

## **A Response to Dr. David Reagan's Article: Will the Antichrist be a Muslim?**

**By Joel Richardson – 01/11/2009**

**Web Site: [www.JoelsTrumpet.com](http://www.JoelsTrumpet.com)**

On December 22, 2008, I received an e-mail from Dr. David Reagan. Attached was the January / February 2009 issue of *Lamplighter Magazine* of which he is the editor. The cover story was Will the Antichrist be a Muslim? What followed was a critical review of four books, including my first book [\*Antichrist: Islam's Awaited Messiah\*](#) and [\*God's War on Terror\*](#), a book that I had the privilege of co-authoring with Walid Shoebat. Dr. Reagan's article has since been posted on his web-site. [You may read it there.](#) After reading through the article, I sent Dr. Reagan an e-mail, cordially inviting him to partner with me in discussing his theological concerns publicly or even co-authoring a book where he could present the Roman / European end time theory and I the Islamic / Middle Eastern end time theory. This would allow us to present our positions in a clear and Christ-like manner on an equal and fair playing field. I believe that such a project would greatly benefit the Body of Christ in light of the ongoing global spread of radical Islam. Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, Dr. Reagan was not interested in participating in such a project. So while I still would enjoy the opportunity to discuss the several theological concerns that Dr. Reagan brought up, for now, I have chosen to reserve my response to only those criticisms that Dr. Reagan expressed which were a bit more personal in nature.

Dr. Reagan's article begins by reviewing Phillip Goodman's *The Assyrian Connection* and Pastor Jack VanKoevering's *The Man of Sin*. After this, Dr. Reagan turns the bulk of his attention to my first book *Antichrist: Islam's Awaited Messiah* and then onto *God's War on Terror*. Reagan began his criticism thusly:

“I wish I could tell you something about the author, but he states in the book's introduction that he is using a pen name due to fear of Muslim threats on his life. I was really turned off by this revelation and almost decided not to read the book. People who speak out publicly on issues should be willing to put their name to their words. And being motivated by fear is certainly not a biblical attitude (Psalm 118:6).”

Obviously, this portion of Dr. Reagan's criticism was very personal. What is clear is that Dr. Reagan either didn't think through this criticism very well or he was making a purposeful effort to begin by painting me in a negative light. Anyone who has read my book will recall that what Dr. Reagan fails to mention to his readers is that my decision to use a pseudonym came as a result of a series of very specific death threats promising not only that I would be murdered, but my family as well. Simply stated, the risk involved in openly criticizing the Vatican or the European Union as Dr. Reagan's ministry does, cannot even begin to compare to the very real risks involved in openly confronting Islam. Adding to my decision, as I was placing the final touches on *Antichrist*, my first book, the news swept through the missionary community that a family in New Jersey was brutally murdered because the father was both active and successful in evangelizing Muslims on the Internet. You can read the details here: [www.militantislammonitor.org/article/id/392](http://www.militantislammonitor.org/article/id/392).

Dr. Reagan states that in using a pen-name, I am obviously “motivated by fear.” He then quotes a Bible verse so as to establish the fact that my behavior is unbiblical. To be clear, even if I was excited to die as a martyr tomorrow, this is simply not a choice that I believe I should make for my three little girls or my wife. What Dr. Reagan calls “fear,” I simply view as the wisdom of a father. In my opinion, Dr. Reagan’s lack of respect on this point was insensitive to say the least.

Next, Dr. Reagan begins critiquing my actual work by claiming that my presentation of Islamic eschatology is “very misleading.” This is a serious charge for one Christian teacher to make of another teacher. His reason for making this claim is because, according to Dr. Reagan, belief in the coming Mahdi (Islam’s primary Messiah figure) is strictly a Shi’a belief and is not at all embraced by Sunni Muslims. Dr. Reagan confidently states that, “90% of all Muslims—the Sunnis—are not looking for a Mahdi.”

