



God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth

G.K. Beale , Mitchell Kim

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Preaching's 2014 Best Books for Preachers 2014 Best Missions-Oriented Biblical Study, from Byron Borger, Hearts and Minds Bookstore Just like we do today, the writers and chief actors of the Old Testament felt a deep longing for the presence of God. It is symbolized in the temple ruins, and before it the temple itself, and before that the ark of the covenant and the tabernacle that housed it, and before that the Garden of Eden. In response to this longing, God shares his ultimate mission, in which his people play a part: the expansion of Eden, the temple of God's presence, to all peoples throughout the earth. The temple has always been a source of rich scholarship and theological reflection, but what does it mean for the church's ongoing mission in the world? G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim take temple theology off the bookshelf and bring it to our modern-day life, where the church is instructed and exhorted in its purpose. From Eden to the new Jerusalem, we are God's temple on the earth in our day, the firstfruits of the new creation. God has always desired to dwell among us; now the church must follow its missional call to extend the borders of God's kingdom and take his presence to the ends of the earth.

God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth Details

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From Reader Review God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth for online ebook

Corey says

Basically a more concise and non-academic version of his book, "The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God." Only in this version he's got a co-author who happened to preach a series of sermons based on Beale's first book. For that reason this book has more pastoral sensibilities that not only make my head spin, but my heart sing. I love the chapter towards the end explaining why the argument of this book is overlooked. And it's true, not many students of Scripture understand that the very first temple was not the ancient building in Jerusalem, nor was it the tabernacle that migrated along with the Israelites in their wilderness wanderings. Rather, the first temple was the Garden of Eden. Adam was the first priest. And his mission was to extend the borders of this garden-temple to the ends of the earth, bringing the glory and presence of God right along with its expansion. Though he failed, as did the Israelites themselves, Jesus as the last Adam and true and better Israel is also the cornerstone of a new temple (which is the church). And this temple is expanding to the ends of the earth as the nations are brought to faith in Christ. When the time has come, the new heavens and the new earth are the long awaited eschatological temple as the presence of God fills the entire earth and evil is eradicated forever. What a rewarding read.

Paul says

Good stuff.

I think the introduction & conclusions could have been minimized or avoided altogether.

Bob says

Summary: A study of the theology of the Eden-temple of creation as an expression of God's purpose to have a dwelling place with humanity and the development of this theme throughout scripture, under-girding the mission of the church.

Good biblical theology works up from the data of particular books of scripture to develop themes that run through the whole of scripture. It helps us both hear the testimony of particular writers to a particular time, and the harmony of witness through time, and calls us to join the chorus with the worship and service of our lives. This book is good biblical theology that does all of these things.

The book arises from Mitchell Kim's pastoral ministry, particularly a seven week sermon series based on the work of G.K. Beale in *The Temple and the Church's Mission* in the *New Studies in Biblical Theology* series. Kim, with Beale's co-authorship, expand this series into a survey of this theme suitable for an adult lay audience. They begin with the idea of the garden of Eden as God's dwelling place with his image-bearers, and his intention that they would expand Eden to fill the whole earth through their offspring. Although the fall of the first couple means this purpose to extend the Eden-temple to the whole earth could not be fulfilled in the way God originally intended, we see this working out in the patriarchs with Noah once again being

fruitful and multiplying after the flood, God dispersing the nations at Babel and the promise to Abraham and the response of Abraham and later Jacob in building altars throughout Canaan as types of "sanctuaries" as God begins to make a great nation.

After the deliverance of the nation from slavery in Egypt, God establishes a "tabernacle" in the wilderness, which Kim and Beale call the Eden dwelling place "remixed in the context of sin." There is both the Holy of Holies, and provision for sin by which the people of God may approach and live in God's Holy presence. The tabernacle, and the later temple image the cosmic temple, and the restoration of the temple, the future temple that will fill the earth.

