

# Walk With Him

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[ 0 : 00 ] Lord, as you speak to us, may we be receptive to what you have to say. May these words be not my words, but yours.

! Your words that bring healing and change. Not my words, not my thoughts, but yours, Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen.

This is an amazing book. Or rather, it's a library, it's a collection of books. It's at least 40 different authors. It was written in three different languages, Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek.

All of this is amazing that it's all gathered together in this, not very big volume, I know that I'm up there, it's a lot bigger.

But it's just so amazing that over such a long time, this has come to be what we know as the Bible.

[ 1 : 11 ] But even more impressive than how it came to be written and the people that wrote it, is the story that it tells.

It's an epic story of God and his creation. It deals with his blessing. It deals with temptation. It deals with sin and it deals with exile.

And it deals with salvation and restoration. And we know, because we look with hindsight, that every single bit of it points to Jesus.

They didn't know at the time when they were writing it, they thought that there was other things in mind. They thought God was talking about something else. But we know that it was about Jesus.

But as a book, it has a beginning. It says, in the beginning God created. But how will this epic tale, this epic story end?

[ 2 : 23 ] And we've heard from my reading just how it's going to end. This whole book of Revelation, it's full of symbolism.

It's very difficult for our modern minds to unpick what John was experiencing. That there are things that we can take from it that help us have a hope for the future.

It certainly doesn't give us all the answers about how things will end up. It doesn't give us all the answers about what this new creation and the new heavens and the new earth are going to look like.

And I think that's probably not a bad thing. Because it's the scope for God to be God and not tied down by our understanding and our interpretation.

God didn't grant John these visions to satisfy our curiosity. God didn't grant John these visions to satisfy our humanity.

[ 4 : 06 ] that Jesus was raised from the dead. We look at it and we see how broken it is at the moment. But this isn't how it's going to end up.

The whole earth will be recreated. If you like, going back to the very beginning. Going back to that Garden of Eden situation. where God called things into being and said it was good.

It was very good. This is an amazing place. Everything will be made new.

And death will be no more. It will be replaced with life, everlasting life. Amazing. And in the Old Testament and in the times that this was written, there was a need for a temple because that was where God had his dwelling place.

But in the new creation, the new Jerusalem, there is no need for a temple because God's presence is everywhere. God is everywhere in his new creation.

[ 5 : 28 ] It is all the holy of holies. And it isn't just for one nation or one group of people. Every nation is going to be blessed through the power of Jesus' resurrection.

I remember when I was a new Christian, various people were coming up with explanations for what was going on in Revelation and how it timetabled when we were to look for Jesus' return.

And they produced timelines and charts and all sorts of things. That's not what Revelation was written for. It's not a code for us to decipher.

Nor is it there to say, this is exactly what's going to happen the moment we die. But it is there to bring us home.

It's also there to give us something of a challenge. It was there to, if you remember at the start of Revelation, there was seven churches named.

[ 6 : 39 ] They were all going through a time of persecution and difficulty. This was written to encourage them. But it has a timeless quality. It comes to us down the centuries as an encouragement.

That promise that Jesus, who loved us and died for this world, will not let evil triumph.

Evil will not continually go unchecked. One day, Jesus will return to remove evil for good. And his world will be made new, including his people.

I find that an amazing promise. An amazing motivation to be faithful to the Lord.

See, when God makes promises, and this is a promise, he'll keep it. He'll keep this promise. God keeping his promises isn't something that is new.

[ 7 : 51 ] He kept his promise in sending Jesus. And he keeps his promises ever since. I don't know whether your insurance policy has an old for new, a new for old clause.

You've broken something, you've lost it, you've had it stolen, and they replaced it with a brand new thing. That's a little bit like what's happening at the end.

God's plan for that broken old creation, which, thanks to man's sin, that which we call the fall, is now under God's curse.

And it's going to be replaced. The old broken is going to be replaced by a new heaven and a new earth. And in this new creation, there is no sin or any consequences of sin.

It's a place of unimaginable beauty. We just get little glimpses of what it's like. It's like a bride beautifully dressed.

[ 9 : 08 ] There's talk of gold and like this lovely life. Streets paved with gold. Just amazing. I know we live with somewhere that's really beautiful.

But the beauty that we experience here in this place is only a foretaste of what the beauty of heaven is going to be like. That beauty of that place where God reigns.

