



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



# The Holy Book of Revelation

## Chapter 19

Bishop Youssef



# Introduction

- In the last chapter, we saw the terrible destruction of city of Babylon; now the scene totally changes to heaven
- This chapter illustrates the ultimate defeat of the enemies of God's people
- In this chapter the heavenly host announces to John that the Bride of Christ is ready
- Her appearance, prepared for marriage, signals the opening of the Temple and the full establishment of the New Covenant united to Christ in the Eucharistic Banquet: the Marriage Supper of the Lamb



# Introduction

- These same images will be repeated in the next two chapters when, after a series of 7 visions, John will see the City of God descending from heaven
- Biblical scholars point to a number of similarities in language between the last verse of Revelation 18 (verse 24) -19:10 compared with Revelation 11:15-19
- Chapter 19 is an expansion and completion of what was announced by the 7<sup>th</sup> angel in chapter 11, and hits the highest point with the vision of the Bride prepared for her wedding feast in Revelation 19:9





# Introduction

- John's vision of St. Mary in Revelation 12:1, as the symbol of the Church who is both Virgin Bride and fruitful mother, foreshadows this chapter

## Chapter Outline

- Heaven Exults over Babylon 1-10
- Christ on a White Horse 11-16
- The Beast and His Armies Defeated 17-21

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- *After these things*, The usual introduction to a new phase of a vision, Revelation 4:1, etc.
- The *loud voice*, as usual, characteristic of the heavenly utterances, Revelation 5:2, etc
- The utterance may well be that of all the heavenly inhabitants and saints in glory, Revelation 7:9
- As usual in the Apocalypse, at the termination of a description of the last judgment comes the triumphant song of the heavenly host, Revelation 7:9-17, 11:17

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- In Revelation 6:9-11 the prophets and Saints had prayed for the "Great City's" destruction
- In chapter 19 their prayers were answered and now the great multitude of the redeemed gathered around the Throne of God crying out in a praise
- We have seen the expression of this form of responsorial praise earlier in Revelation in chapter 5
- This passage reminds us that John's vision take place in the heavenly throne room



# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- The word *Alleluia* is in Greek, and is *Halleluyah* or *Hallelujah* in Hebrew
- Most commentators translate this word as "praise God" but in the Hebrew the more literal translation would be 'Praise You, Yahweh.'
- The suffix 'yah' or 'jah' reflects God covenant name "Yahweh"
- The word *Alleluia* occurs in this chapter no less than four times, Revelation 19:1,3-4,6
- It is nowhere else used in the New Testament

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- But it is familiar to us in the Psalms, as fifteen of them begin or end with “Praise Ye the Lord” or “Hallelujah”
- *Illeluia* is the hymn of this great multitude, the song of praise of the twenty-four presbyters and the four living creatures [4], and the hymn of all the heavenly [6]
- This is the hymn that the Church sings, particularly during the Eucharist, and towards its end
- Also the congregation repeats this hymn during feasts, saying, Amen! Alleluia!



# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- The song here does not begin with ascribing *Salvation* to God, it rather affirms the fact: the salvation, & etc., is God's
- It is the triumphant affirmation of the truth by which the Church and children of God had sustained their struggling petitions, as they closed the prayer which Christ Himself had taught them, saying, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory"
- The manifestation of His power is in the deliverance of His children from the evil, from the great harlot, and in the avenging the blood of His servants out of her hand

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- The mystery of heaven's joy is primarily that God declares His justice, as He condemns Babylon, the great adulteress
- This doesn't mean the heavenly rejoice over the wicked, but rather they show happiness for the evil is taken away
- This painful picture of evil that caused the saints to grieve
- A second reason for the worship of verse 1. Corrupting the earth; as in Revelation 11:18, where a form of the same verb is used
- God promised the martyrs that He would avenge their deaths and He has
- *Her fornication*; her unfaithfulness and deceit, Revelation 14:4,8

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- This multitude repeats with joy their hymn
- It is interesting that the specific wording here is borrowed from Isaiah's description of the punishment of Edom in Isaiah 34:10 *"its smoke rising forever.."*
- The rise of the smoke assures heaven that they will never come out of the lake inflamed with fire
- Thus they will no more cause danger to the victorious Church
- It indicate that her punishment was eternal!
- She will never be resurrected to her former spiritual state!



# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- *the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures*, join the heavenly hosts in joy
- Happiness here is not expressed only by words of hymns, but by falling down and worshipping God...
- Once again John witnesses the expression of worship through the posture of the Saints and angels
- Apparently, whenever praise and worship breakout in heaven, one can expect *the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures* to join in

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- St. Isaac the Syrian presses on the connection between kneeling and happiness: “Persistence in watchfulness, together with kneeling at times, will readily give the striving worshipper the joy of prayer. Devote yourself to prayer, and you will obtain the pleasure of kneeling, and persist joyfully in it.”

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- The order came out from the throne, to praise
- As if all the heavenly praise is inspired by the One who sits on the throne
- It is not said by whom this voice was uttered
- It could be one of the elders but it could also be Christ calling on the redeemed to praise God, Revelation 16:17; Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:11-12
- It was addressed to the Church as a whole, *His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great*
- All of every class and condition - poor and rich - young and old; those of humble and those of exalted rank, Psalm 148:7-13



# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- Upon this order from the Throne, the whole church, in obedience to it, began to praise God with loud voices; which might be compared to the sound of *the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings*
- *the voice of a great multitude*, That is, in its suggestiveness of great power and magnitude, Revelation 1:15, 14:2; Psalm 93:3; Jeremiah 51:16
- The saints do not rejoice in the ruin of their adversaries, but in the glory of God advanced by it, and as His kingdom is by it promoted

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- The Holy Spirit who sanctified the bride and made her ready, asks the heavenly to receive the bride joyfully
- *the marriage of the Lamb*, Is the figure under which is portrayed that complete union between Christ and His faithful Church
- *His wife has made herself ready*, St. Paul wrote of Christ's sacrifice on the cross as the redemption of the Bride, “*Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*” Ephesians 5:25-27

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- The prophets frequently express the favor of God to His people by the affection of a bridegroom to his spouse, Isaiah 62:5; Hosea 2:19-20; Zephaniah 3:17
- And the Church of Christ in the New Testament is often represented under the same similitude of a bride, Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25
- And as marriages used to be celebrated with great joy, this is a proper emblem to show the state of prosperity and happiness to which God will raise his church, after all its sufferings for the sake of truth and righteousness



# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- *it was granted*, By God, from whom all her good qualities proceed
- Her apparel is in contrast to the harlot: it is not purple and scarlet, Revelation 17:4, 18:16, but pure white
- The way she dressed has a symbolic signification
- Her wedding garment is white (the symbol of ritual purity) and the texture of her garment is the good deeds of the saints
- Did you notice that the True Bride does not appear for the marriage ceremony until the False Bride is destroyed?

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- The harlot attracts by showy exaggerated colors, the tokens of qualities more eye-catching than steadfast, more dazzling than helpful
- The Lamb's wife is robed in pure and stainless white, the token of those high, moral, spiritual qualities by which she has been known
- It is no fictitious righteousness; it is real, it is hers, though it would never have been hers but for Him without whom she can do nothing, John 15:4-5, and Philippians 3:8-10:
- And it is through the wearing of this white garment of a blameless life that she has borne witness for her Lord, and against the spirit of harlotry and sin, Matthew 7:16-18

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- The angel commanded St. John to write
- *Blessed are those*, This is the 4<sup>th</sup> of the 7 blessings or beatitudes in Revelation, Revelation 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7,14
- *the marriage supper of the Lamb*, It is founded on our Lord's parables, Matthew 22:1, 25:1; Revelation 3:20
- We must not draw too sharp distinctions, as some commentators have done, between the bride and the guests
- Saying if the bride is the church, who are the guests?
- The imagery is varied to give fullness and force to the truths which no symbols can adequately express



# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- For those who partake of the *"marriage supper"* are those who constitute the bride, the faithful Church of God, Revelation 3:20, *"I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."*
- The Church of Christ will rest, and feast, and reign with her Lord; and in all the peace, gladness, and triumph of that joy-time God's servants will share
- A solemn confirmation of this follows, as in Revelation 21:5; Revelation 22:6, these words are true (sayings) of God

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- It is impossible to say who the speaker is that thus addresses St. John, except in so far as may be gathered from verse 10
- Pope Athanasius, the apostolic, says, “The Apostle thought the angel to be Christ, therefore he wanted to worship him as God. For the angel showed splendor, honor and power.”
- Verse 10 has caused some controversies as some say that we should not kneel criticizing people’s kneeling before the bishops or the Pope
- So, what is significant about the angel's rebuke of John?

