



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

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## Becoming Children of Eden

### How did *God Dwells Among Us* come about?

**G. K. Beale:** The substance and basic thesis of the book is distilled from my earlier book, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*. More extensive argumentation from the biblical text as well as the surrounding world can be found in that original book.

**Mitchell Kim:** Then I developed the basic thesis into a seven-week sermon series preached at Living Water Alliance Church in Chicagoland and then condensed into a seminar given at different conferences.

### So one book turned into a sermon series that then became another book. What was that process like?

**Beale and Kim:** Writing and speaking are two very different mediums. Writing gives liberty to provide in-depth substantiation and explore secondary lines of support for an argument. Preaching demands a laser-like focus on communicating a single point. Adapting the considerable substance of the original temple book to preaching demanded a radical reduction in order to communicate orally. Translating the preached sermons back to a written format allowed an amplification and deepening of the preached material, while we attempted the vibrancy and focus of preaching. Some material has been lifted verbatim from the original book; most has been reworked and reworded to communicate more concisely and clearly.

### How is God's mission clear from Genesis to Revelation?

**Beale and Kim:** In the closing chapters of Revelation, the new heaven and earth (Rev 21:1) is juxtaposed against a lengthy description of the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:1–22:5). The new heaven and earth remind us of the expansive scope of the new creation, while the new Jerusalem highlights its purpose as a dwelling place for God. This picture in Revelation 21–22 fulfills the mission given in Genesis 1–2, and the progress of this mission can be traced throughout the entire Bible. In Genesis 1–2, Eden is the dwelling place of God, and God commissions Adam and Eve to expand the boundaries of that dwelling place to fill the earth (Gen 1:28).

While God's original call seemed to be thwarted by sin in Genesis 3, God continues to establish his dwelling place among the patriarchs until the construction of the tabernacle and temple. After the destruction of Solomon's temple, the prophets anticipate the coming of a new and expanding temple, and these prophecies begin to be fulfilled in Jesus and the church. The church as the dwelling place of God must expand until one day it fills the entire heaven and earth; the entire cosmos becomes the dwelling place of God. Mission does not

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**Mitchell Kim** (PhD, Wheaton) is founding and lead pastor at Living Water Alliance Church in the Chicagoland area.

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. This ultimate picture of the whole earth filled with God's presence fulfills God's original intention from the sanctuary of Eden.

**Will people be surprised by the comprehensiveness of this vision?**

**Beale and Kim:** For some, the concept of creation as the first temple in Genesis and the entire cosmos as a temple in Revelation 21:1-22:5 in particular may seem surprising. Why is that? A number of blinders can obstruct our vision of this glorious reality in Scripture. Specifically, differences in cosmology, biblical unity, history/typology and understanding "literal" fulfillment may prevent us from seeing things that are present in Scripture.

The cosmology of the Old Testament frequently viewed the cosmos as a temple, and so this view would be understandable by some original readers of the Genesis account. When we recognize the unity of the Bible, we see how later revelation shows more clearly how the original creation is like a temple. Also, the New Testament helps us see how the earthly tabernacle was the pattern and type of the end-time tabernacle, a tabernacle that was inaugurated by Jesus' death and resurrection. Finally, this view is not a spiritualizing of the text, but a literal understanding of the texts that are under discussion.

**What are your hopes for *God Dwells Among Us*?**

**Beale and Kim:** In writing this book, we see more clearly than ever that the themes of Eden, the temple, God's glorious presence, new creation, and the mission of the church are ultimately facets of the same reality. More specifically, we hope to build a bridge from the world of biblical theology to the needs of the church. The goal of this book is to strengthen biblical conviction for sacrificial mission. Compelling conviction propels us through painful sacrifice.