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"Review of *L'ultimo nemico di Dio: Il ruolo dell'Anticristo nel cristianismo antico e tardoantico*"

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Recommended Citation

Patella, Michael. Review of *L'ultimo nemico di Dio: Il ruolo dell'Anticristo nel cristianismo antico e tardoantico*, by Alberto D'Anna and Emanuela Valeriana. *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 77 issue 2, (2009): 397-398.

Originally published in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, <https://catholicbiblical.org/publications/cbq>.

Davis's work treats the *skeptical faith tradition* "as the height of religious commitment rather than its waning" (p. 52) in a number of individual psalms through four categories of questions. Questions of praise such as "Who is God besides the Lord" (Ps 18:31) acknowledge God's greatness. Questions of reflection express wonder at God's mysterious care for the people and at the complexity of human life, while attributing evil to human conduct. Under Yhwh's inactivity Davis studies the function of the questions "How long?" and "Why?" In the former, the psalmist holds Yhwh accountable not for suffering but for his lack of response. The latter seeks an explanation for God's inactivity on behalf of the just. This kind of question examines Yhwh's reactions to a particular situation and implies Yhwh's willful decision not to intervene (Psalm 80).

The use of lament is studied by Barker in the postexilic text of Joel 2:12-17. He divides the text into two subunits: vv. 12-14 and vv. 15-17. In 2:12-14, he examines first the prophet's silence regarding the "sin" for which the community must repent; he suggests that the text is about a return (שוב) to God in worship by lamenting through fasting, weeping, and mourning as an appeal for divine intervention in the face of a grave situation. Joel 2:15-17 then demonstrates the people's turn to God in worship under the leadership of priests. Barker's close reading of the text suggests that the people's turn to God in lament creates the context for God's turn to the community.

Overall, the collection presents rich and stimulating insights into the historical and theological exegesis on the theme of lamentation that opens up the conversation for further studies. The book is a valuable resource for scholars whose interest lies in the expressions of lament and lamentation in the Hebrew Bible.

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ALBERTO D'ANNA and EMANUELA VALERIANI, *L'ultimo nemico di Dio: Il ruolo dell'Anticristo nel cristianismo antico e tardoantico* (Primi secoli 8; Bologna: Dehoniane, 2013). Pp. 151. Paper €13.50.

Containing four essays and dealing with the subject of the Antichrist, this compilation tackles a subject normally handled by contemporary Christian millennialists, at least in the English-speaking world. The introduction by Enrico Norelli reexamines the Antichrist as it appears in the Letters of John. Jean-Daniel Kaestli discusses the role of the Antichrist in the Latin manuscript *Revelatio Iohannis*, recently discovered in Prague. Emanuela Valeriani provides a commentary on the *Apocryphal Apocalypse of John*. Finally, Alberto D'Anna studies the role of Simon Magus as the Antichrist in the *Acts of Peter*.

The Antichrist, explain D'Anna and Valeriani, as a major theme in Christian writings, also stands as a major part of early Christian identity. The Christian movement in its beginnings was far from uniform and evidenced great diversity. Consequently, the figure of the Antichrist appears in different roles according to the various communities from which it arises. Both internal factors, such as schisms and heresies, and external forces such as persecutions have produced a theological interpretation of the Antichrist according to the conflict experienced by the respective Christian community. According to the editors, such

interpretations construct a possible representation of the Antichrist and hence deepen the discussion of its theological role in Christianity.

The strength of this collection is that it situates the Antichrist in its historical context and thereby successfully counters the popular culture's proclivity toward finding it in every political opponent or movement. The most helpful essay is Kaestli's, which features Norelli's Italian translation of the *Revelatio Iohannis* as an appendix; unfortunately, it does not include the original Latin version.

The four essays have few if any references to one another; each chapter stands alone, with no overlap between one theme and another. In addition, while the editors provide a short précis of each chapter, they do not do so for their own respective contributions. A more serious drawback is that the editors do not provide a conclusion at the end of the book. Thus, there is no summary of the book synthesizing all the material into a complete picture of the role of the Antichrist in Christianity in early and late antiquity, as the title of the book suggests. On the other hand, if one is seeking a quick sketch of four possible sources from which to build a research project, this collection provides it.

Valeriani and D'Anna furnish a broad overview of the most recent scholarship on the subject, which some will find very helpful in furthering their own exploration of the topic. Researchers of the Antichrist will also find the indexes beneficial. They are divided according to OT and NT biblical passages that contain either direct quotations regarding the Antichrist or indirect references that can be associated with the Antichrist. Included as well are ancient authors and texts treating the Antichrist along with modern authors dealing with apocalyptic material and the Antichrist.

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DAVID J. DOWNS and MATTHEW L. SKINNER (eds.), *The Unrelenting God: God's Action in Scripture. Essays in Honor of Beverly Roberts Gaventa* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013). Pp. xvi + 323. Paper \$45.

The sixteen essays of this volume have been written in honor of Beverly Roberts Gaventa, formerly the Helen H. P. Manson Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at Princeton Theological Seminary and presently the Distinguished Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Baylor University. Organized around the theme of God's action as portrayed in Scripture, these essays echo Gaventa's lifelong interest in the theological dimension of the text, especially the way it portrays God's apocalyptic intervention in human history.

In addition to a preface by David J. Downs and Matthew L. Skinner, and a personal word by J. Louis Martyn, this volume contains the following essays: Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Body Piercings Revisited: Piercings and Profanations of 'Bodies' and the Character of God in Ezekiel"; Joel B. Green, "Conversion in Luke-Acts: God's Prevenience, Human Embodiment"; John B. F. Miller, "'Not Knowing What Will Happen to Me There': Experiences of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts"; Matthew L. Skinner, "The Word of God and the Church: On the Theological Implications of Three Summary Statements in the Acts of the Apostles";



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