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- The most obvious interpretation of verse 10 is a warning against the worship of heavenly 'powers.'
- Only God, as the angel tells John, is to be worshiped, Colossians 2:18; Hebrews 1:14, 2:5
- However the Bible presents to us kneeling for other reasons than worship
- As when Jacob fell down at his feet seven times before Esau, to dismiss the spirit of anger (Genesis 33)
- Also the kneeling of Jacob's sons before Joseph, as a sign of their loyalty to Him



# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- Moreover, we see Abraham, the Patriarch, kneeling before the sons of Heth, as a sign of his love to them, and his gratitude for what they did for him (Genesis 23)
- In addition, kneeling was the common sign of respect one gave to someone in authority
- So some interpreted that the angel is telling St. John that he is not God, worshiping is for God only

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- With Christ's sacrifice on the Cross opening the "gates of heaven" to believers through the forgiveness of their sins, for the first time human beings "in spirit" have access to God just as the angels have access to God
- We are now "fellow-servants" and "fellow witnesses" to Christ along with the heavenly beings
- *For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*, There are divers opinions given of the last phrase; but of all given, there are a few which may seem probable

# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- One is that the spirit of this prophecy, by which the angel has revealed these things to John, is not his, it is the testimony of Jesus; He therefore is to be worshiped, not the angel
- Another is that John's preaching the gospel, which is his testimony to Christ, is as much from the Spirit of God, as the angel spirit of prophecy
- They are therefore equals, and he is not to be worshipped
- *This testimony of Jesus*, Also that He came incarnated, died and was risen, and will come to judge the living and the dead, is the spirit of prophesy, its purpose and its core



# Heaven Exults Over Babylon

## 19:1-10



- The testimony about Jesus (that He is Lord, alone) is the spirit (at the heart) of prophecy
- *"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me." John 5:46*
- *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me"* John 5:39
- These are the Lord's words, which evidence that He is at the heart of all Scripture

# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- The announcement of the heavenly wedding and the everlasting banquet, were accompanied by two main things:
- First: The talk about the Person of Christ
- Second: The talk about the defeat of the Antichrist and his followers
- For we can never mention the heavenly wedding without referring to the victorious Groom and His deeds on behalf of His bride

# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- Verse 11 begins the first of the final series of 7 visions, each of which begins with the phrase *and I saw*, Revelation 19:11,17,19, 20:1,4,11, 21:1
- There are actually 7 visions but 8 uses of *I saw* which is used twice in 20:4
- With the revelation John receives of *the marriage supper of the Lamb*, he suddenly experiences heaven opening and discovers that every barrier between Christ and himself is removed



# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- The description reminds us of the opening of the first seal
- Again we have the white horse, and the rider
- The white horse is symbolic of Christ's victory and dominion over all the earth
- The rider was Christ, because he is called *Faithful and True* which agrees with Revelation 1:5; and by the names in the following verses, Revelation 19:13,16, given to him

# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- The purposes of this mission are to "*judges and makes war*"
- Which indicates the moral foundation upon which the Lord stands as He deals with both the people of God and the wicked earth-dwellers on the earth
- Scholars disagree whether Christ is riding forth in judgment at His Second Advent at the End of Time, or whether John is witnessing the progress of the Gospel throughout the world in the universal proclamation of the message of salvation which follows Christ's First Advent

# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- These flame-like eyes have been fixed upon the moving scenes of human life, and have been reading the hearts of men, and the true meaning of all events and actions
- *“all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”* Hebrews 4:13
- He comes as the King of kings, and *on His head were many crowns*
- Crowns rather of royalty than of victory
- The plurality of "crowns" points to His character as King of kings, Revelation 17:14, 13:1



# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- And His name that *no one knew* means that no one can conceive His essence, neither angels nor humans, for no one knows God but the Spirit of God
- The robe refers to the glorious body of the Lord who carries the traces of the cross, Isaiah 63:2
- In the original passage in Isaiah, the blood is doubtless the blood of his enemies; but there is here a reference to the blood of Christ Himself, which he shed in his warfare with Satan
- The signs of divine love, declaring that He offers the price of the wedding: His precious Blood

# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- Also the robe signifies the Church which is purified by the Groom's Blood
- It is a name which is, besides other things, significant of Christ's mediating work
- He is the Word who was with God, who was God, and who declares God to man, John 1:1-4, 3:13, 14:9
- Only in St. John's writings does this title appear, *Word of God*, a strong argument in favor of his authorship of the Apocalypse John 1:1; 1 John 1:1

# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- *the armies in heaven*, This would mean the holy Angels exclusively, or at least primarily
- But some think that the glorified Saints are at least included
- It seems in harmony with the ideas of this Book to represent them, not indeed as executing Christ's revenge (which the angels do, Revelation 14:19; Matthew 13:39-42), but as spectators of His triumph, which is all that these armies seem to be



# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- *clothed in fine linen, white and clean*, To denote their glory, purity, and holiness
- It is the usual clothing or dress of those who are in heaven, as everywhere represented in this book, Revelation 3:4-5, 4:4, 7:9,13, 15:6
- *followed Him*, The armies in heaven follow the Word, and do His will
- *on white horses*, To prophesy success and victory
- As Christ appeared sitting on a white horse, He gave His followers to share in His victory and ride on white horses just like Him

# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- The sharp sword is the same that we have read of before, Revelation 1:16; there it was called the two-edged sword
- The word of messiah's mouth is the sole weapon of His victory
- The sword is now wielded for but one work—the word that Christ spoke will judge men at the last day, John 12:48
- With this He now smites the remainder of his enemies, and breaks them to pieces
- The nations that were opposed to him, those especially who were represented by the beast and the false prophet, Revelation 19:18-20

# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- *And He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of God, for He alone is the Almighty God who can bear the wage of sin in His body*
- The victory of the messiah is single-handed *“I have trodden the wine-press alone”* Isaiah 63:3
- On the cross, He carried our sins
- Through His resurrection we are victoriously risen, for He conquered on our behalf
- His enemies were the grapes, that now were put into the winepress of God’s watchful providence; Christ trod them there, Isaiah 63:3



# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- The symbolism is descriptive of warfare, victory, and judgment
- Christ comes as King
- His is a rule in righteousness
- Those who oppose this kingdom of righteousness find the shepherd's staff as a rod of iron
- The stone rejected falls upon the builders, and grinds them to powder
- It is thus that the winepress of God's wrath is set up, and the righteous King appears as one who treads it out
- He Himself (the emphasis lies here) treads it

# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- The King rides at the head of His host
- On His robe, where it spreads out from the waist, His title is inscribed
- It proclaims Him to be the one who is the true supreme King of all
- Inscriptions on the outer garments were sometimes used by distinguished personages
- The title anticipates the final victory; His power is irresistible, His Kingship is universal

# Christ on a White Horse

## 19:11-16



- *on His thigh*, It signifies His human nature that is united with His divine nature
- The meaning of this verse is that God's authority power and glory will cover the whole world
- His robe, may also symbolize the church who announces and declares His name to the whole world for the purpose of repentance and salvation



# The Beast and His Armies Defeated 19:17-21



- This is the second of the final 7 visions
- In which *the supper of the great God*, was proclaimed to John
- *an angel standing in the sun*, The central spot, in mid heaven as in Revelation 8:13
- In a place befitting his glory, and also whence he can appropriately issue his call
- *in the sun*, also the symbol of the divine presence, Revelation 1:16, 10:1, 12:1

# The Beast and His Armies Defeated 19:17-21



- *he cried with a loud voice*, As is usual in all the heavenly utterances, Revelation 5:2, etc.
- In this vision another "great feast" will be proclaimed by an angel *standing in the sun*
- Now an angel invites *all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven*, to the *supper of the great God* where they can glut themselves on the flesh of Christ's enemies
- This metaphoric picture reveals the fierceness and severity of their destruction
- There is a similar scene in the Old Testament, Ezekiel 39:17-18

# The Beast and His Armies Defeated 19:17-21



- *the supper of the great God*, Not, of course, the "supper" of ver. 9, but rather a contrast to it and with the great supper, Luke 14:16-24 from which the invited guests turned away
- That supper which is reserved for the ungodly
- The message is: either you drink the blood and eat the flesh of the Son of God as He commanded us in John chapter 6 or you will be consumed as a sacrifice to your sin and rejection of Christ
- Those nations that refuse to submit to the lordship of Christ will be utterly destroyed