The second Jerusalem temple never fulfills these purposes in itself, which only the coming of Jesus does; the temple that will be destroyed and raised up, signalling the coming of God's new creation extending to the nations. This is accomplished in and through the church, the body of Christ and the temple of his Spirit, extending the new Eden-creation to the ends of the earth, even as it looks for the consummation of this purpose in the return of Jesus, establishing the new heavens and the new earth.

The penultimate chapter asks the telling question, "Why Haven't I Seen This Before?" The authors cite four reasons. One is that very different cosmology of the biblical writers from our naturalistic cosmos disconnected from any spiritual realities. Second is that rarely is the Bible treated as a unity, a canonical whole. We look at particular books but rarely at the witness of the whole (and some who do only emphasize the discontinuities). Third is that we are unfamiliar with the use of typology. Finally, we think of "literal" fulfillment only in physical terms, when in scripture, the "true" temple is the heavenly one of which the earthly temple is only a shadow.

The final chapter returns to the idea of the mission of the church as those through whom the new creation Eden-temple is being extended to the ends of the earth. This is a call to sacrifice, and to ministry empowered by the word of God and prayer. It was here, even as I found myself saying "Amen" to these foundational aspects of the church's life and witness, that I also found myself struggling with the very "spiritual" feel that seemed to ignore how the church's social witness and care for creation also herald the coming Eden-temple of the new creation, portrayed in Revelation as a garden-city.

Aside from this quibble, I appreciated this book as a model of the kind of teaching that can, and I think, ought to be done in the setting of the church that helps people grasp the Big Story of which we are a part, and how we in fact have a part in advancing the plot that is life-affirming and embracing. Such teaching is rich fare that fuels both worship and work in a way that the "fast food" diets of many of our churches cannot sustain, as many of our most vibrant churches are learning.

Bob Hayton says

Christians who love the Bible, should love biblical theology. More than any other discipline, biblical theology has the power to take the student on an exciting journey into the overall meaning of the biblical text. Early on in my study of biblical theology, I was told about the transformative power of one particular book and one particular biblical theme. That book was "The Temple and the Church's Mission" by G.K. Beale (IVP). Eventually I read through that book and now agree with all the praise that was heaped upon it.

Beale's work on the temple, showing how that theme is developed from Eden all the way to the New Jerusalem, can be truly transformative. Beale is not the only scholar to uncover this biblical theme, but his

book perhaps more than any other, has advanced our understanding of all that is meant by God's pledge to dwell with man in a visible temple.

The one drawback to Beale's earlier title was that it was quite difficult to work through. Beale is exhaustive in his treatment of primary and secondary literature. He builds cases for each of the NT allusions he finds to OT passages. He interacts with the second temple Judaistic writings in his effort to understand what the people of the Bible's day would have thought when they heard various images and themes about the temple. All of that reads more like a theological tome than a helpful and practical book for church use.

Finally, Beale has updated his original book and simplified it. Many thanks are due Mitchell Kim, a pastor who has used Beale's material and also developed his own on the same theological topic. Together (and with the help of IVP) they have created a readable, shorter version of Beale's original title, and even advanced beyond that book with more fully developed application of this theme for practical church ministry.

This new work, "God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth" by G.K. Beale and Mitchell Kim (IVP), is going to be my go-to book to give people interested in biblical theology. It applies biblical theology for the church and will be useful for lay teachers, pastors and Bible students everywhere.

"God Dwells Among Us" is well written, clear and concise. It provides numerous applications, and takes the time to show how the interpreters arrive at their conclusions. The book does not directly take on dispensationalism, but does explain certain assumptions which may provide a reason as to why many modern Christians have not seen the full nature of the temple theme as applicable to Church today. This volume also doesn't tackle all the questions posed in the bigger work. It doesn't directly deal with Ezekiel's temple all that much, and it doesn't major on ancient cosmology as a way of understanding the Eden = Temple image. You will have to get the larger work for those questions.

