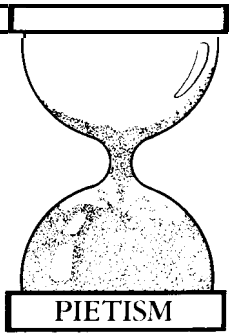


# Dispensationalism in Transition

Challenging Traditional Dispensationalism's "Code of Silence"



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## DISPENSATIONALISM'S ACHILLES' HEAD (PART ONE)

Comments on Hal Lindsey's *The Road to Holocaust*

by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., Th. D.

**[Introduction:** With this issue of *Dispensationalism in Transition* a new writer takes over for Michael R. Gilstrap, who has served well in this capacity since its beginning. Michael has moved to Franklin, Tennessee, (outside of Nashville) in order to head up a regional antipornography organization. May the Lord bless his labors there. The readers may know Ken Gentry through some of his writings published in Reconstructionist circles and through the Institute for Christian Economics. He currently has one just-published book and two others due out in the next month from ICE: *The Beast of Revelation* (now available), *Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation*, and another one co-authored with Greg L. Bahnsen entitled, *House Divided: The Break-up of Dispensational Theology*. Ken invites your inquiries and suggestions.]

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For too long dispensationalism has attempted officially to ignore the Reconstruction movement. That tactic, which has proven ineffective, is now changing. In the last six months there have been three book-length assaults on Reconstructionism from dispensationalists: one co-authored by a certified dispensationalist scholar (Wayne House) and the other two from best-selling pop-theologians, Dave Hunt and Hal Lindsey. The first was A. Wayne House and Thomas D. Ice's, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?* (Fall, 1988). This was followed by Dave Hunt's *Whatever Happened to Heaven?* (Winter, 1988) and, more recently, Hal Lindsey's *The Road to Holocaust* (July, 1989).

Judging from the horrendous errors rampant in each of these works, one can better appreciate the previous silence by dispensationalists. Let me briefly illustrate what I mean by surveying Lindsey's work.

For my first *Dispensationalism in Transition* I choose to respond to Lindsey for several reasons.<sup>1</sup> (1) His book is newsworthy in having just been released with much fanfare. You can probably find it prominently displayed in B. Dalton bookstores. (2) His book is more likely to garner the attention of the Christian public than the other two mentioned above,<sup>2</sup> given the fact of his past sales successes (though his sales are slipping). (3) In keeping with Lindsey's sensationalism, his is the most reckless in its assault (interestingly, his is also the only one of the three published by a secular publisher: Bantam Books). (4) With the

brief space I am afforded in this small newsletter, perhaps you might find the introductory data below helpful in demonstrating the poverty of his research to any unsuspecting friends who might read it.

That which is most immediately notable in this work is its low level of scholarship. Lindsey has never been regarded as a scholar, not even by reputable dispensationalist theologians.<sup>3</sup> This book illustrates why this is the case.

### Plagiarism

Let me begin with just three brief samples of Lindsey's plagiarism of House and Ice. Without any quotation marks or endnote references, Lindsey virtually lifts a number of statements from House and Ice:

#### Sample #1:

**Lindsey:** "We don't have any more reliable Church tradition than this. But David Chilton uses a typical debater's tactic to cast doubt on the reliability of the source. There is no legitimate reason to doubt the veracity of the source. This is why Chilton resorts to the weak statement, '... he [Irenaeus] may have meant.'"<sup>4</sup>

**House and Ice:** "Irenaeus was in a position to receive the best possible witness on the date of Revelation. Chilton's approach is nothing more than a debater's technique. When you do not have strong reasons against something then you try to cast doubt upon the reliability of the source. But no reason exists to doubt the veracity of the source. Otherwise, Chilton would have given some specific reasons rather than resorting to the use of the word 'may.'"<sup>5</sup>

#### Sample #2:

**Lindsey:** "Chilton concludes his argument by making a totally unfounded, unsupported, and speculative statement: 'Certainly, there are other early writers whose statements indicate that St. John wrote the Revelation much earlier, under Nero's persecution.' But then he doesn't give us even one of these phantom 'other early writers' to support his confident boast."<sup>6</sup>

**House and Ice:** "Chilton concludes his critique of the early church tradition by making a totally unfounded, unsupported, and speculative statement: 'Certainly, there are other early writers whose statements indicate that St. John wrote the Revelation much earlier, under Nero's persecution.' But he does not produce those other early writers."

1. It should be noted that this work has been capably responded to in some detail by Gary DeMar and Peter Leithart in their just-published *The Legacy of Hatred Continues: A Response to Hal Lindsey's The Road to Holocaust* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), 64 pp. (paperback). It should be understood that my articles were written before seeing their work.

2. In fact, our sources inform us that House and Ice's book is "dead in the water."

3. Lindsey did not even finish college, although he did graduate from Dallas Seminary

4. Hal Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust* (New York: Bantam Books, 1989), p. 245.

5. See House and Ice, *Dominion Theology*, pp. 252-253.

6. Lindsey, *Road to Holocaust*, p. 245.

7. House and Ice, *Dominion Theology*, p. 253.

### Sample #3:

**Lindsey:** "If the Apostle John were exiled to Patmos and wrote the Book of Revelation during the reign of Nero (A.D. 54-68), as Chilton and the Dominionists contend, we would expect to see at least some trace of an early tradition to this effect. But there isn't any."<sup>8</sup>

**House and Ice:** "'It would be strange, if the book really was produced at the end of Nero's reign, that so strong a tradition arose associating it with Domitian's.' If there were some validity to the early date, some trace of this competing tradition should have surfaced. However, it has not!"<sup>9</sup>

### Academic Excellence?

What is worse, Lindsey even picks up on the errors of House and Ice, while plagiarizing them! For instance, he uses a House and Ice argument, while footnoting it from the source House and Ice gave (Henry B. Swete) as if he did the original research himself.<sup>10</sup> In doing so, he even gives an improper form of Hort's name – just as House and Ice did: all three of them call him "J. A. Hort" instead of "F. J. A. Hort."

