:5 emphasizes that the righteous dead will be alive during the millennium, thanks to "the first resurrection."

### *Chiasms III and V: The Wicked Defeated*

Figure 6 shows the verses constituting these chiasms and Figure 7, the table of parallels. In both Chiasms III and V, the wicked make war against God and are defeated and slain. Chiasm III is set before the millennium, and Chiasm V is set after it. If Chiasm II and Chiasm VI are inserted in chronological order, the progression is making war against God, being judged, and being slain.

<b>Chiasm III: Premillennial Defeat of Those Who War Against God</b>	
<p>A 19:17-18 "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, <b>Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;</b> 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." [Chiasm II inserts here.]</p>	<p>B 19:19 "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, <b>gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army."</b></p>
<p>The feast on the wicked dead is announced and eaten</p>	<p>C 19:20a "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him,"</p>
<p>Those gathered against God are slain</p>	<p>Why punished? D19:20b "with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image."</p>
<p>Captured &amp; cast</p>	<p>C' 19:20c "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."</p>
	<p>B' 19:21a "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth:"</p>
	<p>A' 19:21b "and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."</p>
<b>Chiasm V: Postmillennial Defeat of Those Who War Against God</b>	
<p>A 20:8 "And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."</p>	<p>B 20:9a "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city:" [Chiasm VI inserts here.]</p>
<p>Devil deceives nations &amp; is punished</p>	<p>B' 20:9b "and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."</p>
<p>Attack &amp; Counterattack</p>	<p>A' 20:10 "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."</p>

Figure 6. Chiasm III and Chiasm V

## Chiasm III—Rev 19:17-21

## Premillennial Defeat of Those Who War Against God [Earth]

"fowls" L "eat the flesh" L 17-18	A/A'	"fowls" "filled with their flesh" 21b
"kings of the earth, and their armies" S "him that sat on the horse" L 19	B/B'	"the remnant" [of the wicked] "him that sat on the horse" 21a
"beast . . . false prophet" S 20a	C/C'	"these both" 20c

Heart of Chiasm III: Beast and false prophet thrown into lake of fire 20

## Chiasm V—Rev 20:8-10

## Postmillennial Defeat of Those Who War Against God [Earth]

"and [he] shall go out to deceive the nations" L8	A/A'	"the devil that deceived them" 10
"they went up" [attack] A 9a	B/B'	"fire came down" [counterattack] 9b

Heart of Chiasm V: The wicked are devoured by fire 9

## Chiasm III Parallels Chiasm V

"deceived" L	"deceived"
"beast" "false prophet" L	"beast" "false prophet"
"lake of fire" L	"lake of fire"
"gathered together to make war" [polemon] L	"gathered together to battle" [polemon]
"kings of the earth, and their armies" S	"Gog and Magog"
"all men" S	"as the sand of the sea"
"eat the flesh" [phagete] "slain" L	"devoured" [katephagen]

L=Linguistic Parallel; T=Thematic Parallel; S=Synonymous Parallel; A=Antonymous Parallel

Figure 7. Chiasm III and Chiasm V Parallels

In Chiasm III A the birds are told to "gather . . . together." In Chiasm III B the wicked are "gathered together to make war," and in Chiasm V A the devil goes out to "gather them together to battle." The word translated "war" and "battle" is the same in Greek, *polemon*.

The "beast" and the "false prophet" are mentioned in this vision only in these two chiasms. The "kings of the earth, and their armies" are mentioned only in Chiasm III, but the chiasmic parallel suggests that "Gog and Magog" should be seen as a metaphor and synonym of these kings and armies, rather than as specific nations.

A form of the verb *planaō*, "deceive," occurs four times in Chiasms III, IV, and V, and nowhere else in this vision. The devil appears only in Chiasms IV and V, where the word "deceive" is associated with him, but "deceived" occurs in Chiasm III D as well, associated with the devil's earthly tools, the beast and the false prophet. In Rev 12:9 the devil is called "the deceiving [one]" [*ho planōn*].

Chiasm III B and B' and Chiasm V B and B' are parallel: In both the

wicked gather together to make war against God and are slain. However, there is an interesting twist: Chiasm III C and C', in which the beast and false prophet are captured and cast into the lake of fire because they have deceived those with the beast's mark, are closely related to Chiasm V A and A', in which the devil deceives the nations and is in turn cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet have gone before him.

