

Anglican practice which has spilt out to other denominations in England. The author defends the personal and physical return of Jesus as well as the reality and the importance of the coming judgement as God's setting things right. Yet for him the final judgment is not followed by eternal conscious torment. Rejecting universalism and conditionalism he opts for a theory about dehumanisation, speculating that those who reject God will become ex-humans, but he does not develop this at any length (195).

The third part of the book focuses on the meaning and significance of salvation and the resurrection. Wright argues that what we believe about 'life after death' directly affects what we believe about life before death, about the mission of the church, what we do in this world. The resurrection of Jesus and the Christian hope confirm the value of the present life. The author helpfully explains the implications of saying that salvation is more than having a relationship with Jesus and going to heaven when we die. One chapter contains specific but brief suggestions for the celebration of Easter and for worship and spirituality in general.

Throughout bishop Wright is a severe and convincing critic of our times and culture. He also shows why 'other gospels' such as Thomas and Judas should be rejected. He defends his own orthodoxy against those who disagree with him over issues such as the New Perspective on Paul. In this respect the book is quite personal, more so than one would perhaps expect. To some this will increase its accessibility. Yet it is an accessible book anyway, lively in style and full of brief illustrations. It has a mere 20 pages of endnotes and helpful indexes at the end. Church groups could use it to good effect.

Although I am enthusiastic about this book and want to recommend it warmly, some critical comments must be made. In the first place one might do so about the fact that Wright maintains his view that Jesus himself never spoke about his return, a view he expressed in previous publications. He argues that Jesus' words about the coming of the Son of Man were fulfilled in his glorification at the end of his life on earth. I remain unconvinced that this exegesis is tenable, but it hardly affects the rest of the book.

A second point of disagreement is the person of the resurrected Jesus. Much as Wright speaks out against Docetism in all its – often hidden – forms, and much as I agree, it seems that in this respect he is not radical enough. Although he believes in the Jewishness of Jesus, he never mentions that in his risen and glorified state he is still a Jew. I would argue that Jesus is not only 'in heaven' in his thoroughly embodied risen state' (122) but that he is there as a Jew. For me this point is linked with a positive expectation regarding God's faithfulness to the Jews and the future of the Jewish people, whereas Wright virtually ignores this aspect of Christian eschatology.

Finally, there is no discussion of the millennium. Given Wright's astute and just criticism of Dispensation-

alism we can guess what he would have said, but the omission takes away from the character of the book as a complete treatment of eschatology.

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*The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical
Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*

G. K. Beale

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SUMMARY

Beale offers a synthetic reading of the theme of the temple across the whole of the Bible, demonstrating its importance for the continuing mission of the Church. His methodology does not always help so readers need to exercise discernment about the strength of some of his arguments, but his central thesis still works. God's dwelling place in creation thus emerges as an important theme across the whole Bible which has important implications for how we consider mission and worship in contemporary practice.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In Erweiterung eines kurzen Exkurses in seinem Offenbarungskommentar bietet Beale hier eine synthetische Lese-weise der Tempelthematik in der gesamten Bibel und zeigt die Wichtigkeit des Themas für die laufende Mission der Kirche. Beale's Methodologie ist nicht immer hilfreich, so dass die Leser die Stärke einiger seiner Argumente kritisch prüfen müssen, aber seine Hauptthese funktioniert dennoch. Gottes Wohnstätte in der Schöpfung taucht als ein wichtiges Thema in der gesamten Bibel auf, das wichtige Implikationen im Hinblick darauf enthält, wie wir über Mission und Anbetung in der gegenwärtigen Praxis denken.

RÉSUMÉ

Développant un bref excursus de son commentaire sur l'Apocalypse, Beale présente ici une étude synthétique du thème du temple à travers toute la Bible et démontre son importance pour la mission permanente de l'Église. Sa méthodologie ne facilite pas toujours les choses et les lecteurs doivent exercer leur discernement pour évaluer la force de certains de ses arguments, mais sa thèse centrale est bien établie. La demeure de Dieu dans la création apparaît comme un thème important tout au long de la Bible, avec des implications considérables pour notre conception de la pratique contemporaine de la mission et du culte.

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Greg Beale's study of the theology of the temple across the whole of the Bible emerges out of a brief excursus

in his commentary on the book of Revelation in the *NIGTC* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). A note of three pages there has expanded into a major study of this theme, demonstrating the richness of many themes in scripture, and that our explorations of a theme at one point open up new possibilities of interpretation at others. However, although Beale's initial impetus for writing was the study of Revelation, and he introduces his study by acknowledging this, he is careful here to defer consideration of it until he has examined the theme across the whole of the Bible.

Beale's survey of texts thus begins with the Old Testament, noting the close links between the creation texts and the presentation of the sanctuary in the Tabernacle, and then more specifically in the temple itself. The survey of texts shows that creation itself in Genesis 1 is a temple to the worship of God and that the tabernacle and temple were constructed so as to represent the whole of creation. The implications of the Old Testament material are significant for the whole of Beale's argument, since he believes that the intention in creation was for Adam to bring the whole of it to worship, though this was something he failed to achieve. Israel likewise, although she established her temple, did not bring about universal worship through the Old Testament, but does anticipate a point where this will happen, especially in Ezekiel 40-48. However, because of his eschatological reading of these chapters in Ezekiel, Beale defers consideration of them until he has examined the theme of the temple in the New Testament. Here, he demonstrates that Jesus is the fulfilment of the hope of the temple, insisting that this is not a spiritualisation of the Old Testament but a literal fulfilment, arguing that a literal fulfilment does not have to be a physical one and that the nature of what is promised can continue to be literally the same even though the form might differ. From this survey of texts, Beale argues that God is bringing the whole of creation

back to the point where it is a temple to him, as seen in Revelation 21-22. Two closing chapters offer theological reflections on the whole and then some practical considerations of what this might mean for Christians today.

Although the general lines of Beale's argument seem well-founded, his approach of presenting multiple lines of argument where some can be seen as persuasive only from the perspective of the whole case does not always help. Also, although his exegesis is generally careful and thought through, some points appear forced, pushing texts in directions which are not really central to them. In a work like this it is almost inevitable that one will disagree with some points of interpretation, and I was not always convinced that Beale's eschatological reading of some texts was most appropriate, but Beale's main case could have been established without drawing in texts which by his own acknowledgement do not have any obvious point of support for his thesis. I would also like to have seen the function of the temple assessed more from the perspective of the mission of God, but of course Beale was writing before Chris Wright's seminal work on this theme. It is not that the overall thesis fails, but rather that Beale's case could have been strengthened by drawing only on those passages with a more obvious connection to his theme and then by subsequently pointing to other texts which might extend the case. As it stands, the reader cannot be sure when Beale is offering something he considers central or not. He thus runs the risk of readers rejecting the central thesis unnecessarily. Readers will thus need to exercise discernment as they read, critically weighing the texts Beale considers, but as they do so they will find themselves challenged to consider the importance of a theme which has not always received the attention that it merits.

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Randal Rauser is Assistant Professor of Historical Theology at Taylor Seminary, Edmonton, Canada.

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