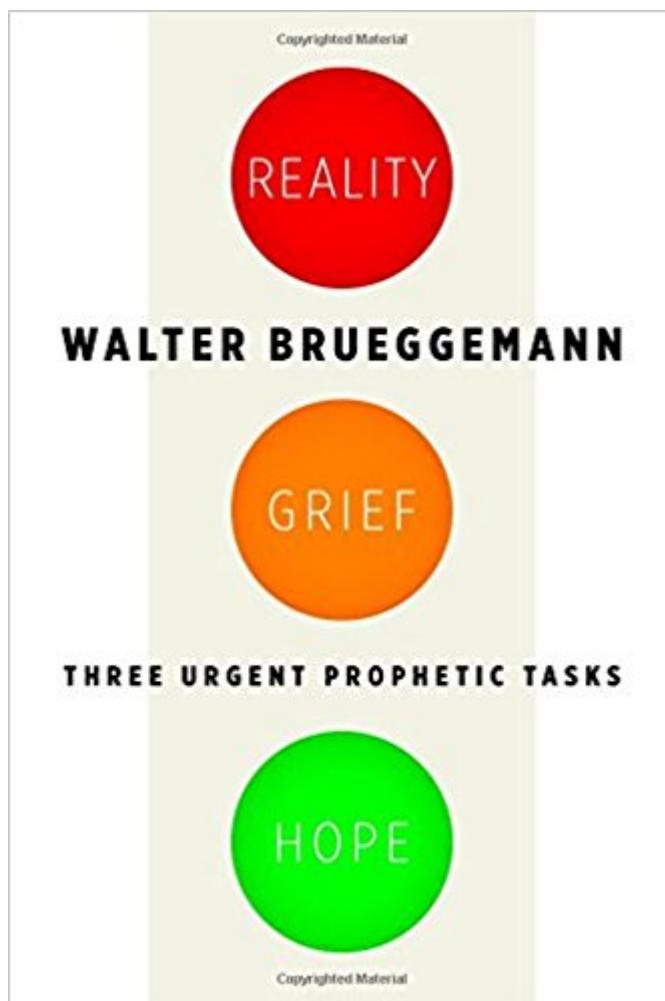


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# Reality, Grief, Hope: Three Urgent Prophetic Tasks



## Synopsis

Walter Brueggemann is one of the most highly regarded Old Testament scholars of our time; talk-show host Krista Tippett has even called him "a kind of theological rock star." In this new book Brueggemann incisively probes our society-in-crisis from the ground up. Pointing out striking correlations between the catastrophe of 9/11 and the destruction of ancient Jerusalem, Brueggemann shows how the prophetic biblical response to that crisis was truth-telling in the face of ideology, grief in the face of denial, and hope in the face of despair. He argues that the same prophetic responses are urgently required from us now if we are to escape the deathliness of denial and despair. Brueggemann's Reality, Grief, Hope boldly confronts the dominant forces of our time, taking on principalities and powers that vie for our souls, and calls the church to courageous action.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Southwestern Journal of Theology "A well-written and engaging discussion." Interpretation "The kind of poetic utterance that has resounded so powerfully from Amos to Martin Luther King, Jr. . . . It truly is a gift that teaches, cajoles, examines, and names reality in ways that make it critical reading for the church today." Shane Claiborne • author and activist "Walter Brueggemann is a legend. . . . With typical Brueggemann brilliance, here he brings the prophets of old into the contemporary world and dares us to look through their eyes. If you love Walter, you'll love this. If you've never heard of him, get ready to get hooked." Brian D. McLaren • author/speaker/activist