Dr. Reagan could not be more wrong on this point. His claim here also leaves me a bit suspicious. If Dr. Reagan had carefully read either *Antichrist: Islam’s Awaited Messiah* or *God’s War on Terror*—the two books he was reviewing—he would not have made this mistake. For it is in both of these books that I cite several highly reliable Sunni sources that make it very clear that belief in the Mahdi is indeed something that is embraced by both Shi’a and Sunni Muslims alike. For now, a few references should suffice to establish this fact. Let’s begin with a fatwa (a religious ruling) issued by the General Secretariat of the World Muslim League, one of the largest non-governmental Islamic organizations in the world. The fatwa was written by the then General Secretariat Sheikh Muhammad Muntasir al-Katani, and was approved by a committee of four other scholars. After listing the names of twenty disciples (Sahaba) of Muhammad that recalled and narrated his statements regarding the Mahdi, as well as listing numerous renowned scholars who have written exclusively regarding the Mahdi, the fatwa states:

“The memorizers and scholars of hadith have verified that there are reliable and acceptable reports among the hadith on the Mahdi; the majority of them are narrated through numerous authorities. There is no doubt about their status as mutawatir and sahih (trustworthy, well-established and reliable) reports... belief in the appearance of the Mahdi is obligatory, and that it is one of the beliefs of the people of the sunna (Sunni) and jama’ah (Shi’a); and none denies it except those who are ignorant of the sunna and innovators in doctrine.” (Parenthesis mine)

I cite this fatwa in *God’s War on Terror*. It was an awfully significant reference to disregard on Dr. Reagan’s part. But this was not the only reference that he chose to overlook. Going back well over a millennium, Ibn Kathir, the renowned Sunni scholar from the eighth century states:

“After the lesser signs of the Hour appear and increase, mankind will have reached a stage of great suffering. Then the awaited Mahdi will appear; He is the first of the greater clear, signs of the Hour.”

Later, Ibn Khaldun, the famous 14th century Muslim historian and author of *The Muqaddima* writes:

“It has been (accepted) by all the Muslims in every epoch, that at the end of time a man from the family (of the Prophet) will, without fail, make his appearance, one who will strengthen Islam and make justice triumph. Muslims will follow him, and he will gain domination over the Muslim realm. He will be called the Mahdi.”

Nearer to home, Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, chairman of the Islamic Supreme Council of America also declares that:

“The coming of the Mahdi is established doctrine for both Sunni and Shi’a Muslims, and indeed for all humanity.”

It was also providential that at the time that Dr. Reagan’s article was sent to me, I was interviewing Adnan Oktar, a Turkish intellectual and the author of numerous books and articles on Islamic eschatology and Mahdism. Because Mr. Oktar is himself a Sunni, I asked him the following question:

A Christian author named Dr. David Reagan has just released a very critical review of some of my writings. In his criticism, he claims that I am “very misleading” when I claim that belief in the Mahdi is not exclusively held by the Shi’a but is also held by a wide range of Sunnis as well. Dr. Reagan then states that “Sunnis are not looking for the Mahdi.” What would you say to Dr. Reagan? In your experience, what percentage of Sunnis generally believe in the Mahdi?

What follows is Mr. Oktar’s response:

“Scholars of the people of the Sunnah (Sunnis) who have stated that the Mahdi will appear:

1. AL-IMAM AL-A`ZAM ABU HANIFAH
2. IMAM AHMAD IBN HANBAL
3. IMAM AL-SHAFI`I
4. IMAM MALIK
5. IMAM AL-BUKHARI
6. IMAM MUSLIM
7. IMAM AL-TIRMIDHI
8. ABU DAWUD
9. IBN MAJAH
10. MUHAMMAD IBN `ABD AL-RASUL AL-BARZANJI
11. AL-MUTTAQI AL-HINDI
12. `ABD AL-QADR AL-GAYLANI
13. IMAM AL-GHAZALI
14. IMAM RABBANI
15. MUHYI AD-DIN IBN AL-ARABI
16. IBN KATHIR
17. IBN TAYMIYYA
18. ZAHID AL-KAWSARI
19. JALALUDDIN AL-SUYUTI
20. BEDIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI
21. IBN HAJAR AL-ASKALANI
22. HUSEYIN HILMI ISIK
23. MAHMUD ESA`D COSAN
24. MAHMUT SAMI RAMAZANOGLU
25. ABU AL-QASIM AL-TABARANI
26. HAMDY YAZIR OF ELMALI
27. OMER NASUHI BILMEN

