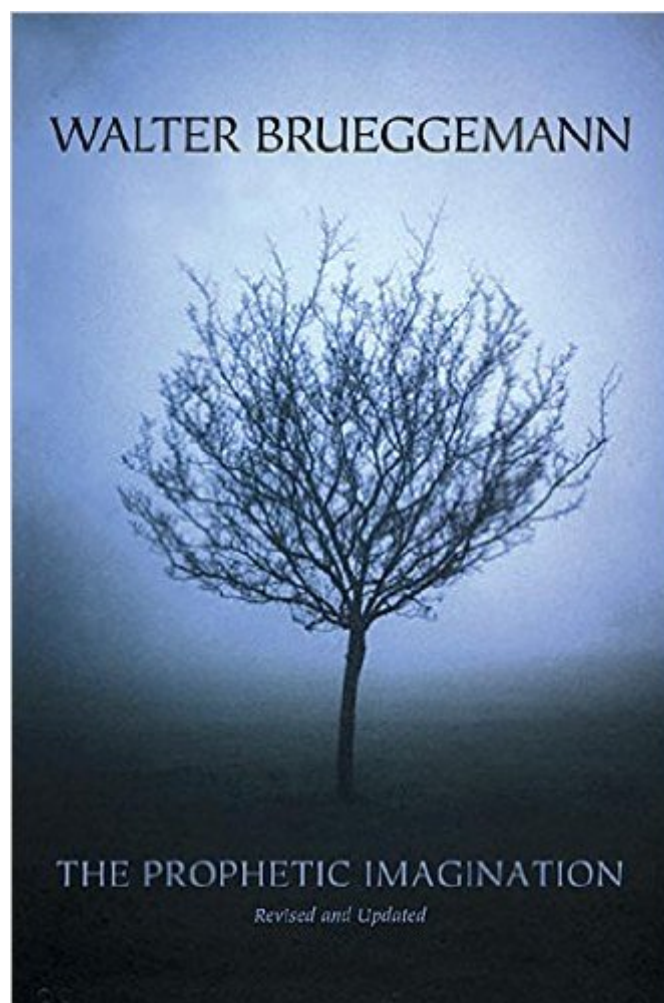


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The Prophetic Imagination, 2nd Edition



Synopsis

In this challenging and enlightening treatment, Brueggemann traces the lines from the radical vision of Moses to the solidification of royal power in Solomon to the prophetic critique of that power with a new vision of freedom in the prophets. Here he traces the broad sweep from Exodus to Kings to Jeremiah to Jesus. He highlights that the prophetic vision and not only embraces the pain of the people but creates an energy and amazement based on the new thing that God is doing. In this new edition, Brueggemann has completely revised the text, updated the notes, and added a new preface.

Book Information

Paperback: 151 pages

Publisher: FORTRESS PRESS; 2 edition (June 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0800632877

ISBN-13: 978-0800632878

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (72 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #39,065 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #29 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Criticism & Interpretation > Old Testament](#) #71 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Bible Study > Old Testament](#) #104 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Old Testament](#)

Customer Reviews

If there is one thing the world needs today, it is prophets. Not the zany kind you get in some Pentecostal and Charismatic churches where apparently the goal is to put the Psychic Hotline out of business. No, Bruggeman paints a portrait of the Biblical prophet as one who contends against the normal order of society and culture which has set itself up at the expense of the marginal, the outcast, the poor, and the weak. Bruggeman calls this "the royal consciousness" but I think we could also refer to it as "the Powers that Be" and here in the United States goes by such names as "the multinational corporation" and "politics in Washington D. C." Bruggeman argues that the prophet does not contend against such entities with arms and use of force, but with the much more powerful weapon of imagination and creativity. To make this point, he uses the examples of Moses against Pharaoh, Jeremiah against the Monarchy, and Jesus against the religion of Israel. One of the things

that so struck me about this book is that ever since I was in high school, every time I took one of those odd (and error-prone) "spiritual gift inventory" tests, I always came up with "Prophet" as my top spiritual gift. When I was a pastor, and because I didn't believe that prophets (the way I thought of them) were in use today, I interpreted this to mean that I was to proclaim or "forthtell" the Word of God, rather than foretell future events or predict the future. Bruggeman has given me a window by which to look at the world and current events through the lens of prophetic imagination. Imagining a different world. A different way of doing things. A different order.

Here is an extraordinarily valuable little book (104 pp. of text) for Christians who would like to better understand the essence of the prophetic impulse and the nature of the subsequent ministry that may be derived from it. Those with Pentecostal or Charismatic backgrounds or experiences will discover a profound spiritual resonance and a clear biblical insight in *THE PROPHETIC IMAGINATION* by Walter Brueggemann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978/1983). Brueggemann shows convincingly from the ministries of Moses, Jeremiah, and Jesus, how each man in response to either an oppressive empire (Egypt) or unjust, religious community (pre-exilic Judah and first century Israel) employs "radical criticism" to "dismantle" the dying or dead culture. Solomon's imperial rule is also examined as an example of how a "royal consciousness" may serve to subvert even the community of promise resulting in satiation and the inevitable numbness and death. Second Isaiah (Isa. 40-66) serves as the primary example of the second aspect of the prophetic task; namely, "energizing" the despairing community with hope. Brueggemann presents his thesis concerning the would-be Christian prophets' need for personal anguish, grief, and mourning as contrasted with the less painful exercise of mere anger and apathy while he ministers as God's instrument. For me it was surprising and gratifying to discover that an Old Testament professor from a mainline Protestant tradition could supply such compelling insights concerning both the tasks and the traumas of God's prophets. Not even my Pentecostal seminary professors helped me in this regard as much as this short read.

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