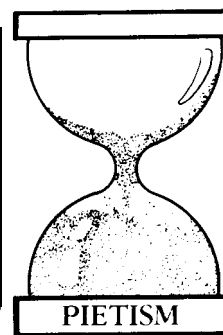


# Dispensationalism in Transition

Challenging Traditional Dispensationalism's "Code of Silence"



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## THOMAS ICE IS A GOOD THEOLOGIAN. NOT!

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

Once again my dispensationalist friend Tommy Ice is on the warpath regarding "Reconstructionist Anti-semitism." Dealing with Tomahawkless Ice is about as frustrating as attempting "Dances with Wolves." He never advances beyond knee-jerk, 1950s era dispensationalism, despite rapid transition among recent advocates.

Ice is convinced that Hal Lindsey's portrayal of Reconstructionism as anti-Semitic is correct.<sup>1</sup> His defense of Lindsey and offense of Reconstructionism is absurd. He understands neither supersessionism (i.e., replacement theology), nor Reconstructionism (i.e., biblical theology).

Parenthetical page references below are to the *Biblical Perspectives* issue mentioned above. I will deal with this ridiculous charge of Lindsey and Ice in a brief series of articles.

### Dances with Errors

Reading Ice's *Biblical Perspectives* newsletter is an exercise in self-flagellation. Beyond his stuck-in-the-mud dispensationalism . . . . Beyond his flailing of the rules of logic. Beyond his torturing of theology, there is his desperate need of an editor. One who speaks English, preferably. Not just any old Indian will do.

Tommy's newsletter is not merely annoying to read, it is downright difficult. To read his frequent long, drawn-out, hyper-compounded, rambling sentences is a laborious task that borders on the unendurable. And he must *never* proof-read anything he writes!

Note the fourth sentence in his essay: "The first charge that Dominion/Reconstructionists advocate views that have in the past engendered anti-Semitism that I have found was made in 1985 by evangelical scholar David Rausch in *Moody Monthly*" (p. 1). Now read it again. Several times. Taking it apart word-for-word. You eventually will understand it. Maybe.

He at least needs to purchase a word-processing program that will do spell, case, and syntax checking. Note the following errors that leaped out at me (his erroneous words/cases, etc., are italicized). He writes that "Perhaps because of Rausch's *expertise* . . ." (p. 1). Try to find "*expertise*" in a dictionary! Apparently, he spelled it phonetically; the word is "expertise."

"Lindsey preached a sermon at *this* church" (p. 2) should read: "at *his* church." The near demonstrative "*this*" has nothing preceding it as a referent to which it points.

"The fact of the matter is, however, that replacement theology has historically, not always, but often, *lead* to

what. . ." (p. 2). He does this again: "**Toon** adds that it was Jewish influence which *lead* to this new teaching" (p. 3). And again: "**It** was as the 'Hebraic and **Judaical** tendencies in England [English? - KLG] thought and theology reached their **zenith** by 1650 and it **is** in this prophetic context' notes Toon that *lead* to the readmission of the Jews" (p. 3; this is horrendous sentence splicing trying to preserve the **quotation!**). Apparently he does not know the difference between "lead" and "led." Tommy really needs to get the "lead" out!

Ice expresses concern that Reconstructionist complaints "are almost always differences in *interpretative* opinions" (p. 3). He means "interpretive." On the same page: "they did **held** to a different kind" (p. 3). I do not think an "interpretative" comment is necessary here!

"[S]ome extreme **Preterist** do not. . ." (p. 4). "**Preterist** are found. . ." (p. 4). "**Preterist**" should have been pluralized. "[Historic postmillennialism *give* the Jews. . ." (p. 5). "Give" should be "gives."

I could go on and on from this one **article**. A major reason for Tommy's lack of credibility – not with an audience of *National Enquirer* readers, but with intelligent laymen and theologians – is his difficulty with his native tongue!

