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WHEN WE ALL GET TO HEAVEN
(What Heaven Will Be Like)

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION
NUMBER 38
REVELATION 21 and 22

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These are not difficult chapters. They present to us a picture of the future. Possibly we should say in the outset that it is impossible to put into words an accurate description of Heaven. Heaven is so far beyond our fondest imagination that words cannot adequately describe what it will be.

Revelation 21:1-8 - "THE ETERNAL STATE"

When you get into eternity, there is just little you can say. It just isn't in our vocabulary to describe it.

Possibly we should call this "The new Replacement". The universe in which we now live is going to be completely destroyed and replaced. We read of this in 2 Peter 3 and in Isaiah. We have three heavens and three earths described in the Bible.

1. The first Heaven and earth is described in Genesis 1:1 and 2 Peter 3:5.
2. The restored earth is described in Genesis 1 and 2 Peter 3:7. (The story in Genesis 1 is not a story of creation but rather a story of restoration.)
3. The new heaven and the new earth as described in Rev. 21 and 2 Peter 3:10. The expanse of this is so fantastic no one can begin to imagine how wonderful it will be. It says, "No more sea". The sea is necessary for human life. In this is involved the law of evaporation and from this comes food and water. But in the new universe there will be no sun and therefore no sea will be needed. Christ will be the light and each resurrected body will have light. The Jerusalem of eternity is described in Revelation 21:9 and 22:5. It is a city 1500 miles square. It is suspended above the earth with 216 foot walls.

REVELATION 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." "Coming down from" means that God is the ultimate source of this city.

1. It is headquarters for the universe of eternity. It will be the personal residence of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. It fulfills a promise God made to Abraham. God told Abraham, "I'll provide a city. You won't have to build one".

HEBREWS 11:9-11 "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised." Abraham was a very wealthy man yet he chose to live in a tent. Abraham died in a tent. But the city God is to give him was worth waiting for. This is one of the greatest evidences of Abraham's faith. It is very dangerous to live in a tent, and his protection was not the tent walls, but the promises of God.

3. The holy city illustrates the glory of eternity. The word "Prepared as a bride" is in the perfect tense and it means prepared in the past and it will abide forever.

Now in verses 3-5 we will see three characteristics of the eternal state
REVELATION 21:3 "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." "Behold, the Tabernacle of God" does not refer to the Tabernacle in the Old Testament you have studied. This refers to Jesus Christ himself. Jesus will be in his glory in eternity. Jesus dwelt in the Tabernacle in the wilderness but here he is the tabernacle. "He will dwell with them."

REVELATION 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." There will be perfect happiness in this eternal state. We may be unhappy here, but we will be perfectly happy there. No death, no sorrow, no crying, no pain. All these things are removed from us forever.

REVELATION 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." Heaven will always be new. We have all experienced the thrill of a new car and the feeling of newness and cleanliness. It even smells new. Heaven will be perpetually new. Faithful and true simply emphasizes the idea that God is going to keep his promise to us.

Now in verses 6 and 7 we see the Eternal State of the Believer.

REVELATION 21:6 "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." "It is done" is perfect tense and means "It has come to pass". The Alpha and Omega here refers to the "Eternity" of Christ. These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet and this means Christ is first and last, he is the beginning and the end. The one who is athirst is the one who is on positive signals and is willing to believe in Christ.

REVELATION 21:7 "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." "He that overcometh" is the one who believes in Jesus Christ. 1 John 5:4-5
 The relationship we have with Christ in time is carried over into eternity. Just one decision you make in time carries over into all eternity. This is made possible by the grace of God.

REVELATION 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." This is a description of the unbeliever. Please notice here that we have six characteristics of the unbeliever--

- a. Abominable, b. Murderers, c. Whoremongers, d. Sorcerers,
- e. Idolaters, f. Liars

These are the unbelievers in eternity. They will have their allotment in the lake of fire and this is the second death. This verse is one of the best descriptions of eternity in the Bible.