The phrase "lake of fire" occurs in both III and V, but it appears as well in VI and VII. In III, only the "beast" and the "false prophet" are cast into it (of course, some commenters see these as representing religio-political systems rather than individual people, and in that case this would suggest that these systems are destroyed before the millennium). Following the millennium, it seems, the wicked are deceived directly by the dragon, rather than through his vicars.

The wicked are "slain" or "devoured" in both Chiasms III B' and V B', and the parallel suggests that the "sword" which comes from Christ's mouth is the metaphorical equivalent of the "fire" that comes "down from God out of heaven."

The thematic parallels in these two chiasms are interesting. In Chiasm III, A calls the birds to eat flesh, and in A' they eat. In B and B' the rebels against God gather together and are slain. In C and C' the beast and the false prophet are captured and cast into punishment. D reveals why: they have deceived the wicked, turning them away from worshiping the true God. In Chiasm V, in A the devil gathers the wicked yet again, and in A' he is punished for this. In B and B' the wicked attack the "camp of the saints" and God counterattacks with fire from heaven. The wicked "went up," and the fire "came down."

The heart of Chiasm III is the capture and burning of the beast and the false prophet who have persecuted God's people and set up counterfeit systems of worship which have turned people away from the true God. The chiasmic heart of Chiasm V is the devouring by fire of those under the devil's sway who have "compassed the camp of the saints about," much as people have done throughout history. Thus Christ reveals to John that his battle against Satan and sin and suffering will result in the destruction of wicked people and of the fallen angels who have tormented them.

#### *Chiasm IV: The Heart of the Millennial Vision*

Chiasm IV is not only the central chiasm of the Millennial Chiasms, but is the only one to deal specifically with the millennium. **Figure 8** shows the text, and the parallels appear in **Figure 9**. As the chiasmic center of the vision, Chiasm IV epitomizes the consummation of salvation

<b>Chiasm IV: Millennial Reign of Christ &amp; His Saints &amp; Binding of Satan</b>		
A 20:1-3 "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."		
Satan bound & unbound	B 20:4a "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them:"	C 20:4b "and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands;"
	Saints as priests & kings, judging	D 20:4c "and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."
	The holy dead live	D' 20:5a "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."
	Lived/ Lived Not	C' 20:5b-6a "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power,"
	B' 20:6b "but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.	A' 20:7 "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,"

Figure 8. Chiasm IV

## Chiasm IV—Rev 20:1-7

## Millennial Reign of Christ and His Saints and Binding of Satan [Abyss / Heaven / Abyss]

"Satan" L "bound" A "key" "pit" "chain" "seal" S "thousand years" L 1-3	A/A'	"Satan" "loosed" "prison" "thousand years" 7
"thrones" T "judgment" [a priestly role] T 4a	B/B'	"reign" "priests of God" 6b
"beheaded for the witness of Jesus" "for the word of God" "had not worshipped the beast" "neither his image" "neither had received the mark" S 4b	C/C'	"Blessed and holy" "first resurrection" 5b-6a
"lived" L 4c	D/D'	"lived not" 5a

Heart of Chiasm IV and Millennial Chiasm / God's Solution to the Problem of Sin and Suffering: The righteous live; the wicked live not 4c-5a

L = Linguistic Parallel; T = Thematic Parallel; S = Synonymous Parallel; A = Antonymous Parallel

Figure 9. Chiasm IV Parallels

detailed in Chiasm VII and the end of the controversy between Christ and Satan, good and evil, detailed in Chiasms V and VI.

In the Rev 12 chiasm, the implied question, "Why is this persecution happening?" is answered when Rev 12:7-9 and 12:12 reveal the war in heaven, which was the source of evil, and the continuation of that war on

earth. In this vision, Chiasms I-III and V-VII reveal the end of this war and the final destruction of evil. In Rev 12, the implied question, "What is God doing to save his people?" is answered when Rev 12:10-11 reveals the inauguration of salvation at the Cross and the appropriation of salvation by the saints through the Lamb's blood (hinted at again at the heart of Chiasm II, Rev 19:13-14). Chiasm IV reveals the consummation of that salvation: Satan is bound and so unable to "deceive," the righteous dead are again alive, and the saints are reigning with Christ, free of suffering and death and temptation.

Rev 12:9 and Chiasm IV A offer parallel identifications of the "dragon" as "ancient serpent," "devil," and "Satan." In Rev 12:9 and 12 he is at war, however, while in Chiasm IV A he is bound, then unbound in Chiasm IV A', at the close of the millennium. This parallel helps to tie together Rev 12-14, the Great Controversy Vision, with the Millennial Vision.

