



Mixology and Theology

Michael Coffey

Week Twenty-one: Wordy by Word, and Old Testament Theology

Mixology: Word by Word

This drink is similar to another cocktail called The Last Word, which also features Yellow Chartreuse. This adaptation is based on a 2017 recipe created by Vitaliy Severinov at El Copitas, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Yellow Chartreuse is a unique herbal liqueur, dating from 1840, and is a milder and sweeter liqueur than the original Green Chartreuse (after which the color got its name). It is made from a blend of 130 plants and flowers. It has a honey sweetness, with mint, citrus, anise, and pine flavors. It is often enjoyed well-chilled and served over ice. It is expensive so you may want to find a substitute. Nothing has the same flavor profile, but some options are Strega, Benedictine, or Drambuie.

Suze is one of many brands of gentian liqueur, which has a bitter and earthy flavor with citrus and is sweet. Salers is a less expensive brand.

Word by Word

1 oz reposado tequila

2/3 oz Yellow Chartreuse liqueur

1/2 oz Suze gentian liqueur

1/2 oz lemon juice

5 fresh mint leaves

1. Place all ingredients into a shaker with ice.
2. Shake until well chilled.
3. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass (coupe, or Nick & Nora glass)
4. Garnish with fresh mint leaf

Word by Word Mocktail

5 mint leaves

3 tablespoons lemon juice

1 tablespoons simple syrup

2 tablespoons honey syrup

Water or club soda

1. Add mint leaves and lemon juice to tall glass. Muddle mint leaves.
2. Add simple syrup and honey syrup. Stir to mix well.
3. Add water or club soda and ice.
4. Garnish with lemon zest and mint.

Theology: Old Testament Theology

Introduction

Before we can discuss what Old Testament Theology is, we need to clarify what we mean by the term *Old Testament*. This term is generally a Christian way of naming, ordering, and thinking about the sacred writings of Judaism that the church inherited. The word “testament” is another form of the word “covenant.” Since Christians refer to Jesus as the source of a new (or renewed) covenant God made with the world, Christian writings about Jesus and the church are called *New Testament*, to distinguish them from the writings that came into the church from Judaism. *Old Testament* should not be viewed as a derogatory or dismissive term. Some have suggested Christians should use other terms (Hebrew Scriptures, First Testament, Original Testament) but each has its limitations.

Some Jewish persons use the term *Old Testament* because of its familiarity. The traditional Jewish term for the Jewish Scriptures is *Tanach*, an acronym of the three Hebrew words that describe the main sections of the Scriptures: Torah (Law), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings).

There are important differences between the Jewish Tanach and the Christian Old Testament (see chart on next page). The books are ordered and classified differently. Christian tradition counts 39 books, Jewish tradition counts the same writings as 24 books, combining “I & II” books into one, Ezra and Nehemiah as one, and counting the 12 minor prophets as one book called “The Twelve.” Catholic and Orthodox canons include the deuterocanonical writings of late Judaism, found in the mid-third century BCE Greek translation of Jewish Scripture called the Septuagint.

Most notable about the differences is how each canon ends. The Jewish Tanach concludes with Chronicles, with King Cyrus of Persia proclaiming liberty and return for exiles. The Christian Old Testament ends with Malachi and the concluding words: *Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah...*, a perfect Christian segue into the New Testament and the arrival of John the Baptist.

So, when we speak of Old Testament theology, we mean a specifically Christian discipline of reading the Christian Old Testament theologically. This means the text is the main source for thinking theologically and gaining insight into the reality of God in our lives. This is distinct from, but informed by, the field of Old Testament critical studies, which can be done from a non-theological and non-faith based perspective. It is also distinct from systematic theology, which is based on historic doctrines and categories developed over centuries in the church and often comes from a particular philosophical viewpoint.

Development of Old Testament Theology

Old Testament theology emerged from the biblical theology movement of the late 18th century. This was the beginning of theological interpretation of biblical texts apart from and outside of systematic theology, and without necessarily using the New Testament to interpret the Old. Johann Gabler made this distinction first. The spirit of this change can be seen in this quote from Robyn Routledge in *Old Testament Theology: The OT was not written as a theological document, and a systematic approach necessarily involves imposing an alien order and structure on it.*