### Can You Sss What Is Missing?

When I was a child I enjoyed looking at puzzle-drawings of scenery with missing items. It was fun to seek what was missing from the picture. Ice's newsletter is like those puzzles. And that which is **missing** should be obvious. Let me explain.

Ice's article is dealing with the charge of "anti-Semitism" leveled against Reconstructionist theology by Hal Lindsey. He states as his objective in his newsletter: "I want to state why I believe that Hal is correct" (p. 1).

The question that naturally arises in this setting is wholly omitted. That question is: **What is "anti-Semitism"?** Nowhere in the article does he *define* "anti-Semitism." What is worse, he *assumes* anti-Semitism (or at least its philosophical underpinning) is *any theology that does not hold that Jews will one day dominate the world*.

On page 82 of *Webster's New Twentieth Century Unabridged Dictionary* "anti-Semitism" is defined (appropriately) as: "1. prejudice against Jews; dislike or fear of Jews and Jewish things. 2. discrimination against or persecution of Jews." *This* is the only legitimate definition in alleging anti-Semitism! A view of history that lacks a future era in which Jews will be rulers of the world is simply not "anti-Semitism."

I know of no published Reconstructionist that disdains or seeks to persecute Jewish people. In fact, our view of history holds that one day the *Jews will be blessed of God – but on an equal footing with all who know the saving grace*

1. Thomas Ice, "Hal Lindsey, Dominion Theology, and Anti-Semitism," *Biblical Perspectives*, 5:1 (Jan.-Feb., 1992). To hold that anything Lindsey promotes is correct is a dangerous leap of faith. Ice is one of the few dispensational defenders of Lindsey remaining. Lindsey is a constant source of embarrassment to Dallas Seminary. See for example, DTS professor, R.P. Lightner's *The Last Days Handbook* (1990), p. 174.

of **Jesus Christ**. Throughout the era of Christ's rule, **creational** distinctions will continue to function (male/female hierarchical relationships), but not **pre-Cross redemptive** distinctions (Jewish superiority over Gentiles).

To demonstrate anti-Semitism, Ice needs to prove **malicious intent** against Jews **because of their race**. Being opposed to the policies of the modern state of Israel for its West Bank atrocities or for its socialism or for its anti-Christian laws will not suffice as anti-Semitism. If any **Reconstructionists** are opposed to the policies of Israel's **government**, that is **not** the same as being opposed to Jews **as such**. I was long opposed to Russian Soviet governmental policies, but was never prejudiced against people of Russian heritage.

What is it that makes Lindsey and Ice set forth their preposterous charge? The theological "problem" is the doctrine known either as **supersessionism** or **replacement theology**. That is, the doctrine that teaches that the international Church has replaced racial Israel as the people of God.

Ice comments: "I noted, similar [sic, he needs an adverb here - KLG] to **Rausch**, that there was potential for anti-Semitism because of a few statements, but mainly because of their 'replacement theology'" (p. 1). Quoting his embarrassing foray into theological **debate**,<sup>2</sup> **Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?**, he continues: "The danger lies in their misunderstanding of God's plan concerning the future of the nation Israel. **Reconstructionists** advocate the replacement of Old Testament Israel with the church, often called the 'New Israel.' They believe that Israel does not have a future different from any other nation" (p. 1; from *Dominion Theology*, p. 397). He then documents this wicked doctrine: "I then quoted **Reconstructionist** David Chilton as an example of that belief. 'Although Israel will someday be restored to the true faith, the Bible does not tell of any future plan for Israel as a special nation'" (p. 1).

Ice goes on to note that "Lindsey does not say that **Reconstructionists** are full-blown anti-Semites. He does say that **Dominion/Reconstructionists** engage in 'the same sort of rhetoric that in the past formed the basis of contempt for the Jews that later developed into outright anti-Semitism.' He then warns Christians to not sit idly by while a system of prophetic interpretation that historically furnished the philosophical basis for anti-Semitism infects the Church again" (p. 2).

