

Jesus rides out like a military conqueror to defeat all enemies

• *What Jesus does before his second coming*

1. *White horse – warfare*

2. *Jesus – faithful and true*

3. *He sees with clarity and purity*

4. *Diadems - sovereignty*

5. *Secret names – purpose*

• *The mighty warrior has distinctive clothing*

• *Christians fighting a battle on earth*

6. *This warrior has experienced battle*

7. *His name is The Word of God – the One who reveals God*

Our Lord Jesus Christ rides out like a military conqueror to defeat all enemies.

¹¹*I then saw heaven opened and there before me was a white horse and the person mounted on it is faithful and true. He judges and wages war in righteousness.* ¹²*His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on his head were many diadems, each with a name written which no one knows but he himself.*

This passage is sometimes thought to be a symbolic representation of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet there are many reasons for thinking that this is not right and that it rather represents what Jesus does in history before his second coming. The characteristic language of the second coming of Jesus is not found here. Jesus is not said to suddenly 'come'. He does not appear in the twinkling of an eye. Rather what we have here is a period of time, perhaps even a lengthy period of time, in which God's enemies are defeated. Jesus is seen as a warrior. We remember back in Revelation 6:2 we saw a figure on a white horse who had done some conquering and was setting out to do some more conquering. Now what we have here seems to be the same figure. He has done a lot of conquering and so he is covered with the blood of his enemies.

1. The white horse represents warfare. Jesus is a mighty warrior, sitting on a war-horse.

2. Jesus is faithful and true. He is faithful to his promises. He is true to his testimony.

3. His eyes see with bright clarity and burning purity. He sees things the way they really are. He burns away all pretence.

4. His diadems represent his sovereignty over the different areas of life.

5. The secret names on his diadems speak of his purpose. It is rather like the secret of God's book which no one could read or unfold. Jesus is bringing about the purpose of God, but no one fully comprehends what that purpose is. In general, we know that God purposes to save a people for himself, to put down his enemies – to glorify himself in salvation and judgement. But what this will involve in minute detail is known only to Jesus himself. For each part of his work he 'gets himself a name'. He declares that he is the Lord. At the name of Jesus every tongue is compelled to declare that Jesus is Lord. The reward is secret until it is experienced!

The mighty Warrior has distinctive clothing. ¹³*He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God.* ¹⁴*The armies of heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him upon white horses.* Literally it says the 'armies **in** heaven'. It undoubtedly refers to Christians, and they are fighting battles on earth, but they are thought of as being 'in the heavenly places'. Their citizenship is in heaven. ¹⁵*From his mouth came a sharp sword, and with the sharp sword he intends to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will crush out the wine in the winepress of the fury of the anger of God the Almighty.*

6. This Warrior has been through a battle. He has shed his own blood and the blood of his enemies is upon his clothing. By his own blood-shedding he has been conquering enemies, and he is about to conquer some more enemies.

7. His name is The Word of God. Supremely this figure reveals and represents God. In John 1:1–5 and John 1:14, the eternal Son of God is the 'Word' of God. He reveals God in his divine nature, in his creating the world, in his becoming human flesh. In Revelation 19:13, the eternal Son of God is the 'Word' of God as the One who reveals God in his holiness and in his righteous judgement.

8. He goes out with His people, conquering and to conquer – leading His church in defeating His enemies

8. He goes out with his people, conquering and to conquer. None of this is the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. God's people will not be preaching in the day of Jesus' second coming! This is a picture of Jesus leading his church in defeating his enemies, by means of the 'sharp sword' of the gospel. Jesus goes out to conquer his enemies, but he does so by leading out his people with him. He rides on a white horse; so do they! The people of God are full of good works, clothed in the fine linen of the righteous deeds of God's people. They have washed their robes in the atoning, cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are ready to follow the Lord Jesus Christ on white horses of spiritual battle, doing what he is doing. All of this surely speaks of a mighty army of Christians who testify to Jesus and proclaim his word¹. It is not the kind of thing that happens in the day of Jesus' second coming.

