

## Review

*God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth*  
 G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim  
 Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014

Reviewed By Mark R. Kreitzer, DMiss, PhD  
 Assistant Professor of Christian Mission  
 Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, Arizona  
 Published in [www.GlobalMissiology.org](http://www.GlobalMissiology.org) January 2017

This very thought provoking book opens up for laymen the biblical theology of the Temple as God's dwelling place with man from its beginning in the Garden to its completion and fulfillment in a new heavens and earth. However, as I will point out later, this doesn't mean I agree with every detail that Professor Greg Beale, PhD and Pastor Mitchell Kim, PhD attempt to establish. This volume came out of a sermon series by Dr. Mitchell Kim that sought to popularize and apply the deep biblical theology of Greg Beale's *The Temple and Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (IVP, 2004).<sup>1</sup> It substantiates the awesome insights that a principle-based, type-fulfillment interpretation of the Temple can bring to biblical theology of mission. It clearly demonstrates that the main story line of Scripture is toward the healing and restoration of a "very good" creation, now broken and cursed because of human rebellion. Grace does not seek to escape from creation but to restore and renew creation, as Isaiah with its echoes in Paul, Peter, and John's writings, state (see Is 65:17, 66:22; 1 Cor 5:17; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:5).

The original walled garden, Beale and Kim thoroughly demonstrate, was a representative, typological palace-temple for God's presence. Adam's sin resulted God's ban upon him and all his relations from entering into the holiest place from which the fountain of water arose and the tree of life, representing life, wisdom and healing, stood. The banishment from the presence of God, his water and tree of life, however, will be completely restored in a step by step process through the redemption of Jesus. Beale and Kim show that the typological temples begin first

---

<sup>1</sup>G. K. Beale. 2004. *The Temple and Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP.

with the Garden-temple, move to tents of worship set up by the patriarchs, which lead to the moveable tabernacle build by Moses, and then on to the two permanent Temples of Israel. Each is replaced by the next until the presence of God in Christ by the Spirit comes to fulfill all the pictures of the OT temples. The final consummation Temple is the renewed heavens and earth in which the resurrected Christ as the God-with-us (Immanuel) dwells with His people

Christ, then, is the Temple of God, and he, sent out by his Father, sends us out in turn to fill the whole earth with Temple glory, worship and praise, coming from both ethical actions and words. Certainly, then, the final, complete restoration will only come when Jesus, scion of David's house, comes as the ever living High Priest-King (and Prophet) in the order of Melchizedek. He will gradually re-make the whole earth into the Palace-Garden-City of the Lord until he presents the total heaven and earth, with all enemies including death conquered, to his Father. Then the Father in the Son by the Spirit will be all in all.

Eden is a place of God's presence, and the place of God presence is a place of worship. The expansion of Eden, therefore, is an expansion of worship. Worip fuels mission in Eden—bearers of the image of God reflect his presence in worship and are propelled forward in their mission to “fill the earth” with the reflections of God's glory (Gen 1:28). Worship is in fact te goal of mission in Eden, filling the earth by multiplying image bearers in the temple of God's presence who would worship and reflect God's glory to the ends of the earth. Indeed, John Piper rightly reminds us the “worship is the fuel and goal of missions.” (29)

In summary, Beale and Kim demonstrate how Jesus is now expanding the Garden palace-temple, which was on a mountain from which four rivers flow to water the whole earth, into a palace-temple-mountain that fills the whole earth (Is 11:9, 56:7-8, 57:13, 65:11). The authors state simply that “the temple has expanded to fill the new heavens and earth. The mission of God's dwelling place is now completed, and God's purposes for Eden are accomplished in the new heavens and the new earth” (144). This divine purpose, they continue, is “not realized through passive observation but sacrificial prayer and bold witness. The vision of Revelation 21-22 reshapes our hope for God's purposes in the world as we see the dwelling place of God expanded to fill the entire cosmos.” In effect, then, these chapters in the Apocalypse demonstrate the fulfillment of the commission God gave in Genesis 1-2 “to fill the earth with images and representations of God” (145).