Comparison of Old Testament Canons

Hebrew Bible (Tanakh)	Roman Catholic and Orthodox Canons	Protestant Canon
<p>Torah</p> <p>Bereshith - Genesis Shemot - Exodus Vayikra - Leviticus Bamidbar - Numbers Devarim - Deuteronomy</p> <p>Nevi'im</p> <p>Y'hoshua - Joshua Shophetim - Judges Sh'muel - Samuel (I & II) M'lakhim - Kings (I & II) Y'shayahu - Isaiah Yir'mi'yahu - Jeremiah Y'khezqel - Ezekiel</p> <p>The Twelve Prophets</p> <p>Hoshea - Hosea Yo'el - Joel Amos - Amos Ovadyah - Obadiah Yonah - Jonah Mikhah - Micah Nakhum - Nahum Havakuk - Habakkuk Ts'phanyah - Zephaniah Khagai - Haggai Z'kharyah - Zechariah Mal'akhi - Malachi</p> <p>Ketuvim</p> <p>The "Sifrei Emet," "Books of Truth"</p> <p>Tehillim - Psalms Mishlei - Proverbs Iyov - Job</p> <p>The "Five Megilot" or "Five Scrolls"</p> <p>Shir Hashirim - Song of Songs Rut - Ruth Eikhah - Lamentations Kohélet - Ecclesiastes Esther - Esther</p> <p>The rest of the "Writings"</p> <p>Dani'el - Daniel Ezra v'Nehemia - Ezra-Nehemiah Divrei Hayamim - Chronicles (I & II)</p>	<p>Pentateuch</p> <p>Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy</p> <p>History</p> <p>Joshua Judges Ruth Samuel Kings Chronicles Ezra and Nehemiah Tobit* Judith* Esther + Additions to Esther</p> <p>Poetry & Wisdom</p> <p>Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon Wisdom of Solomon* Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of ben Sirach)*</p> <p>Prophets</p> <p>Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch, + The Letter of Jeremiah (Roman Catholic Only) Ezekiel Daniel, + Additions to Daniel (Prayer of Azariah; Song of the Three Young Men; Susanna; Bel and the Dragon)* Osee (Hosea) Joel Amos Abidas (Obadiah) Jonas (Jonah) Micheas (Micah) Nahum Habucuc (Habakkuk) Sophonias (Zephaniah) Aggeus (Haggai) Zacharias (Zechariah) Malachias (Malachi) 1 Maccabees* 2 Maccabees* (Roman Catholic Only)</p> <p>*Apocryphal in the Protestant Canon</p>	<p>Pentateuch</p> <p>Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy</p> <p>History</p> <p>Joshua Judges Ruth 1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings 1-2 Chronicles Ezra and Nehemiah Esther</p> <p>Poetry & Wisdom</p> <p>Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon</p> <p>Prophets</p> <p>Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi</p>

Some major Old Testament theologians that influenced the development of the field:

Walther Eichrodt published his Old Testament Theology in 1933. He read the Old Testament from a historical point of view. He attempted to systemize a theological reading, centering his interpretation on the Sinai Covenant.

Gerhard Von Rad wrote his Old Testament Theology in the 1960's he rejected Eichrodt's idea of a single theme to organize interpretation. He emphasized that while the stories are rooted in historical events, the text itself reflects the spirit of the times in which they were written.

Phyllis Trible was an influential early feminist Old Testament scholar who emphasized questions of women's lives and patriarchal assumptions in the text. She developed a rhetorical approach to interpretation, influenced by her dissertation advisor James Muilenburg, who was also Walter Brueggemann's teacher.

Brevard Childs taught at Yale University and focused in his interpretation on the text of the canon as Scripture for the church. He largely rejected historical critical methods of interpretation and favored interpretations that support the Christian dogmatic tradition.

John Levenson is a Jewish biblical scholar who has written extensively on issues of interpretation, questioning Christian assumptions and methods. His essay *Why Jews Are Not Interested in Biblical Theology* showed how the Christian way of interpreting texts was not relevant to Jewish claims, and were at times hostile to them.

Old Testament Theology of Walter Brueggemann

Walter Brueggemann is the most prolific and influential Old Testament theologian of the past 50 years. He has published over 70 books. He was professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary (Presbyterian) in Decatur Georgia, and is an ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ.

Krista Tippett, host of NPR's *On Being*, said this about Brueggemann:

Walter Brueggemann is a kind of theological rock star. His name has been synonymous with the phrase "prophetic imagination" for three decades of preachers and Christian teachers. Students in all kinds of seminaries read him. And they are captivated by the man as much as his ideas, though most never experience more than his words on a page. That's my explanation for why our live-streamed video of my conversation with Walter Brueggemann has been the most-watched session we've ever done.

One of Brueggemann's most popular and influential books is *The Prophetic Imagination*, published in 1978. In it he lays out how the prophets are poets who fund the imagination of faithful people to live in an alternative world. To quote him from p. 13:

The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.

