

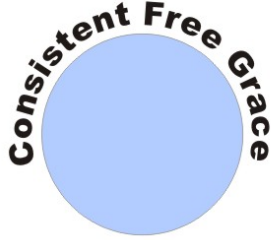
Eschatology and Soteriology

A Review of Hawley's Articles

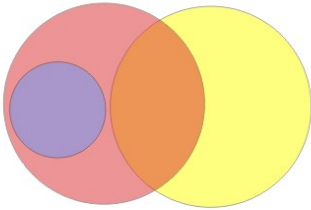
By Marty Cauley

8/8/2012

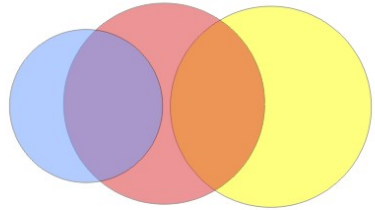
What is the Relationship?



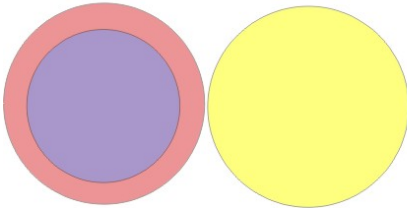
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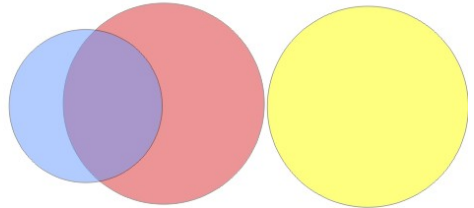
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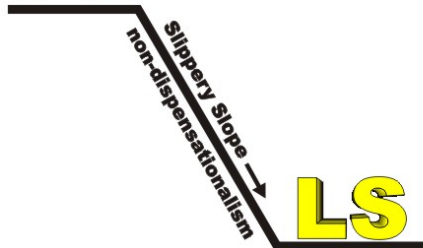


D.



FG

E.



Introduction

Because LS is inconsistent externally in relation to the biblical offer of eternal life as a free gift and is internally inconsistent in turning a gift into a reward, the most being suggested by this discussion is that LS might be at least eschatologically consistent with itself. The question then becomes in that case, “Can LS be consistent with Dispensationalism?” Answers C and D pose that it cannot.

At the same time, the question may be asked, “Is consistency for FG limited to the Dispensational perspective?” In other words, are those writers outside of the dispensational camp who affirm FG being inconsistent in doing so? Must one remain in the Dispensational hermeneutic in order to remain consistently within the FG rubric?

At this juncture, Hawley has written three articles that demonstrates those FG writers who embrace a non-dispensational stance are on a slippery slope that tends toward LS: <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/2011i/Hawley-4.pdf>. What remains to be seen is if he will be able to demonstrate an even tighter link between Dispensationalism and FG soteriology.

Thesis of Part 1

The thesis of part 1 of Hawley’s article is that “**Lordship Salvation does not hold up under consistent dispensationalism**, and that Free Grace is the natural outcome of a consistently literal interpretation of Scripture” (p. 68). In other words, *normative dispensationalism* (ND) rules out LS. I will use \Rightarrow as an *if-then* symbol and \ominus for *negation*. Thus an equation of his proposition would be: **ND \Rightarrow \ominus LS**. If a normative dispensationalist position is adopted, *then* the Lordship position is logically *negated*.

Reaction

As a FG dispensationalist, I certainly find this equation attractive. Yet, notwithstanding the appeal of Hawley’s thesis, my initial reaction was, “So what?” My perception is that that Lordship Salvation does not hold up even outside the dispensational system. If LS cannot survive outside of dispensationalism, then of course it is going to shrivel and die inside of dispensationalism. Nevertheless, I will concede that Hawley does admirably use his thesis, as stated above, to demonstrate his more comprehensive thesis *that dispensationalism and Free Grace are intimately linked*. But what is the exact nature of this link?

Tendency versus Necessity

Certainly, the nature of this link is such that the rejection of dispensationalism has a *tendency to result* (\rightarrow) in LS. The natural tendency is that embracing a *non-dispensational* (N-D) approach would lead to LS. This equation denoting tendency would be: **N-D \rightarrow LS**. Hawley successfully demonstrates this *slippery slope* propensity and thus the accuracy of this equation. Notwithstanding, my perception is that he may have failed to demonstrate logical *necessity*.