"For many of us, Walter Brueggemann has been a mentor from afar. We have learned to read the Bible in fresh ways because of his scholarly insight, pastoral wisdom, and prophetic imagination. *Reality, Grief, Hope* takes us from the world of the Bible to the headlines of today, opening inconvenient but desperately needed truths. . . . If you've never read Brueggemann, here is your entry point. If you've been reading him for years, this one is not to be missed."Gale A. Yee • Episcopal Divinity School "Through a carefully nuanced analogy with the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E., Brueggemann's *Reality, Grief, Hope* presents a passionate and timely exploration of the theological crises that have infected the U.S., particularly since the 9/11 attacks. . . . A splendid work of public theology!"Stanley Hauerwas • Duke Divinity School "It is one thing to call for a prophetic imagination; it is quite another matter to actually have a prophetic imagination. This book clearly shows Brueggemann to have the 'unrelenting realism' that possessed the imagination of the ancient prophets. . . . With steely-eyed observation he helps us see, amid the despair that has gripped American life since 2001, that there is hope • a hope grounded in the everyday work of the church. This is Brueggemann at his very best."Richard Horsley • University of Massachusetts, Boston "Walter Brueggemann is widely appreciated as the most insightful and compelling interpreter of the Bible as it bears on current social and religious crises. Here he discerns how the arrogant American exceptionalism of 'God's new Israel' has been powerfully informed by the biblical ideology of God's chosen people and the exceptionalism of the ancient Jerusalem elite. . . . *Reality, Grief, Hope* is timely, prophetic, and very well done."Carolyn J. Sharp • Yale Divinity School "Brueggemann's connection of Israelite royal ideology with U.S. exceptionalism is provocative and courageous. His interweaving of modern poetry and political theory with Scripture texts powerfully amplifies the countercultural exhortation of the ancient prophets: covenantal faith must be lived in mutual relationship with the poor. Brueggemann calls communities gathered around Scripture to be catalytic in their dismantling of structures of social privilege, economic exploitation, and racism. This is a compelling and urgently needed book."John Barton • Oriel College, Oxford "Challenges the churches to a prophetic task in the face of the twin ills in American exceptionalism: complacency when things go well and self-centered despair when (as after 9/11) they go badly. Brueggemann shows how the witness of the Old Testament prophets can be a resource for faithful hope that does not rest on cynical self-concern. Calling for a wider vision of society and its possible futures than the imperialistic self-assertion of an elite, this book calls for inclusion and for justice."Review of Biblical Literature "Prophetic exhortation to the church to get off its complacent duff and claim the worldview outlined by Jesus in the New

Testament. .Ã Â .Ã Â . Walter Brueggemann bravely addresses the evils of two empires, one ancient and one contemporary. He pulls no punches, does not hold back.Ã Â AndÃ Â he calls the church to stand up and claim its prophetic heritage: to proclaim the good news of the `law of Christ&#39; and to lead the way by living out the second greatest command: love your neighbor as yourself."Christian Century "Reality, Grief, HopeÃ Â unfolds as a tour through various biblical moments Ã¢â€” several prophets&#39; teaching, the Exodus, and of course the Psalms. I felt as though I were sitting next to Brueggemann as he leafed through his Bible, pointing to a phrase or two, with sidebar comments on culture, the inner soul, politics. .Ã Â .Ã Â . Brueggemann is always hopeful, and I feel hopeful when I&#39;ve finished reading him."Reviews in Religion & Theology "Walter Brueggemann&#39;s Reality, Grief, Hope is quite the book. .Ã Â .Ã Â . Brueggemann, in typical fashion, pulls no punches in his analyses. .Ã Â .Ã Â . Christians should take his views seriously so that we might acknowledge the reality of cultural brokenness so that we may have hope in restoration and healing through the church."Mennonite Brethren Herald "As one of the world&#39;s most prolific and significant Old Testament writers, Walter Brueggemann continues to do what he has done for more than four decades: read Scripture in ways that confront, convict and nurture the church. .Ã Â .Ã Â . One cannot read this book and be unmoved. In keeping with the prophetic spirit, it is intentionally provocative and calls for a response. .Ã Â .Ã Â . Offers deep and significant thoughts about Israel&#39;s prophets and our present hearing of them that deserve careful attention and uneasy wrestling in our lives together."Bible Today "Walter Brueggemann is well known as one who looks deeply into the biblical prophetic soul and finds there both the challenge and the sustenance for believers to live in the contemporary world in a prophetic way. .Ã Â .Ã Â . The reflections in this book are grounded in biblical theology, but they have the authenticity that comes from seasoned prayerful pondering."Spirit & Life "If you are willing to be challenged regarding your own ideas of AmericanÃ Â chosenness,Ã Â this book is for you."Anvil "A refreshing and challenging read. .Ã Â .Ã Â . Brueggemann&#39;s call to the contemporary church to learn from the prophets and to engage with the dominant ideologies of our day in a way that is founded upon a belief in the sovereignty of God is one that challenges all who are concerned with the church&#39;s engagement with our post-Christendom consumer society."Regent&#39;s Reviews "For Brueggemann, the prophetic practice of the church is `indispensable for the future viability of our society. It is, moreover, work that is likely to remain undone until it is undertaken by a faithful, courageous, emancipated church.&#39;Ã Â Reality, Grief, HopeÃ Â continues Brueggemann&#39;s consistent challenge to take this prophetic calling seriously."The Christian Chronicle "A counter-narrative to the dominant civil religion of our day. If readers can move past