The book includes a helpful discussion on typology and is much more fully developed, pastorally, than the older work. I appreciate too, that the punchline and the take-home application, are not saved for the end, but over and over throughout the book applications are made to the NT understanding of the OT teaching on the Temple and how this applies to us today.

I highly recommend this book. This is a must read theology book for everyone!

Disclaimer: This book was provided by InterVarsity Press. The reviewer was under no obligation to offer a positive review.

E says

Of the several "interpretive keys" popular in Biblical studies today (covenant, law/gospel, etc.), the concept of temple is one of my favorites. However, this book doesn't handle the topic nearly as well as it could have. It's a mess editorially, for instance. It doesn't help that it is an adaptation of a much longer work by Beale on the same subject. The work is very uneven. At times it reads like a scholarly look; at other times, like a junior-high youth group lesson. For that I blame the co-author, who was brought in ostensibly to "popularize" the earlier book. His applications stick out like a sore thumb.

It's a shame, for the basic outline takes you through the Biblical text quite well. Eden was the original temple, and Adam was supposed to expand that temple as far as possible. Despite the fall, this task was not

lost. The patriarchs did what they could to expand that worship in the promised land. The tabernacle picks up many of those Edenic themes, as did Solomon's temple. Despite sin and exile, the prophets speak often of a great temple being rebuilt for the nations. This is to be understood through the person of Jesus, the second Adam, who picks up his work and begins the process of completing what Adam failed to do. He builds a church, the new temple, in which his people are to serve as priests. We look forward to Eden completely expanded in the new heavens and new earth, where the entire universe will be the paradisaical temple/dwelling place of the Lord.

Mathew says

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God Dwells Among Us exemplified biblical study in service of every day mission. Beale and Kim state upfront, "The goal of this book is to strengthen biblical conviction for sacrificial mission" (14). In this regard, this book succeeds on all fronts. They argue further,

"Mission does not begin with the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20, but mission is God's heartbeat from Genesis 1 until the new heaven and earth become the dwelling place of the Lord God Almighty in Revelation 21-22" (16).

They accomplish this by first laying the foundation for this claim. That foundation begins with an understanding of the Garden as a temple and with Adam and Eve as missionary agents tasked with expanding and multiplying image-bearers into the entire world.

Read the entire review

Rhys says

The content (essentially Beale's, from a larger work) is good, and this may serve as a decent expansion for someone who's already been introduced to these themes.

However, the book suffers from a few things running backwards.

Backwards from Sermon to Book

It's a challenge simply to read the prose, as the book is largely adapted from Kim's sermons on Beale's longer work. You can tell when a book is rejigged from sermon transcripts - lack of flow, oddly placed application. This suffers hugely from that. It doesn't make the content easily accessible, quite the opposite.

Backwards from Temple to Eden, Rather than Eden to Temple

In spite of the book's subtitle, and beginning in Genesis 1-2, Beale and Kim largely use the temple as their main point of reference, and work back to Eden. This is an easier route to take, as readers are more likely familiar with the details, layout etc. of the temple, but it underserves the theme, and gives the temple a primacy which is strange. We should learn primarily to let the temple remind us of Eden, not vice versa. God did not design Eden to be like a temple; he designed the temple to be like Eden.

Nate H says

This is the book that convinced me of Amillennialism. The idea of the goal of God through redemption and recreation to bring the temple of God back into the creation blew my mind. So grateful for this book.

Greg says

One of the most edifying and soul-enriching theology books I have read

Matt Galyon | readsandcoffee says

This was a helpful and short number on seeing the connection between temple, church, and mission. What I found to be the best feature of this book was the way the material was presented at an accessible level. While full of theological insight and data, I would be happy to recommend it to someone outside of the academy.