To illustrate, as a creationist I believe that the acceptance of evolution has a pronounced *tendency* to lead to atheism (**Evolution \rightarrow Atheism**). Many believers have had their faith destroyed by being brainwashed with evolutionary teaching. Some creationists would advance this argument and claim that evolutionary theory *necessarily* leads to atheism (**Evolution \Rightarrow Atheism**). To be sure, theistic evolutionists and progressive creationists may be held up as exceptions to the rule. However, creationists seeking to establish a necessitative link between evolution and atheism simply would respond that those believers who retain their belief in God after embracing evolutionary theory are being logically inconsistent. Thus, the exceptions to the rule do not invalidate the rule that logical consistency demands that atheism be adopted as the logical result of evolutionary theory. Harmonizing the Christian faith with evolutionary theory is impossible. I am inclined to agree with this creational perspective, if the details under contention are examined in sufficient depth.

Similarly, as an inerrantist I subscribe to the *domino theory* in which it is believed that once inerrancy is abandoned, logical consistency would require an abandonment of other biblical doctrines as well. Those believers who reject inerrancy and yet remain conservative in their outlook are, thankfully, being logically inconstancy. They have not allowed the destructive nature of their concession to run its full course. Even those believers who progress on to liberalism stop short of embracing the full implications of their errant view of Scripture. Rejecting inerrancy logically leads to apostasy (**Errancy \Rightarrow Apostasy**), not merely to liberalism.

Hawley's argument likewise advances beyond merely affirming slippery-slope propensity to insisting upon domino necessity. If the details underlying dispensationalism and conditionalism are examined in sufficient depth, then a necessitative relationship is established so that maintaining LS necessary requires the rejection of dispensationalism. Actually, this assessment is nothing more than a contrapositive of his opening thesis and, therefore, is necessarily true if his initial thesis is proven:

$$(\mathbf{ND} \Rightarrow \textcircled{\times} \mathbf{LS}) \Rightarrow (\mathbf{LS} \Rightarrow \textcircled{\times} \mathbf{ND})$$

Of course, one might also express this equation differently by implementing substitution: *FG for* $\mathcal{O}LS$ and *N-D for* $\mathcal{O}ND$. After all, being FG is equivalent to not being LS and being a non-dispensationalist is equivalent to not being a dispensationalist. So the logical relationship of his proposal might also be expressed as:

$$(\mathbf{ND} \Rightarrow \mathbf{FG}) \Rightarrow (\mathbf{LS} \Rightarrow \mathbf{N-D})$$

Without delving into the logical inconsistencies found internally within LS, **could one maintain that dispensationalism itself requires that one reject LS?** Could his argument for propensity be strengthened so as to establish logical necessity? He has stated that he hopes that his article will attract further investigation regarding the nature of the intimate link between normative dispensationalism and conditionalism (p. 68). My purpose here is to consider areas where that investigation might be furthered.

What is the exact nature of the link? Is this intimacy merely slippery-slope *propensity* or might that link be more compelling and one of domino-effect *necessity*.

Thesis of Part 2

It was with this interest in mind that I turned to Part 2 of Hawley’s article. After all, in part 1 he had asserted that there was a “**cause-and-effect relationship** between dispensationalism and Free Grace” (p. 66). Yet, on the next page, he noted that Kendal was an exception to the rule. So my hope was that he would show that exceptions to the rule do not invalidate the rule. Alas, Hawley did not deal with such exceptions. So my question is, “Do such exceptions prove that the relationship is merely one of propensity?”

He begins part 2 by claiming, “I demonstrated *that* a non-Dispensational approach to interpretation **leads** to Lordship Salvation” (bold mine, p. 89). What a minute. Has he actually proven: $\mathbf{N-D} \Rightarrow \mathbf{LS}$? No. If by *leads* he means *necessarily results in* (\Rightarrow), then I fail to see how he has established this equation. What about the exceptions? Does N-D (non-dispensationalism) necessary lead to LS or does N-D merely have a tendency to do so? Moreover, the exceptions run both ways. As he notes in Part 2, both MacArthur and Piper are premillennialists, yet this does not prevent them from embracing LS. Therefore, I question this ($\mathbf{N-D} \Rightarrow \mathbf{LS}$) cause-and-effect relationship.