It's a place of abundance. Even the thirsting can drink from the river of life. It's a place where we live in God's presence.

Another foretaste of what we experience. We experience another foretaste now. Paul writes to the church in Corinth, for we now to be the only reflection as in a mirror.

Then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part. Then I shall know fully even as I am fully known.

[ 10 : 18 ] So yet we can look around and what we've got is a dim reflection reflection of that new creation.

In that new heaven and earth we'll be able to experience God fully. We can experience him partially now.

We know he gives us the Holy Spirit. That's us experiencing God. But then it's going to be face to face. face. John writes to one of the churches that he was in contact with.

Dear friends, now we are children of God and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we will know that when Christ appears, we should all be like him for we shall see him as he is.

We shall be transformed transformed. We shall be transformed like him. Jesus in his resurrection body was the same but different to the person that his friends and the disciples had walked with for 30 years.

[ 11 : 43 ] We know he was different because they didn't recognize him on the road to Emmaus. but we also know that he had a body because he ate fish with them.

And so we too will be granted resurrection bodies, bodies fit for this new creation. And if you want to know more about what a resurrection body looks like, or potentially, read 1 Corinthians 15.

It's a body that won't die, it won't sin, no longer feels pain, and no longer is subject to suffering. That's a real hope to look forward to.

See, the fall has affected every part of life on earth. It has no effect on the new creation.

Truly a place free from sin's impact and influence. Jesus has sold with that. In dying and rising again, that has been put away.

[ 13 : 02 ] That's been done with. And if we were to read again from the passage in verses 4 and 5, we'll see there's lots of things that are done away with.

There's no more crying. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more that pain of loss, of mourning or crying, the old order of things.

will have passed away. That's amazing. And an amazing promise. It's all about God giving a second chance, planning for a second chance for his creation.

life. And we have in our reading this final restoration, this new creation, and we long for it and we hope for it and we eagerly anticipate it.

We don't have to wait until these end times to start, to begin to enjoy kingdom life. love. I've put in my notes, if we messed up, I think when would perhaps be a better word.

[ 14 : 29 ] When we messed up, when we've done things we shouldn't, we know the gospel, speaks of forgiveness, of restoration, and renewal now.

God is a God of second chances. You don't have to read far in the Bible to come up with examples.

I think two of the most outstanding examples of God giving second chances is David and Peter. David, who was commended for having a heart after God, was as a young man, so faithful, he penned the psalms for us, or many of them.

And yet David, when he sees this beautiful woman out on her rooftop terrace, that's that for her.

Causes that husband to be killed in battle, and has a child with her. God would have thought anybody in that position, well, condemned, without cause.

[ 15 : 53 ] But, God is a God of restoration. David repents, and God gives him a second chance, a second chance of being a kid, a second chance of being a husband, a second chance of being a father.

And Peter, Peter who you look up to, was such a pillar of the early church. And yet, during his time with Jesus, he'd said and done so many crass things, that at one point Jesus had even turned around and said, get behind me, Satan.

And on that night when Jesus was sitting down and having that last meal with his friends, Peter promises to never leave him. He would never let the Lord down.

And yet, we know he did. He denied him three times. Peter is restored and given a second chance.

If you like to count of the three denials, Peter is restored and given a second chance. You know, there's so many other people in the Bible who've benefited from a second chance.

[ 17 : 36 ] And when they're different, God gives us a second and a third and a fourth and however many chances we need to walk with him.

The new creation is the culmination of God's gift of a second chance. It's God's second chance of the whole of creation.

But as a place where sinners are forgiven, God's kingdom, kingdom life, starts here and now.

It starts as we find well loved by God. Well, there's not so much that Jesus gave up his life for us.

And that is how we know we have forgiveness. Because Jesus lived, died, and was resurrected to bring us that forgiveness.

[ 18 : 42 ] He gives us a chance to start afresh. a clean page on which we can begin again. God promises a place in his kingdom for all his children.

And he asks us to go on following his command to love one another, to forgive one another in the same way that he forgives us.

God will pray that in the Lord's prayer in a few moments. He calls us to go forward, not on our own, not in our own strength, but to go forward with him.

It's not always going to be easy, but we have that shining prize of the new creation to hope for and look forward to.

too. So despite the difficulties, it's well, well worth it. Amen. . Thank you.