In other words, instead of the pessimistic, escape-vision of classic Amillennialism – what D. Bock calls “the spiritual vision model” on eschatology – Beale and Kim seek a wholistic vision for the creation (Blaising 1999, 161-162).<sup>2</sup> We are not meant to escape the physical earth into heaven, but to restore this earth with the Gospel. Beale and Kim’s biblically optimistic amillennial/idealist vision seeks to restore the expectation of growth for the Kingdom with this understanding of the expansion of the King’s palace-temple into every corner of the universe. In this sense, this volume and Beale’s original volume upon which it is based, helps restore a definite missional expectation (the real meaning of **εὐλπί, j**, *elpis*-hope) to the world Christian movement. It was this hope that the severely over-optimistic, historicist version of classic post-millennialism carried with them around the globe. Such giants of the faith such as Jonathan Edwards, William Carey, and the first wave of British and American missionaries held to it as Iain Murray’s, *The Puritan Hope*, documents.<sup>3</sup>

### **Strengths and Weaknesses:**

This leads me first to mention a weakness or two before I conclude. First, as I see it, both Beale and Kim neglect the provenance of Revelation because they reject an early date during the Neronian suffering as Gentry and many others have shown so conclusively (Gentry 2013).<sup>4</sup> Beale and Kim’s volume, in my opinion, would have been even more powerful if it had embraced a preterist interpretation of the Apocalypse instead of the author’s exclusive new creational idealism. Their view, certainly, is light-years ahead of the classic Platonic idealizing scholarship of, for example, William Hendricksen<sup>5</sup> and perhaps Kim Riddelbarger (though he is more biblically balanced).<sup>6</sup> However, their insights could be very much improved by creedal-oriented Preterists such as N.T. Wright and R.T. France<sup>7</sup> among Greek scholars and two-stage, creedal

---

<sup>2</sup>Craig A. Blaising, 1999. Premillennialism. in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, ed. Darrell L. Bock, 155-227. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

<sup>3</sup>Iain Murray. 2014. *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy*. Edinburgh, UK: Banner of Truth. See also, James A. De Jong . 2006. *As the Waters Cover the Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions 1640-1810*. Laurel, MS: Audubon.

<sup>4</sup>Kenneth L. Gentry. 2010. *Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation*. Fountain Inn, SC: Victorious Hope.

<sup>5</sup>William Hendriksen. 1998. *More Than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Baker.

<sup>6</sup>Kim Riddlebarger, 2003. *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker.

<sup>7</sup>R. T. France . 2002. *The Gospel of Mark* (The New International Greek Testament Commentary) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, and R. T. France. 2007. *The Gospel of Matthew* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Preterists such as J.M. Kik and Kenneth Gentry.<sup>8</sup> The reason is that the Lord directly addresses the biblical theology of the Temple of God in the Olivet Discourse though Kim and Beale neglect it in their exposition. The questions the disciples ask in all three of the synoptic gospels address the issue of when the physical Temple will be destroyed as the Lord's foresees: "[Jesus] said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down'" (Mt 24:2; see Lk 21:6; Mk 13:2). One can see the very close parallels in these three Gospels in the second appendix of R.C. Sproul's book, *The Last Days according to Jesus: When Did Jesus Say He Would Return?*<sup>9</sup> In 70 AD, the Lord commanded his armies to destroy the Temple as Daniel also prophesied in Daniel 9. From then on to the end of the age, the stone carved out without hands will grow into a mountain, which will fill the whole earth (Dan 2:44) – most likely a reference to Mount Zion above, who is our mother (Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22; see Beale and Kim 2014, 71).

Hence the measuring of the Temple in chapter 11 is best seen as measuring the Second Temple before its destruction as Beale and Kim mention and then reject: "Revelation 11:1-2 seems to refer to an earthly temple structure, but closer examination suggests that this temple refers to the people of God" that is the people of God in the new covenant (123). It is true that the physical, Second Temple did refer (secondarily) to the people of God. However, it primarily refers to the old covenant, pre-resurrection people of Israel, as many before Gentry acknowledge. Instead, primarily Revelation 11's external Temple, and well as the first Solomonic Temple and the Tabernacle before that, referenced and typified the True Israel (see Heb 9-10), who is Jesus the Anointed King of the dynasty of David (see, e.g., Gentry 2010, chapter 11, "The Contemporary Integrity of the Temple"). Here is how Gentry describes the situation in a manner, at least in this respect, Beale and Kim would agree with:

---

<sup>8</sup>Kik is not nearly as consistent as Gentry (Kenneth Gentry. 2011. *The Olivet Discourse Made Easy: You Can Understand Jesus' Great Prophetic Discourse*. Draper, VA: NiceneCouncil). By "two-stage, creedal Preterists" I mean those who teach that the Olivet Discourse deals with two main questions: 1) When will the Temple be destroyed, and 2) when will the "end of the age" occur. Jesus answers the first of the questions in Matthew 23:36 to 24:34 (an inclusio demonstrating that the destruction will occur "in that generation" – exactly 40 years later, a Hebrew generation – in 70 AD). After this, our Lord then moves to the second question concerning the "end of the age" when the present heavens and earth will pass away in the cleansing – but not annihilating – judgment of fire (see Mt 24:34-36). From that verse to the end of Matthew 25, the Lord repeatedly discusses the "day" and "hour" as the literary marker showing the unity of the pericope. His purpose was to show that signs will attend his "coming" against Jerusalem, but that no one knows except the Father when the end of the age will come, in other words the Second Coming and the final judgment of humanity.

<sup>9</sup>R.C. Sproul, 2015. *The Last Days according to Jesus: When Did Jesus Say He Would Return?* Grand Rapids: Baker.

The measuring of the Temple is for the preservation of its innermost aspects, i.e., the *naos*, *j*, altar, and worshippers within (Rev 11:1). This seems to refer to the inner-spiritual idea of the Temple in the New Covenant era that supercedes [*sic*] the material Temple of the Old Covenant era. Thus, while judgment is about to be brought upon Israel, Jerusalem, and the literal Temple complex, this prophecy speaks also of the preservation of God's new Temple, the Church ... that had its birth in and and was originally headquartered at Jerusalem ... . Notice that after the holocaust, the altar is seen in heaven (Rev 11:18), whence Christ's kingdom originates (John 18:36; Heb. 1:3) and where Christian have their citizenship (Eph 2:6; Col. 3:1, 2). (Gentry 2010, 174)

This implies further that the external court of the Temple of Revelation 11 is not the same Temple as the fulfillment Temple revealed in Revelation 21:15-17, something that Beale and Kim assert but which preterists deny. However, both many Preterists and our two authors agree that the Temple of Revelation 21 and the internal *naos*-temple of Revelation 11 are clearly the new covenant people of God. Why is this distinction significant? The Preterist interpretation of the book of Revelation preserves much of the original provenance and milieu of the internal evidence (Gentry 2010).

The description of the Temple in Revelation 11 (and the new covenant in Christ, which it prefigured) was that of a building soon to be destroyed, as the author of Hebrews directly imply: "He has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear" (Heb 8:13). Beale and Kim here miss a key passage emphasizing the redemptive-historical movement into the age of majority that occurred when Christ came (Gal 3:14-4:7). They also miss a key passage detailing the revelation-historical movement into the age of maturity when Christ's revelation of his finished work ended (Heb 1:1; Jude 3; and possibly 1Co 13:8-13; Eph 4:11-16). What this means is that the physical Temple representations beginning in the Garden with its the former age overlap with the age to come by forty years. This can be visualized by two overlapping equilateral triangles the top triangle with its base upward and the bottom triangle point upwards, with the twin points overlapping. The topmost triangle represents the "former days," beginning in the creation, and the bottom one, the "last days" which end in the Second Coming. The overlap represents the forty year death of the old age with its physical temples and the beginning growth of the new covenant temple in Christ, which will be consummated at the Second Coming.

Therefore, as Gentry states, “the proper understanding of the passage requires a mixture of the figurative-symbolic and the literal-historical. This is true of every interpretive approach to the passage, even the attempted literalistic hermeneutic of dispensationalism” (Gentry 2010, 174). Understanding the Temple in this manner will preserve that which is excellent about *God Dwell Among Us* but also would preserve the original provenance, temporal setting, and time indicators of the author, who perspicuously indicates that the coming of the events would be “the things which must soon take place ... for the time is near” (Rev 1:1, 3; see 22:20, et al). The Preterist perspective would then also preserve the deep biblical-theological and missiological interpretation of the meaning of “Temple” in the Olivet Discourse (and I might add 2 Thessalonians 2), the rest of which Beale and Kim mostly accurately expound.