# The Beast and His Armies Defeated 19:17-21



- All classes, the great and small, the master and slave, are mentioned
- Those who follow the world-power, and array themselves in hostility to the true King, belong not to one class, but may be found among all
- The war is not between class and class, but between righteousness and unrighteousness, truth and falsehood, Christ and Belial

# The Beast and His Armies Defeated 19:17-21



- We must remember that the vision is a great figurative representation of the defeat of the anti-Christian powers and principles in the world
- The description of the same event at the conclusion of the seal judgments, Revelation 6:15
- The whole account indicates the widespread and complete nature of God's judgments, which none shall be able to escape

# The Beast and His Armies Defeated 19:17-21



- This is the third of the 7 last visions and it reveals the defeat of the Satan inspired Sea Beast and the Land Beast known as the False Prophet
- *the beast*, That described in Revelation 13:1, typical of the hostile world power
- And *the kings of the earth, and their armies*, The kings who were called by the unclean spirits of Revelation 16:13-14, typical of the forces which the beast employs in his spiritual warfare with God



# The Beast and His Armies Defeated 19:17-21



- The armies are the followers and adherents of the beast, described in Revelation 13 - the ungodly, those who follow the world rather than God
- *gathered together*, Gathered as described in Revelation 16:14 and verse 17 of this chapter
- Again (as in verse 7) a double operation
- The gathering is voluntary on the part of the wicked, Revelation 16:14, and yet it is overruled by God, and made to serve his ends, Revelation 19:17

# The Beast and His Armies Defeated 19:17-21



- Christ the King and His army of the Church and the Church militant are in open warfare against Satan and his forces
- *His army* consists of the faithful followers of Christ
- That war which is perpetually waged between the powers of light and darkness, and which will not be terminated until the great judgment
- It has been noticed that the true King is followed by His army—one army, united by one bond, and under one King
- The wild beast is supported by diverse armies, owning allegiance to diverse kings, and united only in hostility to good

# The Beast and His Armies Defeated 19:17-21



- Christ and His saints obtained a full and entire victory
- A victory as complete as when the generals and all the chief officers of an enemy's army are made prisoners of war, and the rest are cut to pieces in the field of battle
- For *the beast*, The idolatrous persecuting power represented thereby; and *the false prophet who worked signs in his presence*, That, by pretended miracles and false doctrine, had supported the apostasy; that is, the antichristian tyranny, and the corrupt were taken, were made prisoners, and condemned to suffer the most exemplary punishment by the hands of justice



# The Beast and His Armies Defeated 19:17-21



- The *lake of fire*, is what we normally consider *Hell*
- It is real, and there is nothing more important than avoiding it
- There is a notable contrast between the destruction of the Beast and the False prophet and the Beast's followers
- *the rest were killed with the sword*, are killed with the sword that comes out of Christ's mouth
- The sword which goes out of the King's mouth, Revelation 19:15 and Revelation 1:16, slays the human allies of evil

# The Beast and His Armies Defeated 19:17-21



- That word which is quick and powerful, Hebrews 4:12, that word which Christ spoke in the days of His humiliation, that word which is mighty and life-giving, James 1:18 as well as death-giving, wins at the last
- The Gospel, the Word-sword of the Holy Spirit will destroy His enemies by conquering them either by converting them or by judging them
- The last sentence emphasizes the nature of the punishment by the reference to the indignity offered to their bodies after death

# Discussion



- In what ways did the bride get ready for the heavenly wedding?
- How does rejoicing and being glad have to do with worship?
- What is the “*marriage supper of the Lamb*” (19:9)?
- Why is the punishment of the wicked an act worthy of praise?  
Should we rejoice in the downfall of wicked people?





# Discussion

- How does it feel to you to be Jesus' bride? How do you feel about being the bride of Christ? Why is it important that we see ourselves as the bride of Christ?
- Why did John attempt to worship this angel (19:10)? How does the angel respond? What does the following phrase mean: *“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy?”*
- How is the *“the great supper of God”* a terrible counterpart to *“the marriage supper of the Lamb”*?