presuppositions that the author is simply waging one more left-leaning battle in the 'culture wars,' the result will be confrontation with an unsettling claim — reality, grief and hope are the elemental truths that belong to the identity and life of the church."Theology "Respected and popular Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann has described theological crises in Ancient Israel and contemporary society, identifying three prophetic tasks pertinent for both. . . . Many commentators on this book have praised Brueggemann's exegetical analysis, honesty, straightforwardness, boldness and deft application of ancient prophetic responses to contemporary Church and society. But it's hard to move from this praise of Brueggemann's work to the bold prophetic action for which the book calls. We have a tendency to domesticate our prophets, making their messages palatable. Are we, with all our praise and admiration, ready to accept these prophetic tasks and the rejection of 'empire' that accompanies them?"The Two Cities "While not everyone will agree with the ways that Brueggemann suggests the socio-political aspect should be developed, he provokes his reader to continually be attentive to the prophetic voice of God and to be open to hear its reformation of our view of reality. . . . Reality, Grief, Hope . . . stands as a needed warning against complacency and arrogance in the light of God's ultimacy."Ministry Today "I like Brueggemann's books, so I came to this one with keen anticipation of something good, and I wasn't disappointed. As always, the author writes with engaging, highly readable clarity, great erudition, and burning passion. Brueggemann is no ivory-tower academic, but a profoundly earthy prophet. . . . Buy this book — it could give your ministry a focus and a direction which will make sense of so much of what is happening in the world, the church and your neighbourhood."

The William Marcellus McPheeers Professor emeritus of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. He is the author of numerous biblical commentaries and scholarly works, including *A Social Reading of the Old Testament*, *The Threat of Life*, *Theology of the Old Testament*, and *The Prophetic Imagination*.

Walter Brueggemann is a prophet for today! His writing is thought-provoking, well-researched, and compelling. In this particular book he makes a cogent case for US citizens to reflect on the reality of our nation and world and for US Christians to seriously contemplate the relationships between citizenship and faith.

Brueggemann's *Three Urgent Prophetic Tasks* is an extraordinarily profound and surprisingly

opportune reflexion on ancient Israel's sense of chosenness and USA's claim of exceptionalism ,which troubles the capacity to clearly see the true dimensions of reality and ,accordingly to realize the grief and hope indispensable to regain the capacity to correct one's conduct to overcome misleading types of behaviour and action.I recommend strongly its reading to whoever is interested in the challenges of the future and the mistakes of the past in order not to repeat them.CordiallyMarcÃƒÂ- lio

A book to ponder and to wonder - but one not to be laid aside until one completes the book, because it opens a huge understanding of the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures both in terms of their own setting in the history of the Jews and the gripping insights to parallels in the world of today and our own nation today. Sylvester ?Ryan

If I had my way, this book and its timely message would be required reading for every politician, banker, and member of the military who put the word Christian in the description of their beliefs. Thank you Dr Brueggemann.

I choose 5 star. I like this book very much! I find it insightful and provocative. It calls for thoughtfulness. I am still evaluating it.I would recommend it to other pastors.

A summary distillation of consistent themes Dr. Brueggeman has written in many volumes over the past. If you read one book of his, read this one!

This was a gift for someone who loves Walter Brueggemann.

Unusual prophetic insight - a must read

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