A few paragraphs later, Ice cites Rushdoony's charge that the premillennial view of the future of Israel is a "heresy" because of its "exaltation of racism into a divine principle" (p. 2). He then concludes: "These statements are clearly replacement theology and thus theological anti-Semitism, which has historically been the foundation for overt anti-Semitism within Christendom" (p. 2). This is theological moronism. His argument is: replacement theology is theological anti-Semitism.

Below I will list some redemptively retrogressive, **Zionistic** statements from dispensational writers with which we strongly disagree. Because we disagree with these, we are labeled "anti-Semitic" - even though we argue that Israel will one day be converted to Christ (Rem. 11:11 -25)! According to dispensationalism the millennial kingdom will be fundamentally Jewish in character, even to the point of rebuilding the temple, setting up David's tabernacle, reinstituting the Jewish sacrificial system, and exalting Jewish believers over Gentile believers:

2. H. Wayne House, Ice's co-author, has expressed regret to both Gary DeMar and Greg Bahnsen over allowing *Dominion Theology* to go into print with so many errors and poor judgment calls.

Ice: "This is the point: once Israel is restored to the place of blessing and the tabernacle of David is rebuilt, then will follow the third phase in the plan of God. That period will be the time of the millennium, when the nations will indeed be converted and ruled over by **Christ**."<sup>3</sup>

**Ryrie**: "God has two distinct purposes-one for Israel and one for the **Church**."<sup>4</sup> "Israel regathered and turned to the Lord in salvation, will be exalted, blessed and favored through this **period**."<sup>5</sup>

Pentecost: "The Gentiles will be Israel's servants during that age. The nations which usurped authority over Israel in past ages find that downtrodden people exalted and themselves in subjection in their millennium." And these are not unsaved gentiles: "The Gentiles that are in the millennium will have experienced conversion prior to **admission**."<sup>6</sup>

Hoyt: "The redeemed living nation of Israel, regenerated and regathered to the land will be head over all the nations of the earth. . . . So he exalts them above the Gentile nations. . . . On the lowest level there are the saved, living, Gentile **nations**."<sup>7</sup>

**Walvoord**: "Israel will be a glorious nation, protected from her enemies, exalted above the Gentiles. . . . "In contrast to the present church age in which Jew and Gentile are on an equal plane of privilege, the millennium is clearly a period of time in which Israel is in prominence and blessing. . . . Israel as a nation will be **exalted**."<sup>8</sup>

## Conclusion

In our next issue I will continue our response to Ice by analyzing his poor theological argumentation. The charge that replacement theology or supersessionism is intrinsically anti-Semitic is a ridiculous assertion. I will demonstrate that the use of his logical methodology is ultimately to attack both Christ, the Bible, and the Christian faith itself. Christian Reconstruction is far and away a more consistently biblical theology than dispensationalism, which is undergoing **massive** changes due to its inherent **fallacies**.<sup>9</sup> Stay tuned.

## Addendum

In closing, let me mention that Christ College is moving from **Lynchburg**, Virginia, to Greenville, South Carolina (where I live), in Fall of 1993. I will be regularly teaching there in the field of **eschatology** and New Testament. If you are looking for a sound theological education at the college level, consider Christ College. For more information write: Christ College, P.O. Box 9084, Greenville, SC 29604.

3. H. Wayne House and Thomas Ice, *Dominion Theology* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1988), p. 169.

4. Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), p. 95.

5. Charles C. Ryrie, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1953), p. 149.

6. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), p. 506.

7. Herman Hoyt, "Dispensational Premillennialism," in Robert G. Clouse, *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views* (Downer's Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1977), p. 81.

8. John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), pp. 136, 302-303.

9. For taped discussions between futurists and myself, send \$4.00 per tapa to me at 46 Main St., Conestee, SC 29636. Three such tapas are available: "Preterism or Futurism: A Theological Discussion with Willard Ramsey." "Dispensationalism or Postmillennialism: A Discussion between Ken Gentry and Tommy Ice." "What is Postmillennialism? An Interview of Ken Gentry by a Bob Jones University Student." For a two tape set entitled "Dispensational Distortions" send \$7.00.