The phrase "thousand years" [*chilia etē*] occurs six times in Chiasm IV and nowhere else in the vision.

The antecedent of the pronoun "they" in IV B is actually found in Rev 12:10-11. It is "our brothers," "they" who overcame by the Lamb's blood and their testimony in the face of death. Chiasm IV C emphasizes that these "brothers" include those martyred "for the witness of Jesus," and C' emphasizes the condition of those who are raised in the "first resurrection": They are "blessed and holy." Where B pictures the saints as kings who sit on "thrones" and judge, B' shows them as "priests" who "reign." B and B' echo the "kingdom and priests" and reigning of Rev 5:10. The similarity of D and B' suggests that C-D and D'-C' may refer to those saints raised from the dead, while B and B' may refer to those saints still living when Christ returns.

The crucial word in D is "lived." At the center of this chiasm and of this vision is the blessed hope of eternal life with Christ, a hope now fulfilled. Those who died in Christ are now alive and reigning with him. The chiastic structure makes it clear that this is a new condition, that they were not alive and reigning before the binding of Satan, but that they are now alive as a result of the "first resurrection." In D' we find that "the rest of the dead," by contrast, those who are not "blessed and holy," "lived not." The saints "lived" and the rest "lived not." This is the chiastic heart of the entire vision, and God's answer to the problem of sin and suffering.

One could make a case for including Chiasm V A as part of Chiasm IV A', as the phrase "deceive the nations" is also found in Chiasm IV A', but a form of "deceive" is found in both Chiasms V A and V A', and a form of "gather . . . together" is found in both Chiasms III A and V A, so it fits the chiastic structure best as it is.

The thematic parallels in Chiasm IV are straightforward. In A Satan is bound, and in A' he is unbound. In B and B' God's holy ones reign and judge as priests and kings. (It is worth recalling here that in the OT judging is a duty of the priests, and only priests can judge between what is clean and what is unclean. "Clean" or "unclean" is the fundamental distinction between the saints and the wicked in Revelation.) In C and C' we find that not only those alive at Christ's return reign with Christ, but also the righteous dead. As mentioned above, D and D' contrast those who "lived" with those who "lived not."

The chiasmic structure of the vision offers light on the question of where the saints are during the millennium. Chiasm IV does not specifically address the question, but the settings of Chiasms I-III and V-VII suggest the answer. Chiasm I is set on earth, as the bride is "called" up to begin the wedding supper, and VII is set on the new earth, as the bride/city comes down. Chiasms II and VI are set in "heaven," but it is a heaven visible from earth, the air. Chiasms III and V are both set on earth, but it is a sinful earth which is being destroyed along with the wicked. Chiasm IV is framed by the abyss, where Satan is bound. Perhaps this is the earth rendered chaotic by the destruction in Chiasm III, or perhaps it is deeper; in either case it needs to be balanced by something much higher, neither earth nor air, but above and beyond, a place where the saints can reign with Christ before the earth is recreated. In Chiasm VII John sees the "new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven." It seems evident that the saints are in heaven during the millennium.

### *Conclusion*

A knowledge of the chiasmic structure of the Millennial Vision is useful for several reasons. First, the intricate pattern of words and themes is beautiful in its own right, like the shape of a complex poetic pattern or an elegant equation. Second, it makes clear what is confusing. Bible students who have struggled with the Millennium for years say, "Aha!" Even beginning students have no trouble grasping the outline.

Another aspect of the Millennial Chiasms has impressed me. These chiasms are made up of things heard and things seen, of vision and voice, of a variety of scenes, of the literal and the symbolic, and John seems to be writing it all down in the order in which he sees it. If he were to rearrange what he has been shown to fit a pattern, he would have to falsify the vision by moving a detail from one scene to another. Certainly he has some choice over which words to use as he writes, but he is told to write what he sees and hears. My conclusion, thus, is that the shape of the

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Millennial Chiasms may be less the result of conscious artistic decisions on John's part than of the shape in which he received the revelation. If this shape is the work of some later editor who cut and pasted the original text, then that person either recognized and worked within the chiasmic structure or developed it, because the structure is there and it appears to be intact: there seem to be no extraneous passages in this division of the revelation. The chiasmic structure serves as organization, helping the alert reader understand. It serves also as authentication, suggesting that the text as we have it is the text as given.