

Dispensationalism: Defined

Based upon the book: "Dispensationalism" by Charles C. Ryrie

Dispensationalism: Defined

Scotfield's over-simplified definition:

"A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some *specific* revelation of the will of God. Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture."

Dispensationalism: Defined

Aspects of understanding the concept:

- Etymology
- Scriptural Use of the word dispensation
- The relation of the dispensations to progressive revelation
- Characteristics of a dispensation (next week)
- The Sine Qua Non of Dispensationalism (next week)

Dispensationalism: Defined

The Etymology of the Word Dispensation

Etymology is understanding the meaning of the word from breaking it down based upon its historical terminology. (Etym=true meaning of a truth/ logos=study, logic, reason)

- Latin: dispensatio
 - To weigh out or dispense
- 3 principal ideas connected to the English word Dispensation:
 - The action of dealing out or distributing
 - The action of administering, ordering, or managing; the system by which things are administered
 - The action of dispensing with some requirement

Dispensationalism: Defined

The Etymology of the Word Dispensation

- Greek: oikonomos (transliteration) where we get the word economy
 - Manage, regulate, administer, and plan
 - To divide, apportion, administer or manage the affairs of an inhabited house
 - Stewardship, management, administration, or treasury

Dispensationalism: Defined

The Scriptural use of the Word Dispensation

Usage of the Word:

- Dispensation (20*NT)
- Oikonomeo: used once and translated as steward
- Oikonomos: (10*NT) Steward, manager, treasurer
- Oikonomia: (9*NT) Stewardship, dispensation, administration, job, commission

Dispensationalism: Defined

The Scriptural use of the Word Dispensation: The Features Displayed:

Characteristics that Jesus gave us of stewardship, dispensational arrangement (Luke 16):

1. Roles: Authority, steward (leader/follower)
2. Responsibilities: stewards must be faithful (there are known duties)
3. Accountability: stewards must answer to their master (authority)
4. Change: loss of stewardship due to unfaithfulness

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The Scriptural use of the Word Dispensation: The Features Displayed:

Characteristics Paul gave of stewardship, dispensational arrangement:

1. We are responsible to God (1 Cor. 4:1-2; Titus 1:7)
2. Faithfulness is required (1 Cor. 4:2; Rom. 16:23)
3. There is an end to the stewardship (Gal. 4:2)
4. Dispensations are connected to the mysteries of God with specific revelation from God. (1 Cor. 4:1; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25)
5. Dispensation and age are connected by not exactly the same. (Eph. 3:9; Col 1:26)
6. Dispensations are directly mentioned by Paul at least 3 times
 1. Fullness of times: Eph. 1:10
 2. The Grace of God: Eph. 3:2
 3. Implication of a previous dispensation: Col. 1:25-26

Dispensationalism: Defined

The Scriptural use of the Word Dispensation

A basic definition based upon usage in Scripture:

"A stewardship, administration, oversight, or management of others' property."

Concise definition based upon Biblical use:

"A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God's purpose."

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The Scriptural use of the Word Dispensation

The "outworking of God's purpose" distinguishes that the viewpoint is God's not man's. As stated by Erich Sauer:

"A new period always begins only when *from the side of God* a change is introduced in the composition of the principles valid up to that time; that is, when from the side of God three things concur:

1. A continuance of certain ordinances valid until then;
2. An annulment of other regulations until then valid;
3. A fresh introduction of new principles not before valid.

Dispensationalism views the world as a house-hold run by God.

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The Scriptural use of the Word Dispensation

Harry Ironside (the **prince of dispensational preachers**):

"An economy is an ordered condition of things... There are various economies running through the Word of God. A dispensation, an economy, then, is that particular order or condition of things prevailing in one special age which does not necessarily prevail in another."

Ryrie:

"A dispensation is from God's viewpoint an economy; from man's, a responsibility; and in relation to progressive revelation, a stage in it."
and

"The word dispensation refers to a particular arrangement by which God regulates the way human beings relate to Him"

Dispensationalism: Defined

The Relation of the Dispensations to Progressive Revelation

"Progressive revelation is the recognition that God's message to man was not given in one single act but was unfolded in a series of successive acts and through the minds and hands of many men of varying backgrounds."

This is a theistic rather than deistic view of revelation.

Dispensationalism: Defined

The Relation of the Dispensations to Progressive Revelation

Scriptural evidence of progression:

- Mars Hill sermon: Acts 17:30
- Opening of Hebrews: Hebrews 1:1-2
- John 1:17, 14:16-17, 26, 16:24

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The Relation of the Dispensations to Progressive Revelation

Major issue with non-dispensational interpreters:

- reading back into and forcing the teaching of the new testament into the old.

Dr. C:

Dispensational theology does not cause disunity in the Bible, rather, the forcing of "unity" over recognizing a unified progression will cause disunity.

"Progressive revelation views the Bible not as a textbook on theology but as the continually unfolding revelation of God given by various means throughout the successive ages."

Dispensationalism: Defined

Review:

Aspects of understanding the concept:

- Etymology
 - Basic understanding: dispensing, administering, economy, stewardship
- Scriptural Use of the word dispensation
 - English word: 20 times
 - Basic greek equivalents: 20 times (where we get our english word "economy")

Dispensationalism: Defined

Review (cont.):

Aspects of understanding the concept:

- ...Scriptural Use of the word dispensation
 - Features Displayed:
 - 4 Major Characteristics from Jesus
 - 6 Major Characteristics from Paul:
 - Concise definition
 - "A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God's purpose."
 - 3 Concurring things necessary for a change in dispensation
 - Remember Ironsides' & Ryrie's definitions.

Dispensationalism: Defined

Review (cont.):

- The relation of the dispensations to progressive revelation
 - "...series of successive acts..."
 - know where to find Scriptural evidence of progression
 - know how to answer the accusation of disunity