



## EPILOGUE

**O**ur own individual human journeys, from birth to death and beyond, are played out on the stage of God's great divine drama. He plans to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:10).

God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world. He predestined us to be adopted as his children and granted us redemption and the forgiveness of our sins. And he made known to us the mystery of his will (Ephesians 1:3–9). He has not left us in darkness. The Bible unfolds his purposes and intentions.

The Old Testament looks forward to the coming of Jesus Christ who will save fallen human beings. The New Testament reveals him in all his fullness. Jesus completes and fulfils Old Testament law, prophecy and sacrifice, and through his death and resurrection on our behalf, and in our place, he secures our rescue and reconciles us with each other and with himself.

As our Lord and Saviour, Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Man, washes us clean and fills us with his Spirit to enable us to do his will.

He calls us to follow in his footsteps as he builds his kingdom and ushers in a new heaven and new earth where pain, sickness and sin have no place, where he is in all and over all, and where everything is in perfect harmony.

As we await that grand coming together of all things we walk together on our human journey. As human beings, the crown of God's creation and made in his image – representative, spiritual, moral, immortal, relational and creative – we are made for his glory

and praise. As fallen flawed masterpieces, being refashioned in his likeness, we await our final destiny, the redemption of our bodies to be like that of the resurrected Christ.

Through the earliest stages of our existence we are shaped and carried in our mothers' wombs, to enter the wider world of the earth – from fertilisation, through implantation and development to the first breath of air – we follow Christ who was once like us an embryo and a fetus.

He gives us the capacity to form friendships and close bonds with one another as a pale reflection of his own existence in the fellowship of the trinity. He urges us to go forth and multiply, to reproduce and fill the earth.

He outlines the purpose, pattern and practice of marriage, to be treasured and honoured and to point to his own union with his body the church. And he solemnly warns us of the consequences of tampering with it.

He knows that we are mortal, that our days are numbered – through the ageing process and through injury, disease and death – and he teaches us to focus on eternity while being good stewards of our earthly bodies, which we are to treat as sacred temples for him to live in himself.

He reveals to us truth through his word to help us order our lives – fashioning us as body, soul and spirit in an indivisible whole and teaching us how to think and act to maximise life's bounties through its uncertainties and irregularities, while looking beyond them all to an eternal life with him that is utterly secure.

He teaches us to value our lives as the precious gifts they are, to obey his commands and to face death with courage and hope, not in fear and despair. And he provides us with knowledge, skills and enquiring minds, to think his thoughts after him, to understand the world in which we have been placed and to develop technologies in his

character and purpose to tend for his created order and to serve one another.

Then he expands our vision to encompass the world, to preach his gospel, to be his instruments of healing, deliverance and justice as he establishes his kingdom and defeats his enemies – from Jerusalem, to all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. He calls us to make disciples who will love and serve him and live with him forever.

In tracing this human journey we have touched on eight great themes and begun to ask some foundational questions. Our aim has been to establish principles for understanding, thinking and acting in God's world to his glory. This has been but a brief skim across the surface, but my dream is that it might help us to plumb the depths of God's word and world more deeply as we seek to bring the Bible, health and healthcare together.

I hope that you have enjoyed the short journey through this book and that you can also make use of the accompanying videos, study guide and web resources to go further and to take others with you.

I pray that they will play a small part in helping us together as God's people to glorify Jesus Christ, the first and the last, the beginning and the end, fully God and fully man, our Saviour and Lord in whose image we were made.

To him be all the glory. Amen.





## GLOSSARY

**Assisted suicide:** Helping someone else to kill themselves (suicide). This is illegal in UK law. In recent years more than 100 people from the UK have travelled abroad to the Dignitas clinic in Switzerland to end their lives. No one has been prosecuted for helping them get there.

**Biotechnology:** The use of living systems and organisms to develop or make products deemed to be useful, or 'any technological application that uses biological systems, living organisms or derivatives thereof, to make or modify products or processes for specific use' (UN Convention on Biological Diversity, Article 2).

**Body Mass Index:** A measure to determine if someone is a healthy weight for their height. It is calculated by dividing an adult's weight (in kilograms) by the square of their height (in metres). So  $BMI = \text{kg}/\text{m}^2$ . BMI can also be calculated by multiplying a person's weight (in pounds) by 705, then dividing by height (in inches) twice. A BMI over 30 is considered obese.

**Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT):** A talking therapy used to help people change thoughts, feelings and behaviours that are causing them problems. It doesn't remove people's problems, but better equips them to cope.

**Cohabitation:** Where two unmarried people (a man and woman) live together and have a sexual relationship or live as though married.

**Conception:** Where a man's sperm meets and fuses with woman's mature egg (fertilisation). At the moment of fertilisation, a baby's genetic make-up is complete. The fertilised egg will then travel down the Fallopian tube and attach to the wall of the uterus (implantation).

**Depression:** A mental illness or mood disorder which makes people feel sad and pessimistic. Symptoms include low mood, feelings of hopelessness, low self-esteem, lethargy and sleep problems.

**Embryo:** The developing baby from the moment an egg and sperm fuse until eight weeks gestation in the womb.

**Euthanasia:** Intentionally ending the life of someone (usually when they are very ill or in pain) with the aim of relieving their suffering. They may or may not wish to die. Although some people campaign for the right to euthanasia, it remains illegal in the UK and most countries.

**Fertilisation:** Where a sperm meets and fuses with a mature egg.

**Fetus:** The developing baby in the womb from eight weeks to birth.

**Gamete intra Fallopian transfer (GIFT):** A tool of assisted reproductive technology where eggs are removed from a woman's ovaries, and placed in one of the Fallopian tubes along with the man's sperm, to enable fertilisation to take place inside the woman's uterus. The procedure is estimated to have a 25–30% success rate.

**Gradualism:** The view that an embryo develops into a person slowly over time, rather than at a decisive moment. The opposing view holds that the embryo is a person from the moment of fertilisation.

**High income countries:** Countries with a gross national income (GNI) of \$12,616 per person or more (eg Germany, France, United States of America, United Kingdom).

**Infanticide:** Infant homicide – the intentional killing of children under the age of twelve months. This is illegal in the UK according to the Infanticide Act 1938.

**Implantation:** See conception (above).

**In vitro fertilisation (IVF):** A process by which an egg is fertilised by sperm outside the body (in a laboratory). It involves stimulating a woman's egg production then removing the eggs from her ovaries and letting them be fertilised by male sperm. Usually a number of embryos are created, and a maximum of two are implanted while the rest are frozen or destroyed.

**Low income countries:** Countries with a gross national income (GNI) of \$1,035 per person or less (eg Afghanistan, Uganda, Cambodia, Zimbabwe).

**Obesity:** The condition of being very overweight, usually defined as having a Body Mass Index (BMI) in excess of 30.

**Palliative care:** Specialised medical care for people with serious illnesses, with the aim of making the end of their life as comfortable as possible.

**Polygamy:** The practice or custom of having a marriage with two or more partners. When a man is married to more than one wife at a time, the relationship is called polygyny; and when a woman is married to more than one husband at a time, it is called polyandry.

**Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD):** Genetic profiling of embryos produced using IVF before they are implanted in the womb. This is used to identify embryos with hereditary conditions such as Down's syndrome, Huntington's disease or cystic fibrosis.

**Psychiatry:** The medical specialty that deals specifically with disorders of the mind.

**Quickening:** When a baby can be felt kicking and moving by the mother.

**Reductionism:** A philosophical position which seeks to hold that a complex system is nothing but the sum of its parts. With regard to humans this is often expressed in phrases such as 'humans are

nothing but highly evolved primates' or 'humans are nothing but a bunch of chemicals running round in a bag'.

**Stem Cells:** Simple, unspecialised cells with the potential to become any other cell in the human body.

**Speciesism:** A term used by some animal rights activists arguing that privileging one species over another (eg assigning greater value to humans over animals) is a prejudice similar to racism or sexism. Advocates argue that membership of the human species carries no particular moral significance.

**Surrogacy:** An arrangement where a woman carries and gives birth to a baby for a couple who are unable to conceive or carry a child themselves.

**Taxonomy:** A field of science that involves the description, identification, naming and classification of living organisms.

**10:40 Window:** The rectangular area between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator (encompassing Saharan and Northern Africa, and almost all of Asia). The window is home to the majority of the world's unevangelised countries.

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