

Reviewer's Bookwatch: September 2016
James A. Cox, Editor-in-Chief
Midwest Book Review
278 Orchard Drive, Oregon, WI 53575

Bethany's Bookshelf

Reviving Old Scratch
Richard Beck
Fortress Press
P.O. Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209
<http://fortresspress.com>
9781506401355, \$18.99, PB, 192pp, www.amazon.com

Synopsis: The devil has fallen on hard times. Surveys say that even the majority of Christians doubt Satan's existence. Burdened by doubts, skeptical believers find themselves divorced from Jesus' dramatic confrontation with Satan in the Gospels and from the struggle that galvanized the early church.

In "Reviving Old Scratch: Demons and the Devil for Doubters and the Disenchanted", popular blogger and theologian Richard Beck reintroduces the devil to the modern world with a biblical, bold, and urgent vision of spiritual warfare: we must resist the devil by joining the kingdom of God's subversive campaign to interrupt the world with love.

Beck shows how conservative Christians too often overspiritualize the devil and demons, and progressive Christians reduce these forces to social justice issues. By understanding evil as a very real force in the world, we are better able to name it for what it is and thus to combat it as Jesus did.

Beck's own work in a prison Bible study and at a church for recovering addicts convinced him to take Satan more seriously, and they provide compelling illustrations as he challenges the contemporary (and strangely safe) versions of evil forces. The beliefs of liberals and conservatives alike will be tested by Beck's groundbreaking ideas, fascinating stories, and clear thinking. Because if Jesus took Satan seriously, says Beck, then so should we.

Critique: Impressively well written, soundly based on biblical theology and Christian tradition, exceptionally well organized and presented, "Reviving Old Scratch: Demons and the Devil for Doubters and the Disenchanted" is an extraordinarily informative and thought-provoking read from beginning to end. While highly recommended for all members of the Christian community regardless of their denominational affiliation, it should be noted for personal reading lists that "Reviving Old Scratch" is also available in a Kindle format (\$10.77).

Susan Bethany
Reviewer