Tom says

From a Biblical Theology perspective, showing the motif of the Garden throughout Scripture, this book is excellent. The authors make connections between Eden, the tabernacle, the temple, and the church, between Adam, the priests, Jesus, and believers. In making these connections, we see God's plan for His world. Even so, they miss the opportunity to proclaim the victorious nature of the Kingdom. In proclaiming how the gardens and tabernacle were meant to encompass the world, they don't make that connections to the Kingdom. It's not that they don't see this connect, it seems they are trying to purposefully avoid it. For example, in explaining the measuring of the temple in Revelation, they avoid the more obvious interpretation of the passage, that John was to consider the actual temple, still standing when he wrote Revelation. Instead they allegorize the passage without any textual cause. Also, I was hoping for more "therefore" directions on how we are to carry out the expansive of Eden. The last chapter does give some direction, but also as an add on.

Patrick S. says

This book brought so much joy and understanding to me. What this book does is bring an understanding of the Garden and the Temple at the beginning, middle, and end of history and ties it with the correct understanding of biblical typologies and allusions. This isn't "spiritualizing" the topic but the case presented lays out a clear understanding that these things tie together. I can't say enough about this book. As far as application, I found myself using what I learned from the theology to then have a better understanding of the greater role I have as a Christian in God's world. The theology presented isn't hard to understand but this was drinking from a fire hose for me where I had to stop and look up and think. This - THIS - is what I want from my theology books. I came to a greater understanding of who God is, who Jesus Christ is, the role of God in

history is, and my role as a believer looking to the end times. This book needs to be read by Christians. Final Grade - A+

Bret James Stewart says

God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth by G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim focuses upon and explains temple theology and its impact on the missionary aspect of the church to the world. This review examines and evaluates the biblical theology of the text and the hermeneutical approach used. In addition, the contribution of my personal understanding of the Bible and the relationship between the Old and New Testaments and the applicability of this to ministry by the book will be explored.

Theology and Hermeneutics

As mentioned previously, the book is concerned with identifying and explaining temple theology and how it relates to the missional activity of God's people. Mankind is intended to abide in the glory of the Lord and exhibit and expand this presence to the entire world. From Eden forward to the New Creation, we see God planning for and promoting this concept. Had mankind not fallen into sin, this project of expansion might have filled the earth from the nexus point of the garden of Eden with its sanctuaries and wherein God literally walked, providing His presence in a spiritual and physical manner. Due to the sin of Adam and Eve, the garden-temple complex of Eden was forfeited as a result of the fall. Now, man had lost the beginning point of the mission to the world. Fortunately for us, this is not the end of the story as God does not allow His plan to be thwarted. The Lord continued to court the patriarchs and the later Israelites, allowing them to have the motifs of the tabernacle and temple as sanctuaries demonstrating God's presence and providing a means of expanding God's glory and presence in a limited way then the edenic temple-complex. In the New Testament, this presence is transferred from the temple to the personage of Jesus Christ and, later, the church as the community of saints. After the Second Coming, the heavens and earth will be renewed, and this new glorious creation is filled with God's presence, finally bringing to culmination the plan He had in Eden.

How does God's mission impact the missional activity of the church? Since we all are priest-kings in the earth, we are, individually and corporately, to sacrifice ourselves to the mission to be holy and knowledgeable of scripture. God's Word, the Scriptures as He has provided them to us, has power. This power is to save and expand God's glory among believers and non-believers. It must, however, be expanded by rightly understanding and communicating the truth therein. Obedience and faithfulness to God involves a proper hermeneutic (more on this below) and expository preaching of the Word. Prayer is a characteristic of the saved, and the church should bathe itself in prayer for the lost to be reached and the Word to be properly understood. The church, if it does all these things, can spread the presence to God to the four corners of the world. God's presence will ultimately spread to the entire cosmos after the heavens and earth are renewed in the New Creation.

The proper hermeneutic is an important part of preaching and teaching. Expository preaching, recommended by the authors, involves the historical-grammatical approach to hermeneutics. This is also the approach they seem to be using in the book. They take into account the original languages and context throughout. They also use a canonical approach, keeping the entire biblical canon in view and its corresponding aspect of progressive revelation. The historical-grammatical hermeneutic is the most conservative method, and I believe it is the correct default method for hermeneutics as the Bible itself demonstrates these in its own corpus. I agree with the authors, and I use the same hermeneutical approach for my own Bible study and exposition.

