*Introduction*

Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Israel has every right to have it as its capital and also every right to the land that they possess, and if we take what God said to Abraham, they should have a land three times their size.

Jerusalem is not often out of the news. It has become just like the Bible states:
***ZEC 12:2-3 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.***

Jerusalem has always been an important city. It was on the site of this city that Abraham offered Isaac to God but saw the ram stuck in the brambles, it is also believed that this very place was the place where Jesus died upon the cross.

It is the city that housed the Temple wherein God dwelt.

It is the city that David made the place for his throne

It is the city that three religions claim as their holy place (Judaism, Christianity and Islam).

It is the city where the third temple is yet to be built.

It is the city that the Messiah will come to – through the Golden gate which at this time is bricked up.

It is also the City that Christ will reign from for a 1000 years (Rev 20:9).

 It is this city that will be replaced, when Christ as King defeats for the final time, Satan and his armies and casts them into hell for ever, and there is a new heaven and a new earth and a new Jerusalem.

As we look at this New Jerusalem as written about in Revelation, you may be one who thinks that because it is part of Revelation that it is not real, but part of the spiritual picture language used by John, it was just a vision.

You may be one who thinks that it is real but it is a long way off and you are not going to get excited about it just yet.

In one respect you are right in thinking its along way off, well Biblically it is a minimum of 1007years away. But the event that ushers in what we see before us this morning is very close.

The next prophetic event in God’s calendar is the Rapture of the church, by the church I mean those who have been born again by the Spirit of God through believing in Jesus death on the cross for their sin and who have repented of their sin and turned to him as Saviour and Lord.

Following the rapture comes the tribulation and following that comes the 1000year rule of Christ and then comes the New Heavens and Earth and the New Jerusalem.

What does God want us to know this morning about the New Jerusalem?

1. God is returning to dwell with man.
2. No sinful thing will enter this new creation.
3. You have to have your name in the book to enter.
4. *God is returning to dwell with man.*

God has always wanted to dwell with man. We actually see that fulfilled for the first time in the history of the Israelites in the wilderness where God dwelt in the Tabernacle. Then He dwelt with them in the Temple, but due to their disobedience He left the Temple and did not dwell with them again.

But even this is not the first time that God has dwelt with man. Back in Genesis we read:

***GE 3:8-9 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"***

When God made His creation and finished it He said it was “VERY GOOD”. But He did not then just leave, never to be seen again. He had a relationship with Adam and Eve. He walked in the garden, He had a relationship with them both.

When the Lord calls “where are you?” it would suggest that He wanted to see them, and find out what they had been doing in the garden.

But on this occasion things had changed. Adam and Eve had sinned, they had disobeyed what God had told them not to do. They had eaten of the fruit of the tree. They had been conned by Satan.

They had died spiritually.

They were put out of the garden and out of the presence of God.

From that moment on the Earth was under a curse and has been groaning under the weight of it ever since. Man has been rebellious against God down the ages, to the point that God destroyed them through the flood. Now man has got so rebellious that it has got to the times of ‘Noah’ and of ‘Lot’ once again. Man’s rebellion knows no bounds it seems.

***LK 17:26-30 "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.***

But in Revelation we see a return to that dwelling -

***REV 21:3-4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."***

But at the end of this age as we know it, when we see the new heaven and the new earth formed, we will see the New Jerusalem and it will be the place where God is.

1. *No sinful thing will enter this new creation*

Unlike Genesis and the garden of Eden, this New Jerusalem, and in fact the entire new creation, sin will not enter.

In the beginning God gave man the free will to choose to be obedient. God wanted man to go His way, but gave each of us the free will to decide.

Throughout the ages man has decided either to follow Him and walk his way or to continue in disobedience like Adam and Eve.

***27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful,***

Everything that was sinful will be gone and back in v8 we see a little more as to what those shameful and deceitful things are:

***8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."***

No, everything in this new City of God is absolute purity.

***11-14 It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.***

Look what is featured here, this City is so pure that it shines with the glory of God.

What does the Scripture say elsewhere about this:

***EX 34:29 When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD.***

***MT 17:1-3 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.***

***REV 1:16 His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.***

The second thing we notice is that this city is built upon God’s people Israel, with it naming the twelve tribes, and also the Church, naming the Apostles. The picture of this great City shows us that it has been built upon the Church through Christ, but the entrance to the City is through Israel, from whom Jesus came.

Israel has not been replaced by the Church and the Church has not become Israel.

This makes sense when we consider that we have been grafted in to the root that is Israel:

***RO 11:17-18 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.***

Paul goes on to say:

***RO 11:25-26 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved,***

This New Jerusalem with its walls of exquisite stones and Pearl gates, has streets of pure gold, so pure it was like transparent glass.

What a place!

1. *You have to have your name in the book to enter*

***27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.***

Here is the crux of the matter, the really important issue.

You may have looked at the list of people who are shameful and deceitful, the murderers, the vile, the ones who practice magic and easily say “Well, I am not one of them”.

But is your name written in the Lamb’s book of life?

The ONLY way to have your name in the Lamb’s book of life is to trust in the Lamb.

The Lamb is Jesus Christ, He is the only Son of God, He alone is without sin and was good enough to pay the price that had to be paid for sin.

Jesus took our sin upon himself when he was nailed to that cross, where he died an agonising death instead of us. We deserved to die, but he took your place and my place.

Believing that Jesus is the Son of God and that he died for your sins, repenting of your sin and turning to him in faith is the only way to have your name in the Lamb’s book of life.

*Conclusion*

The New Jerusalem is the culmination of the bride of Christ and the bridegroom coming together forever.

This is the place that Jesus spoke of in John when he said:

***JOHN14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.***

This place has been prepared especially for those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life. It will be the union of the bride and the bridegroom for eternity. J Sidlow Baxter, a great Scottish preacher once put this union in these words:

*How sublimely wonderful is this relationship between the heavenly Bridegroom and that queen city of the new earth! How rapturously it lights up the indissoluble bond that binds the people of Christ to their Lord and Saviour! The Lamb is the Bridegroom and His people are the bride, so it is a loving union. The Lamb is both the temple and the object of his people’s worship, so it is an adoring union. The lamb is the luminary or eradiating glory light, so it is a transfiguring union. The Lamb is the portal and ‘nothing that defileth’ can ever gain access, so it is a holy union. The Lamb is the life and we live in his life for ever, so it is a life-renewing union. The Lamb is the King and His people reign with him for ever, so it is a royal union.*

There is a day coming, it could be any day now, when the trumpet will sound and the dead in Christ will rise to be with Christ in the clouds. We whose names are in the Lamb’s book of life will follow in the twinkling of an eye.

If that trumpet were to sound at this moment, would you be raptured or left behind?

It does not matter how well known you are in this world, or what wealth you have. It does not matter what position you hold in the Church or that you come every week, if you have never asked Jesus into your life as Lord and Saviour, repenting of your sin and asking Him for forgiveness, there is no place in the New Jerusalem for you.

Let us just bow in the presence of God in an attitude of prayer. Search your heart and ask yourself “Is my name written in the Lamb’s book of life”. “ Do I know Jesus as my Lord and Saviour?”

If the answer is no, then ask him into your life now, repent of your sin and ask him to forgive you and come into your life.

Tell someone.

Amen.