This next section, Rev. 21:9 through 22:5 gives a description of The New Jerusalem. This is a glamorous description. This is not the Jerusalem of the Millennium. This is the Jerusalem of Eternity. We have a description of the Millennial Jerusalem in Zechariah 2 and Ezekiel 40-48.

The Millennial Jerusalem has natural light.
 The new Jerusalem has spiritual light.
 The Millennial Jerusalem has no walls.
 The new Jerusalem will have walls over 200 feet tall.
 The Millennial Jerusalem will have animal sacrifices.
 The new Jerusalem will have no animal sacrifices.
 The Millennial Jerusalem has living water coming out of the Temple.
 The new Jerusalem has water coming out of the throne.
 The Millennial Jerusalem will have some unsaved in it.
 The new Jerusalem will have only saved people.
 The Millennial Jerusalem has trees for food.
 The new Jerusalem has the tree of life.

So we have two different cities.

This city comes as a completed package. When God gives something it is always perfect. He gave us a perfect Saviour and he will give us a perfect Heaven. The new Jerusalem will be completed, not built brick by brick. One moment it isn't there and the next moment you see it, in its completed form.

REVELATION 21:9-10 "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" This is a high vantage point so John could see the completed Holy City. Please notice that the city is a square.

REVELATION 21:11 "Having the glory of God and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" God made this city and it reflects his glory. Jasper stone is a perfect diamond.

REVELATION 21:12-14 "And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." This city has a wall and twelve gates. Three gates on each side. The twelve foundations are named for the twelve apostles. Judas is not one of them. Paul is the twelfth apostle. (Just personally speaking, I'd like to go in the Paul gate.)

REVELATION 21:15-17 "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of man, that is, of the angel." This city is foursquare. It is 1500 miles long and 1500 miles wide.

REVELATION 21:18 "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass." Here is the list of the materials out of which the city was constructed. Jasper stands for diamond. It is translucent, a beautiful white blue. Pure gold means perfect gold without any substitute.

REVELATION 21:19 "And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald" The foundation is of diamond. The sapphire is a translucent blue. The chalcedony is a turquoise and is greenish blue. The emerald, a bright green transparent stone.

REVELATION 21:20 "The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chryso-prasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst."

The sardonyx is a beautiful white stone.

The sardius is a ruby and is one of the stones worn in the breastplate of the high priest. It was mined near Sardis.

The chrysolite, a green or yellow silicate.

The beryl is a beautiful green stone.

The topaz is yellow-blue in color.

The chryso-prasus is a bright green stone.

The jacinth is orange or brown in color.

The amethyst is a purple stone.

So these are the foundation stones and you can see from their description that the foundation will be beautiful beyond imagination.

REVELATION 21:21 "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." The gates are made of pearl, each gate one pearl. And the streets were made of transparent gold.

REVELATION 21:22 "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." When Christ is present there is no need for a special temple for worship. Being with Christ is enough.

REVELATION 21:23 "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The glory of God will be light enough. God's own composition is light.

Now in verses 24-27 we have a description of the inhabitants of the city.

REVELATION 21:24-27 "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Notice that even in heaven the nations are mentioned.

Only born-again individuals will be there.

Nations are mentioned because this is a memorial to the grace of God in saving the human race. No fallen angels or unbelievers will be there.

At the end of time the Book of Life is called the Lamb's Book of Life, for in that book are the names of believers only.

Chapter 22

REVELATION 22:1-2 "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Here are symbols of eternal life. These two verses simply state the principles on which eternal life stands.

REVELATION 22:3 "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him" The curse which fell on man in the Garden of Eden is over. All the curse which fell on the Jews in the five cycles of discipline has been removed.

REVELATION 22:4 "And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads." Believers are identified with God for all eternity. At last the old sin nature is gone, human good is gone, and our resurrection bodies are marked with God's perfection.