¹ 19:14

9. His weapon – the Word

• *There is a mighty surge of overcoming*

• *God uses His word to do the spiritual killing of wickedness*

• *The gospel-message has a cutting edge to it*

9. His weapon is the weapon of the Word which proceeds from his mouth. The nations have rebelled against him by persecuting his people. But the days of persecution which grew into a mighty climax of wickedness are halted for the moment. God's people have been called to overcome, to conquer, to triumph. Jesus has been overcoming. Now there is a mighty surge of 'overcoming'. The gospel-revelation strikes down the nations. There is firm rule of the nations, but this is not **military** conquest. It is certainly not Christians doing the persecuting! Rather the mighty, powerful 'rule' of the saints takes place by the sharp word of the gospel which proceeds from their mouths, as it proceeds from the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ. God uses his word to do the spiritual killing of wickedness. God said through Hosea: 'I have fought them through the prophets, I have killed them with the words of my mouth. And my judgement^a is like the light when it emerges'¹. Christ's prophetic word 'smites' the nations. It is a sharp sword. It begins with a message about sin and judgement. The gospel-message has a cutting edge to it.

¹ Hosea 6:5

10. A day of great rescue comes for God's people

10. A day of great rescue comes for God's people. Revelation 19:15 echoes Isaiah 63:1–6. The book of Revelation says, 'He will crush out the wine in the winepress of the fury of the anger of God the Almighty.' It is clear from Isaiah that this refers to the Messiah's spiritual victory over all enemies. In Isaiah 63 the question is asked:

Who is this coming from Edom,
from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson?
Who is this, robed in splendour,
striding forward in the greatness of his strength?¹

The text now contains many Bible passages – should they be italics? They aren't in the PDF

¹ Isaiah 63:1a

• *A mighty warrior is appearing*

A mighty warrior is appearing, having done great battle with Edom – the enemies of Israel who hated God's people so much. An answer to the question comes back:

'It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.'²

² Isaiah 63:1b

• *Another question*

Then there is another question:

Why are your garments red,
like those of someone walking the winepress?³

³ Isaiah 63:2

• *The answer -*

The answer comes again:

'I have trampled the grapes in the winepress alone;
from the peoples no one was with me.
I trampled them in my anger
and trod them down in my wrath;
their blood spattered my garments,
and I stained all my clothing.'⁴

⁴ Isaiah 63:3

• *God's Saviour has overthrown the enemies of His people*

It is the day when God's Saviour has overthrown the enemies of his people.

'For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redeemed ones^b has come.'⁵

⁵ Isaiah 63:4

• *The Saviour acted alone*

The Saviour acted alone. The conquering Saviour does his work with his people alongside him – but he had to rescue them first!

'I looked, but there was no one to help,

I was appalled that no one gave support;
 so my own arm worked salvation for me,
 and my own wrath sustained me.
 I trampled the nations in my anger;
 in my wrath I made them drunk
 and poured their blood on the ground.⁶

6 Isaiah 63:5-6

• *God's people are ready to rise up and join their Saviour – restored and revived*

From this point on the people of God are ready to rise up and join their Saviour. They are restored and revived. The next verse in Isaiah goes on to say:

I will tell of the never-failing love of Yahweh,
 the deeds for which he is to be praised,
 according to all Yahweh has done for us –
 yes, the abundant good things he has restored back
 to the house of Israel,
 according to his compassion and many kindnesses.⁷

7 Isaiah 63:7

• *Preparation for the day of final judgement and marriage supper of the Lamb*

This is not the day of the second coming of Jesus. It is a day of triumph in the gospel-age of ongoing history **before** the day of the second coming. Perhaps it is near to the end. I think it is. It is **preparation** for the day of the final judgement and the marriage supper of the Lamb. But it is not (as I see the matter) the day of the second coming itself.

11. *Supreme demonstration of the kingship of Jesus*

11. This mighty rescue of the church is the supreme demonstration of the kingship of Jesus. ¹⁶*He has this name written on his robe and on his thigh: King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* Christ is a fit and worthy ruler of the nations because he has been given a position of supreme Lordship over the universe.

Notes

- a. In the Hebrew of Hosea 6:5 the 'k' at the end of Hebrew *wmisptyk* belongs with the next word (*k'wr*).
- b. This is the best translation. 'Redemption' (found in some translations) is not so good. See J.A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (IVP, 1993), p. 511, footnote.

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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