Elsewhere, he lifts the errors from House and Ice regarding certain Reconstructionists: Gary North does *not* have a doctorate in economics; Rushdoony did *not* found Chalcodon Foundation in Vallecito, California; Greg Bahnsen did *not* read Rushdoony as a boy; Gary DeMar is *not* the president of Institute of Christian Government; and so forth.<sup>11</sup>

On page 240 Lindsey makes a strong reference to the impersonal pronoun "that" in church father Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*. But as we have shown, House and Ice blundered in assuming such was in the original Greek, and now Lindsey comes along and picks up their argument (without indicating to his readers that it was first broached by House and Ice) and reproduces their error!<sup>12</sup>

Apparently, a number of his endnote documentation sources were lifted from House and Ice rather than from the original sources. Yet he cites them as if *he* consulted the original sources, for he quotes the exact same words they do and in the same argumentative contexts!<sup>13</sup>

And all of this is done in leading up to a bold judgment by Lindsey: "Dominionists are guilty of, to say the least, 'sloppy scholarship' !"!<sup>14</sup>

### Greek Errors

In an unusual move for Lindsey, he makes frequent reference to Greek grammar by employing actual Greek

characters. This proves to be a mistake in that there is a frustrating inconsistency when he prints out the Greek characters. Sometimes they have an accent<sup>15</sup>; most of the time they do not<sup>16</sup>; sometimes they are wrong.<sup>17</sup> Sometimes he does not list the accents, but the breathing marks<sup>18</sup>; sometimes breathing marks are absent<sup>19</sup>; sometimes the breathing marks are wrong<sup>20</sup>; sometimes he accidentally substitutes accents for breathing marks<sup>21</sup> and breathing marks for accents.<sup>22</sup>

Unfortunately, he misstates and overstates his Greek case frequently. Of Luke 18:8 Lindsey writes: "In the original Greek, this question assumes a negative answer. The original text has a definite article before *faith*, which in context means 'this kind of faith.' "<sup>23</sup> But it does not "assume" a negative answer. The classic Greek grammar Funk-Blass-Debrunner notes that "when an interrogative particle is used [as in Luke 18:8, KLG], *ou* is employed to suggest an affirmative answer, *me (meti)* a negative reply. "<sup>24</sup> But neither of these particular particles occur here and so the answer to the question is "ambiguous,"<sup>25</sup> in that the one used here (*ara*) implies only "anxiety or impatience."<sup>26</sup>

Lindsey notes of Matthew 28:19 ("make disciples *out* of the nations, " he says) that "the genitive construction means 'a part out of a whole.' "<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately for Lindsey's argument, *there is no genitive there!* His confident argument from the Greek is wholly mistaken.

He erroneously claims that the Greek word *oikumene* means the "entire inhabited earth"<sup>28</sup> and that this "is the only possible meaning of the Greek word *oikumene*."<sup>29</sup> But this is absolutely not true. If it were, then when Augustus Caesar sent out a decree that the *oikumene* (Luke 2:1) should be enrolled, he intended this for China, Africa, the Parthian Empire, North America, etc. !

### Conclusion

Next month we will conclude our analysis of Lindsey's *The Road to Holocaust*. The number of factual errors and the fraudulent research method of Lindsey should alarm the discerning reader and indicate the desperation of his position. Unfortunately, there will be thousands of Christians who will read his work without realizing its being fraught with error.

As an incidental aside, someone should inform Lindsey that Freud was not the creator of the ink blot test (p. 223). It is properly called the Rorschach Test after its creator, Hermann Rorschach.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 205, 210, 220.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 138, 144, 167, 169, 174, 177, 199, 210

17. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 144, 184, 203, 218, 220, 225, 261.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 200, 204, 219, 228, 270, 227.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

24. Robert W. Funk, cd., F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 226 (section 440).

25. *Ibid.*

26. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 103".

27. Lindsey, *Road to Holocaust*, p. 277.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 218, 220.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

8. Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust*, p. 247.

9. House and Ice, *Dominion Theology*, p. 254.

10. Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust*, p. 241.

11. *Ibid.*, pp 32-34. He obviously got this erroneous information from House and Ice, *Dominion Theology*, pp. 17-21.

12. See Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 47-57.

13. E.g., Zahn at Lindsey, *Road to Holocaust*, p. 246 (cp. House and Ice, *Dominion Theology*, p. 254); Schaff at Lindsey, *Road to Holocaust*, p. 242 (cp. House and Ice, *Dominion Theology*, p. 252). There are a number of others, as well. Interestingly, a quotation on page 246 is introduced in the text as being from Ice's work, but the endnote says it is from Guthrie! On page 263 he says that "Jesus illustrated the baptism with fire in Matthew 3:12." But that is a quotation from John the Baptist.

14. Lindsey, *The Road to Holocaust*, p. 231. What is strange about this charge is that elsewhere he notes certain Reconstructionists as "unquestionably... brilliant" (p. 32) and a "brilliant and keen thinker" (p. 33).