Personal Understanding and Applicability

I was vaguely familiar with temple theology before reading this book. Thus, there was not much that was new to me in the text other than the focus upon Eden as a temple-sanctuary complex from which the believer's role was to expand to the ends of the earth. In other words, I have previously viewed Eden as a microcosm of perfection from which mankind fell, but I had never before considered it to be the nexus from which God's presence would fill the earth. The charge to expand Eden is new to me, and this understanding greatly enhances my appreciation of what Eden actually was (a temple sanctuary) and the charge given to Adam to expand it rather than the more localized view I had held that Adam and Eve would "keep the garden" with no view toward expanding it in the way the authors use the expression. This results in a radically different view of the pre-Fall world in that, rather than a "hold your ground" sort of approach wherein mankind was segregated from the world to a vitally mission-centered approach of witnessing to all the world in order to expand God's presence to the earth in its entirety. The cosmos can only be filled by God's volition in the New Creation, so mankind has no role in this aspect of God's plan.

The authors also do a good job in explaining the canonical approach to the topic, and they show how the temple theology flows from the Old to the New Testament and back again. I knew this before, but this book provided a strong refresher for me and served to increase my belief in the temple theology as a biblical theology and its importance.

The practical application of the book's message is clear. As agents of the almighty God, we should emulate Him and promote His plan at all times. Expanding His presence to all the world is our goal. This is to be done by properly acting as priest-kings during the church age. This role involves witnessing effectively to others through our own lifestyle. We are to be holy and obedient to the Word. We are to rightly divide the Word through expository preaching and the proper historical-grammatical hermeneutic. We are to pray for the lost. When we do these things, we are walking with God and can expect Him to bless us and promote His plan through us. Thus, the ultimate focus of the book is missional. This missionary mindset is appropriate and necessary to be faithful to the Lord as well as to work toward His goal of expansion to the world and heavens.

Conclusion

Overall, I am pleased with the work that Beale and Kim have done. I feel they have adequately explained temple theology so that the Christian can understand that God's goal has remained consistent through the ages: He had always meant for humankind to participate in the expansion of His presence throughout the entire earth. We can share in His glory and goodness by willingly and properly adhering to and promoting His plan for the cosmos revealed in the original Eden and in the pending New Creation whereby His glory will finally be unlimited in its presence and purity. This wonderful goal the Lord has set for us provides us with clarity of vision as well as motivation to complete the task He has set before us.

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in temple theology and, especially, how this theology relates to Christian missions. It is also of interest to the general Christian audience, as well, due to our charge to rightly divide the Scriptures. No legitimate view or explication of Scripture is in vain, so I endorse this volume to all Christians.

Ricky Garcia says

This was truly a great book! This book helps us to trace God's redemptive plan for His church from Genesis (Eden) to Revelation (New Heavens/Earth). The connections identified between Christ, the temple and each individual church member was particularly fascinating. This book also helps us to understand the overarching goal of scripture more clearly. Finally, this book helps us to see the importance and urgency of missions as God works out His eschatological plan to dwell among us. This has easily been my favorite book of 2017. I know the year is young but this book will be hard to beat!

David says

There are some really eye-opening concepts in here about how the temple of God tells the story of scripture. Beale and Kim argue for Eden being essentially a garden-temple whose workers were commissioned to expand its borders throughout the earth. After the fall, God chooses to dwell in a tabernacle (tent) and then a physical temple, both of which are designed to model the universe - a picture of the fact that God means ultimately to fill the whole earth with his presence. The conclusion, of course, is Jesus, who is God dwelling fully in the temple of a human body, and the church, in whom the Spirit of God also dwells, all of it culminating in the picture in Revelation of heaven coming down to earth and God filling everything with his presence.

A good book, but the writing gets repetitive.