28. MUHAMMAD ALI AL-SHAWKANI
29. MUHAMMAD JAMAL AD-DIN AL-QASIMI AL-DIMISHQI
30. AL-QURTUBI
31. IMAM AL-MATURIDI
32. IMAM AL-AJURRI
33. IBN-KHAZM
34. AL-PAZDAWI
35. AN-NASAFI
36. AL-TAFTAZANI
37. IBN AL-‘ARABI
38. IMAM ABU JAFAR AT-TAHAVI
39. BAYAZI
40. SAYYID AL-ALOUSHI
41. ABU ‘L-MUNTAHA
42. AS-SAFFARINI
43. ABDUL MUHSIN BIN HAMD AL-ABBAD
44. ABU MUHAMMAD AL-BARBAHARI
45. MUHAMMAD NASR AL-DIN AL-ALBANI
46. SHAMS UD-DIN MUHAMMAD BIN AHMAD AS-SAFARAYNI
47. ABU ABD-ALLAH MUHAMMAD B. JAFAR AL-QATANI
48. SHAHAB AL-DIN AHMAD B. MUHAMMAD AL-GHUMARI
49. HASANAYN MUHAMMAD MAKHLUF AL-MISRI
50. ABUL-HASAN MUHAMMAD IBN AL-HUSAIN AL-ABURI
51. SAID HAWWA
52. SHEIKH HASSAN AL-HAMZAWI
53. SIDDIQ HASSAN AL-QUNUJI
54. MUHAMMAD B. HASSAN AL-ASNAWI
55. NUR AD-DIN ATAR
56. ABU-SADAT MUHAMMAD B. MUHAMMAD ABU SHOHBA
57. AN-NAWAWI
58. ABU ‘L-FADHL ABD-ALLAH B. MUHAMMAD AL-IDRISI
59. MUHAMMAD AL-MAKKI
60. ABU BAKR AHMAD B. MUHAMMAD AL-ISQAFI
61. ABU BAKR B. HAYSAMA
62. ABU BAKR MUHAMMAD IBN IBRAHIM BUKHARI KALABAZI
63. ABU AL-QASIM ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-SUHAYLI
64. YUSUF B. YAHYA AL-MAQDISI ASH-SHAFI‘I
65. SHEIKH IBRAHIM IBN MUHAMMAD HAMWINI
66. IBN HAJAR ASH-SHAFI‘I AL-MAKKI
67. IBN HAJAR MAKKI
68. SHEIKH MUHAMMAD B. AHMAD AS-SAFARINI AL-HANBALI
69. SULAYMAN AL-QUNDUZI
70. SHEIKH SIDDIQI AL-QANUJI
71. ABU ‘L-FADHL ABD-ALLAH B. MUHAMMAD AL-SIDDIQ
72. ALLAMA SHAWKANI
73. AL-HAFIDH AL-ASQALANI

74. IBN HAJAR AL-HAYSAMI
75. AL-SHABLANJI
76. EGYPTIAN SHEIKH MUHAMMAD AL-HANAFI
77. SHEIKH MUHAMMAD SABBAN
78. AL-SUWAYDI
79. AHMAD BIN ZAYNI DAHLAN ASH-SHAFI'I
80. ABD AL-VAHHAB ABD AL-LATIF
81. ALLAMA ABU-TAYYIB
82. SAID BIN JABR
83. NIYAZI MISRI
84. AN-NIFARI
85. ALI AL-QARI
86. AL-TAHTAWI
87. SHEIKH MANSUR ALI NASF
88. SAYYID QUTB
89. SHEIKH FAQIH IMANI
90. ALI AS-SABUNI
91. MUHAMMAD MAHDI AL-KHORASAN
92. SHEIKH AL-ISLAM MUSTAFA SABRI EFENDI

Belief in the Mahdi is an article of faith in the 4 schools of Sunnism (Hanafi, Shafi'i, Hanbali and Maliki). The Mahdi is also awaited by all sects; the Nakshibendi and the Kadiri movement.... They are all agreed on expecting the Mahdi to appear. Nobody in Sunni belief holds any contrary opinion regarding the coming of the Mahdi. A few religious scholars in Sunni communities do, however, say things that depart from Sunni teachings. But these represent only a very small group. These people are a minority and nobody subscribes to their isolated beliefs.

