



exploring the big picture

over

of the bible

view

from genesis to revelation

In addition to God's six covenants, he has chosen to work in different ways with different groups at different times.

These are called "**dispensations**" from the word *dispensatio*, which is the Latin translation of the Greek *oikonomia*. *oikonomia* means "**house law**."

An aerial photograph of a dense, green forest. A winding river or stream flows through the center of the image, creating a path that leads the eye from the top towards the bottom. The trees are thick and vibrant green, with some lighter patches where the river is wider or shallower.

Considering humanity as God's "house," the dispensations are simply a way to see how God has managed **his** house over the years.

An easy way to understand the concept is to compare it with how you run **your** house – age of children, number, stage of life.

How many dispensations?

1. Paul mentioned three

Colossians 1:25 – the church (*present*)

Ephesians 3:5, 9 – previous generations (*past*)

Ephesians 1:10 – fullness of the times (*future*)

At the time of this writing, Paul may not have known about the distinction between the Millennial Kingdom and the Eternal State

An aerial photograph of a dense forest with a winding river or stream cutting through it. The image is in grayscale and serves as a background for the text.

How many dispensations?

2. Theologians in the 1600-1700s usually listed five, six, or seven
3. Scofield popularized seven in his *Scofield Reference Bible* (traditional)
4. Dr. Christopher Cone sees twelve

When does a new dispensation begin?

God gives:

- new revelation
- new rules
- new expectations

Nine Dispensations



Free Will / Innocence **(Genesis 1–2)**

- One law for all humanity
- Power of contrary choice
- Ended with the Fall

Nine Dispensations



Moral Conscience (began Genesis 3)

- Many unwritten laws
- Still in effect today

Nine Dispensations



Human Government (began Genesis 9)

- One new permission: all things acceptable to eat
- One new law: capital punishment
- Still in effect today
- **Noahic Covenant**

Nine Dispensations



Abrahamic Promises (began Genesis 12)

- One new law: bless Abraham/Israel or be cursed by God
- Still in effect today
- **Abrahamic Covenant**

Nine Dispensations



Mosaic Law (Exodus 12 - Cross)

- 613 new laws
- Given to the nation of Israel only
- Ended with the cross; no longer in effect
- Mosaic Covenant

Nine Dispensations



Church (Acts 2 - Rapture)

- Numerous rules (the law of Christ) which we are empowered to live out by the indwelling Holy Spirit
- Accessible to everyone but comprised of only those who believe in Jesus; Spirit baptism

Nine Dispensations



Tribulation / Daniel's "70th week"

- 7 years; after the Rapture until Jesus' Second Coming
- Visions and dreams will provide new revelation
- Moral Conscience, Human Government, and Abrahamic Promises still in effect

Nine Dispensations



Millennium (Revelation 20:1-6)


- 1,000 years
- Theocratic kingdom; Jesus' word will be law; animal sacrifices in effect; rebels will be executed
- Human Government and Abrahamic Promises continue
- Land, Davidic, New Covenants

Nine Dispensations



Fullness of the Times / Eternal State (Revelation 21-22)

- No law will be necessary because all people will be fixed in their permanent spiritual state
- All other dispensations will be summed up here; this dispensation will last forever

An aerial photograph of a dense, lush green forest. A winding river or stream flows through the center of the image, creating a meandering path. The water is a light, silty brown color, contrasting with the deep green of the surrounding trees. The forest appears to be a tropical or subtropical rainforest, with a thick canopy of various tree species. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day, and the overall scene is one of natural beauty and tranquility.

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