Moreover, if my mathematical representation of Part 1 is correct, then he has performed a logical fallacy in this opening claim of Part 2. He seems to have assumed that a logical inverse is necessarily true: $(\mathbf{LS} \Rightarrow \mathbf{N-D}) \Rightarrow (\mathbf{N-D} \Rightarrow \mathbf{LS})$.

However, logical inverses are not necessarily true. Although exceptions do not necessarily invalidate a rule (see discussion of creationism and inerrancy above), it will take more than a logical inverse to prove his rule. Thus, at this point in the discussion, I consider his logical inverse to be unproven.

Exceptions to the Rule

Although Hawley claims that the *Judgment Seat of Christ* (JSC) and the *Millennial Kingdom* (MK) are watershed issues, it must be remembered that, as premillennialists, MacArthur and Piper would place the JSC before MK. However, doing so does not prevent them from embracing LS. So why am I to believe Hawley's claim that normative dispensationalism (ND) logically prevents one from embracing LS? Is even this preliminary cause-and-effect relationship valid? Because of such exceptions one might even question his preliminary thesis (**ND \Rightarrow \emptyset LS**).

Just as the existence of theistic evolutionists weakens the creationist case that evolution leads to atheism and just as the existence of conservative errantists weakens the inerrantist case that errancy leads to atheism, so the existence of FG N-D and the existence of LS ND certainly weakens Hawley's case that N-D leads to LS (**N-D \Rightarrow LS**). Further, if I can set aside my dispensational preferences and destroy the LS argument on their home (N-D) turf, then why must I conclude that N-D necessarily leads to LS? I will grant Hawley the *propensity* of N-D to lead to LS but conceding the *necessity* of N-D to lead to LS is far more difficult.

However, as noted above, regarding creationism and inerrancy, exceptions to the slippery-slope rule do not necessarily rule out the domino effect for those who are logically consistent with the details. Difficulty is not to be confused with impossibility. Could it be still that ND necessary renders LS impossible despite the exceptions. Might Hawley's primary equation still be true (**ND \Rightarrow \emptyset LS**)? What details might be brought to fore to demonstrate the necessary relationship?

History

If ND asserts the glory of God is the unifying theme of Scripture, while N-D maintains that soteriology is the focus of Scripture, does adopting N-D necessarily result in LS? Yes, even Hawley's logical inverse follows as a logical necessity in that case (**N-D \Rightarrow LS**). If Lordship Salvation is allowed to read mistholic texts as if they are soteriologic, then conditional security is the necessary result. Hawley's argument that a soteriological view of history leads to LS is conclusive. One problem, though, is that Hawley may have posed a false dichotomy. Is a doxological view as opposed to a soteriological view the only options available?

Some kingdom advocates believe that the message of the kingdom is the unifying theme of Scripture. Additionally, some outside ND recognize the FG distinction between entering and inheriting the kingdom, while some FG advocates inside ND, such as Lopez, muddy the distinction. Granted, I take Lopez to task for doing so in my book *The Outer Darkness*. Nevertheless, such exceptions do raise the question as to whether FG could find a home outside of ND (and thus inside of N-D). Seemingly, a misthological view of history (as opposed to a soteriological view of history) would afford a home for FG N-D. If so, then Hawley's more aggressive thesis (**N-D ⇒ LS**) is false.

Already

How about the N-D argument that the kingdom is already? Does this necessarily result in LS? Possibly not. Many within ND believe that the kingdom is already present in a mystical form. You presently enter the mystical form through faith alone in Christ alone. That is solid FG theology.

Universal Judgment

How about the N-D perception of a universal judgment? If believers and unbelievers both appear before the same judgment, does this necessarily result in LS? Probably not. I frequently set aside my ND preferences in order to refute conditionalism on a N-D turf. I sometimes give up my home field dispensational advantage in order to demonstrate that FG theology can win even when playing on the road so to speak. I don't have to have ND to defeat LS.

