

Position Statement: PSN001

RESPONSE TO NATIONAL LIBERTY JOURNAL ARTICLE ON THE APOCALYPSE CODE

To the Editor:

Thank-you for this opportunity to respond to the recent *National Liberty Journal* article titled, "Hanegraaff Calls Tim LaHaye a Racist and Blasphemer," by Thomas Ice (http://www.nljonline.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=688&Itemid=0).

In November 2004 an article appeared in the *Dallas Morning News* titled, "Last Disciple vs. Left Behind: New Take on Rapture Puts Authors in Apocalyptic Feud." In the article Tim LaHaye supposed that I subscribe to the "nonsense" that "Christ came back in AD 68." As LaHaye's charge was circulated via newspapers and the Internet, I was summarily branded a "preterist" and a heretic who believes the second coming of Christ has already come. Pre-Trib Research Center fellow Mark Hitchcock not only associates me with preterism but uses the label to suggest I may be prone to anti-Semitic proclivities.

And now the *National Liberty Journal* headline: "Hanegraaff Calls Tim LaHaye a Racist and Blasphemer." The article begins by characterizing *The Apocalypse Code* as "a sub-Christian attack," proceeds to say "Hanegraaff is certainly no lover of Israel," and concludes with the assertion, "Hanegraaff embraces and argues for Replacement Theology."

First, a careful reading of *The Apocalypse Code* demonstrates that I do not call LaHaye a racist or a blasphemer. Rather, it is the implications of his theology that I call into question. For example, as I explain, LaHaye divides people into two categories on the basis of race. He goes so far as to assert, "After carefully analyzing the temperament of the first Israelite as he is described in the Bible, I have found Jacob to be a 'dead ringer' for the twentieth-century residents of Israel." The good news for Jews is that LaHaye believes that on the basis of their race they have a divine right to the land of Palestine. The bad news, according to LaHaye's worldview, is that as a direct result of the crucifixion of Christ twenty-first century Jews will soon die in an Armageddon that will make the Nazi Holocaust pale by comparison. In sharp contrast, I hold the very suggestion that Jews are under a national blood-guiltiness for the murder of Christ to be abhorrent.

Furthermore, the accusation "Hanegraaff is no lover of Israel" is flatly false. *The Apocalypse Code* clearly underscores my conviction that "the modern state of Israel has a definitive right to exist." What I object to is the notion of a racially exclusive state. Indeed, in light of the Incarnation, the Zionist suggestion that the modern land of Palestine, along with its capital Jerusalem, is to be reserved for a single ethnicity, or that the temple must be rebuilt and its sacrificial system reinstated, borders on blasphemy. Moreover, to suggest that native Palestinians—many of whom are our sisters and brothers in Christ—must be forcibly removed from the land is not only unbiblical but unethical. Just as it is a grievous sin to turn a blind eye to the evil of anti-Semitism, so it is a grievous sin to turn a blind eye to a theology that divides people on the basis of race rather than uniting them on the basis of righteousness, justice, and equity. As I affirm in my book, God is not pro-Palestinian, He is pro-peace; He is not pro-Jew, He is pro-justice!

Finally, I have never argued for Replacement Theology. As demonstrated in *The Apocalypse Code*, far from having two people divided by race, God has only ever had one chosen people who form one covenant community, beautifully symbolized in Scripture by one cultivated olive tree. Indeed, the precise terminology used to describe the children of Israel in the Old Testament is ascribed to the church in the New Testament. Peter calls them "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" (1 Peter 2:9). Ultimately, they are the one chosen people of God, not by virtue of their genealogical relationship to Abraham, but by virtue of their genuine relationship to "the living Stone—rejected by men, but chosen by God" (1 Peter 2:4). As such, the true church is true Israel, and true Israel is truly the church—one cannot replace what it already is. Rather than reason together in collegial debate, dispensationalists have coined the phrase "Replacement theologian" as the ultimate silencer.

Far from facilitating race-based discrimination on the basis of our eschatological presuppositions, Christians must be equipped to communicate that Christianity knows nothing of dividing people on the basis of race. Just as evangelicalism now universally repudiates the once-common appeal to Genesis 9:27 in support of slavery of blacks, we must thoroughly and finally put to rest any thought that the Bible supports the horrors of racial discrimination wherever and in whatever form we encounter it, whether within the borders of the United States or in the hallowed regions of the Middle East.

—Hank Hanegraaff, president of Christian Research Institute,
host of the *Bible Answer Man* broadcast, and author of *The Apocalypse Code*