The above list represents only one part of those Sunni scholars who believe in the coming of the Mahdi. Belief in the coming of the Mahdi is therefore very strong and certain in both Sunni and Shia belief.

The reason why present-day anticipation of the Mahdi is not as evident in Sunni belief as it is in Shiism may be that belief in the Mahdi has been forgotten over the course of time, and there has been a weakening in anticipation of the Mahdi over the last 20-30 years in particular. But saying that the Mahdi will not appear and silence on the subject of the Mahdi is one of the signs of his coming."

And if all of this is not enough to establish my point, I should also highlight Dr. David Cook, a scholar at Rice University and the Western World's foremost authority on Islamic apocalyptic belief, who makes it very clear in both of his books; *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* and *Contemporary Muslim Apocalyptic Literature* that Mahdism is indeed very much both a Sunni and Shi'a belief. Likewise, Dr. Timothy Furnish, a Ph.D. in Islamic History in his book, *Holiest Wars, Islamic Mahdis, their Jihads and Osama Bin Laden*, reviews the eight most prominent false Mahdist uprisings in Islamic history. Every last one was a Sunni movement led by a Sunni Mahdi claimant. I consulted both Dr. Cook and Dr. Furnish while writing Antichrist.

Dr. Reagan then displays the following image with the caption “An artist’s concept of the Mahdi”.



But Dr. Reagan once again only displayed his lack of knowledge on this subject. For in fact the image is not an artist’s depiction of the awaited Mahdi, but is instead a fairly well-known historical portrait of Muhammad Ahmad Ibn As-sayyid abd Allah (a Sunni) who was a Mahdi claimant from Sudan that led a revolt against the Ottomans in the late 19th century. The story is popularly retold in the book, *The Mahdi of Sudan and the Death of General Gordon*. That said; “let me be clear that ignorance is not a bad concept in my book. I am quite ignorant of far more things than I am knowledgeable of. Who isn’t?” But when someone publishes authoritative statements about something that they demonstrably know little about, even to the point of calling a brother and fellow Christian teacher “very misleading,” then a strong and clear correction is needed. Dr. Reagan was speaking outside of his arena of knowledge and he made an enormous mistake. I exchanged a few e-mails with Dr. Reagan and attempted to inform him of his error as gently as I could, but he was entirely unwilling to reconsider his stance. His response was brief:

“I have read extensively regarding Islamic eschatology, and every expert I have ever consulted has stated that the concept of a Mahdi is characteristic of Shi’it (sic) thought, and not Sunni. I just consulted Wikipedia, and it confirmed that.”

Needless to say, little needs to be said about relying on Wikipedia, the infamously unreliable Internet encyclopedia created by the general public. But even more oddly, when I looked up the actual Wikipedia article on the Mahdi, it didn’t substantiate Dr. Reagan’s claims at all. Instead the article simply states that Mahdism is more emphasized by Shi’a, (a point I state very directly in my book) but nowhere does it state that all Sunnis reject Mahdism as Dr. Reagan adamantly claims. In two follow up e-mails, I asked Dr. Reagan specifically which “experts” he had consulted, but he refused to reveal any. That said, I believe that Dr. Reagan is a man of integrity. Personally, I would hope to see him issue a retraction in his next issue of *Lamplighter Magazine*.