REVELATION 22:5 "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever." All through the Bible God is associated with light. Darkness is gone forever. Believers will rule and reign with Christ forever.

REVELATION 22:6 "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." The essence of God demands that God keep his word. God does keep his word and every promise he has ever made is at last fulfilled. "Shortly be done" covers a few thousand years, but that is a short time in the eyes of God and in the light of eternity.

REVELATION 22:7 "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." This is a blessing especially for Tribulational believers. God's movements are always on schedule and with suddenness.

REVELATION 22:8-9 "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." John says that this outline of world history is true. John, overcome by the majesty of this revelation, fell down to worship the angel messenger. The angel said, "Don't do it. I am thy fellowservant." This angel is just a messenger and we are to worship God, never the messenger. The angel simply says to John, "I'm a member of the team. Don't worship me, worship God."

REVELATION 22:10 "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." This is a point on the availability of the Scriptures. "Seal not" means that this is an open book. It is an open book to be understood by believers. John was so overcome he was about to seal the book up. So many preachers and

commentaries say that this book cannot be understood. But that is not true. The very name of the book is "Unveiling". This is not a nebulous book, it is not obtrusive. So we are here commanded to stay with Bible doctrine and not give our time to social reform and do-good programs. All the dry cleaning by congress can't do it. It takes regeneration to do the job. We can improve this world only through Bible doctrine.

REVELATION 22:11 "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." This really means "Punch that clock, for the time is at hand". God's great stop watch has here been punched and time has come to an end. This is the time for the division of mankind. He that is unrighteous--these are those who by their free will have rejected Christ. He that is filthy --this means the polluted ones--and we are not to try to force them into the Kingdom. This is in the imperative and is a command to us. He that is righteous--means those that are born-again and they will always be born-again. He that is holy--and this refers to the Spirit filled life.

REVELATION 22:12 "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." This refers to the suddenness with which the Second Advent will take place.

REVELATION 22:13 "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." The one who is coming is none other than Jesus Christ.

REVELATION 22:14 "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Doing the will of God here is presented in terms of being born-again and believing in all the words God has spoken.

REVELATION 22:15 "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." This is a color photograph of unbelievers, and the word "dogs" refers to those who follow their old sin nature.

REVELATION 22:16 "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Here John was commanded to go back to the churches and preach this revelation message. We haven't heard of the churches since chapter 5. Notice that Jesus is both root and branch. The root means that Jesus Christ is God. The branch means that Jesus is also humanity. The bright star against a dark background means that Christ is bright against the darkness of history.

And now--an invitation.

REVELATION 22:17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The Holy Spirit has to make the message clear. The Bride is the church at the point of the Rapture. The church in heaven, raptured, says "Come". This is an invitation to the people in the Tribulation to believe. The Tribulation saints say "Come". "Him that is athirst" refers to the ones who have gone on positive signals at the point of God-consciousness.

"Whosoever will" refers to those who have positive volition at the point of Gospel hearing.

REVELATION 22:18-19 A Warning "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Here is a warning for those who tamper with the Word of God. There have been attacks on the Word of God in all ages, and the worst attack will come during the Tribulation. God will add the judgments of the Tribulation to those who dare tamper with the Word of God. "Take away his part out of the book of life" is a figure to show that people cannot be born-again and deny the Word of God. In order to do the will of God, one must obey the Word of God.

Both of these words "if" are third class conditions and it means either you will or you will not do this. Let us all say with trustful hearts again today, "O Lord, help me to be true to this perfect and holy record of divine revelation".

REVELATION 22:20 "He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Here is the final announcement of the Second Coming of Christ. It will take place with suddenness. And John said, "I believe it".

REVELATION 22:21 "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." And this great book of God's revelation ends on the basis of God's divine plan--GRACE.

We are saved by grace.

We become spiritual by grace.

We are to attain Heaven not by merit but by grace.