Second, I must confess I have a bit of a struggle with Beale and Kim’s viewpoint that the physical temples symbolize a tripartite structure signifying the structure of the cosmos. In other words, (1) the outer court symbolizes the earth, (2) the holy place was emblematic of the visible heavens and its light sources; (3) The holiest place symbolizes the presence of God with his heavenly hosts in the invisible dimensions of the universe. This view seems to be based upon the perspective adopted by a archaeological reconstruction of ANE temple symbolism (see chapter 4, “Eden Remixed,” 51-64).

Biblically, however, it would seem much better first to interpret the Mosaic-Davidic tabernacle/temple using the model of the interpretation of the tabernacle in the book of Hebrews. This is standard Reformational hermeneutics: Only Scripture can interpret Scripture (WCF 1.9). In other words, Scripture teaches that the temple proper, termed the holy and the most holy places, separated by a curtain/veil, symbolizes the person of Christ and derivatively, of the body of Christ in Him as Hebrews 10:20-21 clearly states. In other words, “the people” in Christ, steadfast until the end, are the “house of God” (see 3:6, 10:21; see also 2:17, 13:12). This is established further by the vision the Lord gave to John. In the heavenly Palace-Temple that he envisioned, there is the reality-pattern, which Moses saw, (1) for the earthly “sea-laver” (Rev 4:6, 15:2), (2) for the temple/tabernacle’s candelabra in the form of “seven torches of fire” (ESV) representing the seven-fold Spirit of God and Christ (Rev 4:5, 5:6), (3) a gold altar of incense, representing the “prayers of the saints” – with Christ as the chief intercessor (Heb 7:24; Rom 8:34; Rev 8:3, 5, see, 6:9-109:13, 14:18, 16:7), and (4) a throne of God and of the Lamb, of which the earthly ark was the “footstool” (see e.g., Acts 7:49). The Ark was the “footstool” only

of the heavenly throne, Beale and Kim correctly discern (e.g., Rev 22:1, 3; see also Is 6:1; Heb 4:16, 8:1).

All of these temple furniture pieces represent the work of the Lamb, who is the holy tent/tabernacle of God among mankind as is evident, when one compares Revelation 21:3 to John 1:14: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them.” The table of bread is not mentioned directly in the heavenly temple, however, the “tree of life” is that provides food and healing for the peoples/nations. In the tabernacle/temple the candelabra-tree of shining lights (see Ex 25:31-36) is in direct juxtaposition with the table of show-bread. Could both represent “wisdom” that brings food of life, healing, and prosperity to all who eat/watch it? The Proverbs makes this connection as does John’s Revelation.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the “tree of life” and the “river of life” springing up in the Garden-Temple to give food/living drink to the whole earth (see e.g., Gen 2:6 NIV) are connected in Scripture. Both are mentioned again in the Proverbs as the fountain of life from the inner being (Prv 4:23, 10:11, 13:14, 14:27 16:22). These are again connected with the city-temple in the Psalms, Ezekiel and Revelation alongside of which grows the tree of life (cf. Ps 46:4; Joel 3:18; Zec 14:8; Eze 47:1-12). This is most likely what Jesus means when He connects food/bread and water with the wisdom of doing the Father’s will (Jn 4:10-11, 7:38; cf. Rev 7:17). He claims to be the water-bread-light of life (Jn 4:10-11, 6:35, 48; Jn 8:12, 9:5; cf. Rev 22:17). Out of the believer’s inner most temple-being, our Lord states, flows “rivers of living water” when we receive and walk in the Spirit (Jer 2:13, 17:13; Jn 7:38). Last, the river-tree-bread of life could be obliquely mentioned when the Lamb quotes Isaiah 55:1-2 in Revelation, implying that the water of life from the throne is better than any earthly bread (see e.g., Rev 7:17; 21:6; 22:1, 17). Hence there are abundant intra-biblical connections that can be made for temple symbolism without importing extra-biblical meaning to the tabernacle/temple. To do that, as I see it, is eisegesis not exegesis in the classic Reformational sense. In other words, extra-biblical research is very valuable but only to illustrate that which is clear taught in Scripture or can be deduced by necessary consequence.