For example, in *Woolly Wolves and Woolly Sheep*, I do not find it absolutely essential to interpret the *judgment of the sheep and goats* (JSG) from a ND perspective in order to defend unconditional security. For that matter, some dispensationalists, such as Lang and myself (and evidently now even Wilkin), think that unbelievers and believers will both appear before the *Great White Throne Judgment* (GWT). After all, why not? If believers and unbelievers who live through the end of the tribulation can both appear before the JSG then why can believers who die during the millennium not be raised to stand before the GWT with unbelievers?

Therefore, I disagree with Hawley in his assessment that seeing JSG and the GWT as describing a universal judgment (so N-D) necessarily leads to conditional security (Part 2, n. 13, p. 94). Instead, it would seem that adopting a N-D perspective of the GWT does not necessarily lead to LS. Hawley has overstated the dependency of unconditional security on ND. Frankly, I believe you can tie both hands of a dispensationalist behind his eschatological back, and he will still be able to beat conditional security.

So I question Hawley's claim to have proven that N-D leads to LS, if by *leads* he means to imply *necessary leads* (\Rightarrow). Certainly, N-D has a *propensity to lead* (\rightarrow) to LS, and he has well demonstrated some of the reasons that this is so. But to prove that it necessarily leads to LS would require further demonstration. Therefore, for now at least, I remain unpersuaded of his stronger claim (**N-D \Rightarrow LS**).

Weaker Claim of Necessity

What about his primary claim? With my objections and exceptions, have I thereby invalidated Hawley's initial claim that ND necessary renders LS impossible (**ND \Rightarrow \otimes LS**)? No. Even though I am not persuaded that he has established this logical necessity, I am absolute confident that it can be done. Consistent dispensationalism, when it rightly interprets 1Thess 5:9-10, for example, affirms an unconditional rapture. In turn, an unconditional rapture necessitates unconditional security.

I am aware that some dispensationalists have rejected the Hodgian defense of an unconditional rapture as derived from this text. However, I have addressed this Hodgian weakness in *The Outer Darkness* and therefore consider the overall Hodgian interpretation conclusive. Yet this strengthened neo-Hodgian position is so strong that I would venture that it invalidates LS even if the passage is not interpreted from a ND perspective. Therefore, as before, the most I am affirming is Hawley's primary claim, not his logical inverse.

Other examples might be cited as well in favor of Hawley's primary claim. For example, on more than one occasion in my writings, I will point out how an interpretation consistent with dispensationalism would prove my point. However, not being an advocate of the perspective expressed by Hawley's logical inverse, I also tend to point out how FG is superior to LS even when ND is not granted.

Conclusion of Part 2

The bottom line is that I affirm Hawley's primary thesis (**ND \Rightarrow \otimes LS**) and all the logical implications of that statement. If you are a consistent normative dispensationalist, then you cannot be Lordship Salvationist. What is more, I would affirm his argument that being a non-dispensationalist has a *tendency* to lead to Lordship Salvation (**N-D \rightarrow LS**). On the other hand, he seems to have exceeded the logical implications of his argument and the evidence when he asserted a stronger relationship (**N-D \Rightarrow LS**).

Thesis of Part 3

Hawley begins Part 3 of his argument by restating the objectives he sought to achieve in parts 1 and 2. My interest is in his stated goal for Part 2: "My goal was to contend

for the point that Lordship Salvation cannot be consistently maintained without departing from certain key aspects of Dispensationalism” (p. 23). As indicated above for reasons of my own, yet related to those which he has made, I agree with his statement (**ND** ⇒ **⊗ LS**).

He advances beyond this more modest proposition, though, to conclude his article by boldly claiming, “Free Grace rises and falls with Dispensationalism” (p. 37). In my limited interaction with his position above, I have expressed my reservations with this assertion.

Technically, I do not believe that a non-dispensational position necessarily destroys the FG position. That said, I would agree that pragmatically, over the long course, I would not expect FG to be maintained outside of a system that is not at least in harmony with basic dispensational presuppositions.

We do not necessarily have to lead someone to a dispensational understanding before we can lead them to a saving understanding of the gospel. Nevertheless, as Hawley insists, we should seek to advance a dispensational understanding. It is not by accident that Part 1 of my book, *The Outer Darkness*, establishes the eschatological framework associated with dispensationalism as the most reasonable option. Pragmatically, I concur with Hawley. Dispensationalism is indispensable. His overarching thesis and exhortations are well taken and his articles highly recommended.