



Theology of The Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy

Walter Brueggemann

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In this powerful book, Walter Brueggemann moves the discussion of Old Testament theology beyond the dominant models of Walter Eichrodt in the 1930s and Gerhard von Rad in the 1950s. Brueggemann focuses on the metaphor and imagery of the courtroom trial in order to regard the theological substance of the Old Testament as a series of claims asserted for Yahweh, the God of Israel. This provides a context that attends to pluralism in every dimension of the interpretive process and suggests links to the plurality of voices of our time.

Theology of The Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy Details

Date : Published August 27th 1997 by Augsburg Fortress Publishing (first published February 1st 1992)

ISBN : 9780800630874

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Format : Hardcover 777 pages

Genre : Religion, Theology, Christianity, Old Testament, Christian



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From Reader Review Theology of The Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy for online ebook

Minnie says

Still reading

Kory Capps says

Excellent

Hannah says

this is Good and Scholarly but fyfaen did his version of God fuck with my mind. (it's probably obvious which aspect)

Tom Beetham says

Good in the details. Not so much in putting the pieces together for the big picture.

Brad Kuhn says

Absolutely amazing read. The first couple of chapters on the history of OT interpretation are great. What connected with me most are his thoughts in chapter 28 on how Christians should approach OT theology (and how we're often doing it wrong). Not an easy read - but well, well worth the effort!

Mark Wendland says

The one book of Brueggemann's that you should read. It is a testimony that passionate and faithful scholarship does not have to buy into "inerrancy" or even the idea that the writings of the Bible are harmonizable.

Bryan Neuschwander says

I really enjoyed his approach and analysis--he seems to have taken the text seriously.

Steven Bullmer says

I'll read anything by Walter Brueggemann! While it's "textbook tough," he has such an insightful perspective on all things Old Testament

Neil White says

This is a phenomenal project for its breadth and its insight. It is at times a challenging read but well worth the effort. A great work of textual theology and a powerful reading of the scriptures for our time.

Daniel Seifert says

A book I plan to read an essay at a time with seasons to muse and integrate as I am able. Shalom! I read portions of Theo. of the OT in Seminary (03-08). So I pick this up when it comes by on the river of life.

Brueggemann OT:TDA continues to be a staple source for unraveling the various obscure texts of the Hebrew people. This Brueggemann text helps unlock the ancient practice and meaning of thus providing clarity and rich meaning for people (students, poets, prophets, pastors, counselors, sojourners, resident aliens) today.

Andy Gore says

As ever and awesome and heart, soul and mind inspiring read. Brueggemann always takes you where you never imagined him to do but such is this astonishing book we call Scripture.

Jacob Aitken says

It is always dangerous to write a theology around "a unifying theme." Still, everyone does it. Brueggemann suggests "rhetoric" as a device that evokes an alternative reality (Brueggemann 57). To quote current sociologies of religion (Charles Taylor), it is a rhetoric that challenges the world's social imaginary with a new and even more impossible one.

"At the center of Israel's imaginative enterprise are Yahweh's impossibilities (Heb. *pela'*), which regularly transform, reverse, and invert lived reality, either to the delight or dismay of other participants in the narrative" (Brueggemann 68).

Brueggemann's thesis: God lives in the text via rhetoric (66). Advocacy is seen in the witness to Yahweh's sidqoth (triumphs, righteous deeds) that defies challenge and construes a new reality (133, 135). Yahweh is characteristically the subject of the active verb (123). Causative verbs in the hiphil stem. This means Yahweh

acts in decisive, transformative ways. The active verb has a direct object, the one on whom Yahweh has acted. God binds himself to Israel, but in an asymmetrical way. Yahweh initiates and acts (125).

So far this is outstanding and we can only cheer.

Key Point: The beginning point of an “Old Testament theology is in the liturgical, public acknowledgement of a new reality wrought by Yahweh (128). Yahweh creates the world by royal utterance--speech. All ancient regimes sponsored a creation narrative. Israel’s witness about creation was heightened in Babylon. Babylon legitimated its political authority by appealing to its gods. “The effect of liturgy is to create an alternative world of ordered life, made possible by Yahweh’s powerful word and will” (153).

If such is the case, one wonders what the problem is. The problem is that Brueggemann hasn't escaped the old critical methods and the newer postmodern acids. If so, per the former, can this "uttered speech of Yahweh" be unified? Sadly, the critic says no. Per the latter, can postmodern suspicion actually stop empire? No, it can't.

Reed says

Difficult, thorough, and necessary, *Theology of the Old Testament* is Brueggemann at his finest, pulling no punches and calling it as he sees it. This is the raw and relentless account of the Old Testament that the church needs: not one that tries to make every text fit in a coherent system nor explains away inconsistencies and tensions. This is not a text for the faint of heart--battling through all 750 pages is a slug-fest--but for those who claim any sort of leadership in the Christian church, this book should be slowly digested in its entirety. It will make you uncomfortable, as the God Brueggemann sees in the Bible itself makes us uncomfortable, but it will also invite you to engage and wrestle anew with the text that testifies to a new and alternative reality.

Daniel Supimpa says

The great overture of Brueggemann's work is in his interesting structure of Testimony/Counter-testimony/Embodied testimony. B. has a particular style, owing much to the philosophical-existential tradition of theologians (compare him, for instance, to Abraham Heschel's style when writing on the prophets). I particularly like this style. For many people, this can get tiresome.

Still, it is no wonder B. became a milestone in the post-liberal approach to OT theology. He is readable, provocative in interesting points (e.g. his exploration on the questionable character of God in the lament Psalms), and hardly dull. In a couple chapters, some of his conclusions seem quite loose in face of the evidence he has just presented, and the third part runs more slowly than the first two. As Jon Levenson has already pointed out elsewhere, B. fails to convey an OT theology that is "wide" enough for both Christians and Jews. B. assumes a harsh discontinuity between canonical texts and later traditions that is hardly existent to mainstream Judaism. In this view, the only proper tradition to access the canonical text IS the early Jewish tradition (e.g. Targums, Rabbinic literature). Brueggemann insists that the texts themselves and by themselves can be accessed by different traditions without a tradition. He basically betrays his project and

builds a very protestant (and ironically, modern anti-traditional) interpretative movement.

Besides these weak points, I highly recommend the challenge of the reading. It is compelling, rhetorically well-constructed, thorough and widely engaging.

Stephen Grant says

A "paradigm-shifting" book for evangelicals that forces readers to engage the text in ways they are unaccustomed to read. A must read for people living in the liminal space between the modern and post-modern worlds.