By all of this I am not trying to say that Beale and Kim’s view of the temple as a representation of the cosmos doesn’t correctly depict the meaning of surrounding idolatrous temples – it has a lot of extra-biblical support. However, I do want to say that the Apostles Paul

---

<sup>10</sup>Prv 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4; see Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19.

(assuming that he and his circle wrote Hebrews) and John seem to exclusively focus upon every part of the earthly tabernacle/temple pointing to the Person and Work of Christ and His people “in Him.” The ancient tabernacle/temple and its accompanying ceremonies, festivals, and liturgies are “shadows” but Christ is the “eikōn/sōma” “image/body [that casts the shadow]” (Heb 10:1; Col 2:14). Everything points to Him, and the cosmos is merely the theater of His glory, as Calvin said, which is focused here upon this earth especially as it is renewed as a home for his bride now coming from heaven (Rev 3:12, 21:2, 9, 22:17). Hence, I am not convinced it is necessary to add the cosmos-representation view as it has little real biblical support, in my opinion, though I am still open to be biblically persuaded.<sup>11</sup>

Last, I greatly appreciate Beale and Kim’s emphasis upon connecting the Abrahamic covenant with the Adamic Cultural Mandate, building the Temple, and the fulfillment of the Great Commission (93-97). This adds to the missional optimism of the renewed, new creation emphasis found in the idealist-amillennialist movement, which is a huge step forward, in my opinion, especially since my dissertation takes a strong long-term-optimistic perspective on discipling the peoples/nations as well (see Kreitzer 2008).<sup>12</sup> Interestingly enough, Beale and Kim actually demonstrate they are much more missionally-optimistic Amillennialists than the pessimistic Amillennialism of William Hendrickson and others like him. Beale and Kim’s exegesis, ironically enough, is more like R. J. Rushdoony’s idealist-principial commentary on Daniel and Revelation,<sup>13</sup> though Rushdoony calls himself “postmillennial.”

In summary, then, Beale and Kim brilliantly point out that the old covenant Scripture is a picture book revelation and includes picture-book prophesies. The so-called “ceremonial law” points to Christ and the end-time prophesies in the old covenant Scriptures point to a fulfillment in Christ and all that He brings in the eschaton starting at His miraculous, “new creational” birth. Both the law and prophets are fulfilled in and through Him beginning now (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15-

---

<sup>11</sup>My concern is that we do not make the same presupposition that John Walton of Wheaton makes: “Cultural foundations found in cosmology, ontology, and anthropology are not matters of revelation in the biblical literature. The basic defaults from the common cognitive environment are in place and generally represent the way Israelites thought. Certain modification may have come about as a result of their theology, but the foundations show little evidence of innovation.” (Walton 2006, 148). Scripture alone is sufficient to interpret Scripture not the reassembled literature of the ANE. See, John H. Walton. 2006. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

<sup>12</sup>Mark R. Kreitzer. 2008. *The Concept of Ethnicity in the Bible: A Theological Analysis*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

<sup>13</sup>R. J. Rushdoony. 2001. *Thy Kingdom Come: Studies in Daniel and Revelation*. Vallecito, CA: Ross House.



16; Eph 2:10) and ultimately consummated – non-Platonically – in a new Spiritized-yet-still-physical heaven and earth. Hence, the Christo-telic version of the OT prophecies fulfill the picture book form of the prophecies themselves. Both are “literal” because that is what the OT authors intended as inspired by the Holy Spirit. However, the Old Testament prophetic forms for many of these prophecies signify deeper realities in and through Christ than that of a literal Temple rebuilt before the hypothetical coming Anti-Christ as is propounded in popular dispensational teaching. Here again Kim and Beale are spot on though they do speculate that the temple that the Anti-Christ takes his seat in is the Church still in our future (something Preterists reject).

All in all, this is an excellent read, especially suitable for undergraduate students and beginning seminarians. Those who want to chew on the very tasty “red meat,” however, need to move on to G. K. Beale’s original template, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*.