Dr. Reagan’s critique continues:

“Another misleading aspect of Richardson’s presentation is his constant talk about the “amazing parallels” and “startling similarities” between Islamic and biblical end time prophecies. Actually, there is nothing startling or amazing when you

consider the fact that Mohammed borrowed nearly all his key ideas from Bible stories he heard from both Jews and Christians, stories he often got thoroughly confused. This is a well proven fact, and for overwhelming evidence, I would direct you to Dr. Samuel Shahid's book, *The Last Trumpet*. Also misleading is Richardson's heavy reliance on quotations from the Hadith to establish his scenario for end time events. He treats the Hadith as if it contains inspired prophecy, when, in fact, it is nothing more than the ramblings of a demon-possessed man."

Dr. Reagan has entirely misunderstood the whole point of my research. I am in complete agreement with him regarding the fact that many of the Islamic narratives are merely borrowed and distorted versions of Biblical, Gnostic and Zoroastrian accounts. However, the fact that many of the Islamic prophecies perfectly mirror Biblical prophecies albeit in an inverted manner—something that I call an "anti-parallel"—is proof to me of only one thing; namely the satanic hand in the inspiration, development and evolution of the Islamic religion. Because many of my readers are Muslims, I make efforts throughout the book to express such matters in a sensitive manner, but my ultimate conclusions are obvious. In fact, I doubt that I could have been clearer:

"In thinking through the implications of the fact that the biggest "bad guy" in the Bible; the Antichrist, has been literally transformed into the coming savior of Islam, while the biggest "good guy" in the Bible, namely Jesus, has been transformed into the biggest "bad guy" in Islamic eschatology, one must be willing to ask the obvious question: Has Satan been specifically involved in the inspiration of Islam's end-time doctrines? Has Satan devised in the Islamic traditions a preemptive means to carry out his final plan? Now, of course in natural history there were real men and numerous developments that contributed to the formation of these traditions as we have them today. But I am speaking of the invisible spiritual factors and beings that are behind the formation of these traditions. The specificity, detail and extent of the parallels demand the acknowledgement of design, while the twisted and cynical nature of these "anti-parallels" clearly point to the malevolent nature of the "person" doing so."

If Dr. Reagan had truly read my book, and still published the claim that I "treat the Hadith as if it contains inspired prophecy" then it is he who is being misleading. But I will give him the benefit of the doubt and assume that he skimmed over this portion of my book. My whole effort is to show that through their own prophetic traditions, Muslims have been set up to receive the Antichrist as their Mahdi / Messiah figure and also to fight against the real Jesus as if he is the Dajjal—the Islamic Antichrist. My research simply shows what the ancient Islamic tradition has led Muslims to expect. The result is that we as Christians should pray with compassion for mercy and the spirit of enlightenment for our brothers and sisters in humanity who are deceived by the Islamic religion. All of us were once blind and when we see the degree to which Muslims have been set-up by their own ancient prophecies, we can pray that the Lord would awaken them, even as He has awakened us.

While Dr. Reagan may feel comfortable off-handedly brushing aside the striking quality of the numerous anti-parallels that exist between Islamic and Biblical prophecies, (Walid and I list dozens of them) these realities have in fact been enough to convince at least a few Muslims to

convert to Christianity after reading these books. But as to these things, I will simply leave it to the readers to review the material and decide for themselves.

Finally, Dr. Reagan's criticism then turns to my friend, Walid Shoebat. About Walid, Dr. Reagan says, "when it comes to Bible prophecy, his ideas are very unorthodox..."