This is a major theme in Brueggemann's work throughout his career. He is more interested in how the text helps fill us with an alternative imagination that sees God at play in the world, rather than moving quickly to solving problems before tending to our deeply compromised world-view.

One example that Brueggemann uses for how this might work is from Isaiah 40:

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³ A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵ Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶ A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

In this prophetic poetry, Isaiah speaks to Israel's history of exodus from Egypt when God brought them through the Red Sea. But the situation now is exile in Babylon, and instead of water keeping them from getting home, it is waterless desert. Isaiah inverts the history to open the imagination of the people for a totally new thing God will do, which is connected to but not limited by the past.

Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy: This 1997 book is Brueggemann's major work in the field of Old Testament theology. In it, he tries to forge a different path for thinking about the Old Testament as a whole, using the metaphor of the courtroom. Brueggemann explores how the Old Testament includes Israel's foundational testimony, speaking to God's choosing of Israel and Israel's covenantal faithfulness. This expression of biblical faith sees the world as ordered and predictable. He then discusses the countertestimony of Israel, rooted in voices of pain. These are the voices that speak out that the original expression of faith does not hold in all times and places for all people.

Brueggemann's approach in his Old Testament theology is to pay close attention to the words of the text. He explores the adjectives, nouns, and especially the verbs that describe God and what God does. His approach is rooted in rhetorical methods of interpretation, while being informed by the historical-critical tradition of understanding the texts.

A few quotes that show Brueggemann's approach to Old Testament theology:

What does emerge, in any case, is an awareness that the elusive but dominating Subject of the Old Testament cannot be comprehended in any preconceived categories.¹ The God of the Old Testament does not easily conform to the expectation of Christian dogmatic theology, nor to the categories of any Hellenistic perennial philosophy. As a result, most of our categories are unhelpful for the elucidation of this Subject, and we shall have to proceed concretely, a text at a time, a detail at a time. The Character who will emerge from such a patient study at the end will still be elusive and more than a little surprising.

The threat of life, so palpable among us, is a threat that can and will be countered by the Creator who continues the work of governance, order, and sustenance. Creation faith is the summons and invitation to trust the Subject of these verbs, even in the face of day-to-day, palpable incursions of chaos. The testimony of Israel pushes toward a verdict that the One embedded in these doxological statements can be trusted in the midst

of any chaos, even that of exile and finally that of death.

There is much that is wild and untamed about the theological witness of the Old Testament that church theology does not face.

Throughout his work, Brueggemann engages with tensions inherent in the texts and in our lives. Rather than pick sides or eliminate the tensions, he sees the faithful way of reading the text and of living in the world is to engage with the tension as an endless dialogue and negotiation. In this way, Brueggemann, himself very much a part of the progressive tradition, routinely criticizes both liberal and conservative approaches to issues when they are not faithful expressions of the God revealed in Scripture. He shows how the Old Testament preserves both voices as essential, and that our reading of the text must engage with both sides, rather than dismiss the texts we don't like, and focus on the ones we do.

Brueggemann labels our dominant worldview in American life as *military consumerism*. In a review of Brueggemann's book *Mandate to Difference*, one person writes:

Brueggemann describes our current situation as “technological, therapeutic, military consumerism” (63).

- *Technological: We blindly accept new technologies which give us a sense of invincibility.*
- *Therapeutic: We are obsessed with “pain-free, death-free, inconvenience-free existence at the expense of the neighbor” (63).*
- *Military: We put our faith (and our money) in military power.*
- *Consumerism: We buy in order to achieve happiness.*

In the midst of this dark world, the Hebrew Scriptures offer hope. Mandate to Difference is a collection of essays and sermons that offer an alternative way of living based on God's Word.

All of Brueggemann's favourite themes are found here: the necessity of Sabbath, the call for justice, and the challenge to imagine a different future that challenges the current ideology.

Brueggemann's way of speaking of God is of a Holy One who is beyond our comprehension or control, who cannot be domesticated by our categories, who is dependable and faithful, who is profoundly compassionate and hears the cries of pain of all suffering people, who calls people to live in a neighborly love for the transformation of the world.

Walter Brueggemann Videos

Walter Brueggemann on Idolatry	https://youtu.be/3aUZiROSevo
Practicing Neighborhood Amid Empire	https://vimeo.com/55755360
Preaching Moment	https://youtu.be/RPG78ImWpcw
Walter Brueggemann on the Relational God	https://youtu.be/mrIVs58s5nk

Web site: <https://www.walterbrueggemann.com/>