What Dr. Reagan is doing here is exactly what guardians of Evolutionary science attempt to do toward any who do not embrace Darwinian evolution; first they claim that Darwinian Evolution and "Science" are synonymous and then they paint any who embrace Creationism, Intelligent Design or any alternative position as being "anti-Science". It is also precisely what the Pharisees did toward a certain preacher named Jesus who came along and challenged many of their traditional interpretations of Scripture. Likewise Dr. Reagan attempts to paint his eschatology as "orthodox" and the Islamic Eschatological Paradigm as "unorthodox" (read: heretical). The ironies here are many. First of all, the mere notion that there has ever existed any universal orthodoxy regarding the end times within the Church is demonstrably not the case. Secondly, Dr. Reagan himself holds many eschatological positions that disagree with many other notable theologians including Dr. John Walvoord or Dave Hunt. Dr. Walvoord for instance argues that Rome cannot be the City of Seven Hills / Mystery Babylon (I agree with Dr. Walvoord). And Dave Hunt argues that Ezekiel 38 and Armageddon are one and the same (I agree here with Dave). What I am saying is that there is ample room within the field of biblical eschatology for one to hold varying opinions without being called "unorthodox." Ironically, on other foundational doctrines, such as the eternality of hell, Dr. Reagan openly holds to a position that is in fact unorthodox by all standards. But most importantly—and repeating a pattern—Dr. Reagan's claim is simply not true. As Walid and I document in *God's War on Terror*, those who have held to one form or another of the Islamic or Middle Eastern End Time Theory include some of historical Christianity's greatest minds and leaders. Among those who have expressed various elements of the Islamic or Middle Eastern End Time Theory are; Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, John of Damascus, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and many other prominent Christian and Jewish commentators throughout history and up until this day. In recent days, several prominent prophecy teachers such as Chuck Missler have embraced the Islamic End Time Paradigm. To say that Walid and I hold a minority position would be accurate, but "unorthodox" we most certainly are not.

In Dr. Reagan's defense, new theories within the realm of Christian eschatology come along frequently and many are admittedly strange and "out there." But if there is one arena of theology where we as believers need to be extremely careful not to become overly rigid in our assumptions, it is the arena of eschatology. Holding to an inflexible "orthodoxy" with regard to prophecy was one of the most foundational reasons that many from among the Pharisees fell short when Christ arrived in the first century. So while I certainly sympathize with any who are slow to embrace "new" ideas within the realm of biblical eschatology, a humble consideration of this thoroughly biblical paradigm is all that Walid and I are asking.

Dr. Reagan concludes his critique by venting his frustrations:

"One irritating point that Shoebat keeps making in his public presentations is that one must have an Eastern mindset in order to understand Bible prophecy. He claims that all of us in the Western world have completely misunderstood Bible prophecy because we interpret it from a Western mentality. This is not only a prideful viewpoint, it is also unbiblical."



Once again, this is simply not true. I know Walid personally and while he certainly does attempt to bring new insights to the subject of Bible prophecy that he has gained from his life experiences—namely growing up in Bethlehem and working for a recognized Muslim terrorist organization—he simply does not claim, “all of us in the Western world have completely misunderstood Bible prophecy”. I myself am a “Westerner” and Walid and I exchanged plenty of ideas, thoughts, and insights as we wrote *God’s War on Terror* together. In the book, Walid personally acknowledges the beneficial and edifying qualities of the ministries of many other “Western” Bible teachers. So I’m not sure exactly why Dr. Reagan personally finds Walid so “irritating.” Walid is no doubt a unique and colorful character with a colorful personality. But this is exactly why he is loved so much by so many. In this particular case, Walid is simply making the same point that Joel Rosenberg makes and which many others are awakening to: The Epicenter—the entire focus of the whole Bible is indeed Jerusalem, Israel and the Middle East. The Bible is Israel-centric to its core. Why is it so offensive that someone who grew up in Bethlehem might have some insights into the language and worldview of the Bible that we Americans might not be so keen to catch? Walid was a former operative in the PLO. When he read the Biblical prophecies about God’s judgments against the gentile neighbors of Israel, he saw himself and many of his fellow Muslims in those prophecies. This is how he came to Christ. Why should it offend anyone that Walid would share what he saw and what he learned? To call Walid “irritating” and “prideful” for sharing his perspectives was, in my opinion, completely unnecessary and uncalled for.

## **Conclusion**

There are several more theological challenges that Dr. Reagan makes, as I said, all of which are entirely worthy of further discussion. But again, Dr. Reagan was unwilling to further discuss these things publicly. Nevertheless, I believe a book that presents both the Roman and the Islamic end time theories would greatly benefit the whole body of Christ. Beyond Dr. Reagan, I have extended the invitation to a couple of other prominent prophecy teachers. Perhaps in time, such a project will come to be. These are surely the times when the Church, with the Bible in hand and the Holy Spirit as their guide, need to be ever more watchful as The Day quickly approaches.