**Dispensationalism - Details**

### Who is the Beast?

In the dispensational view of eschatology, the "beast" in the Book of Revelation is typically understood as a future world leader who will arise during the end times.

**Is the Beast the Antichrist?** Yes and no. This figure is closely associated with the Antichrist, though some dispensationalists distinguish between the two, with the "beast" being the political manifestation of the Antichrist's power. Often they are used synonymously.

**First Beast (Revelation 13:1-10)**: The first beast emerges from the sea, symbolizing chaotic, Gentile nations. It is often identified as a powerful political leader or empire that will dominate the world during the end times. This beast is described as having seven heads and ten horns, with blasphemous names written on its heads. The horns are often interpreted as ten kings or nations that will support the beast's rule.

### What Does the Beast Do?

* World Domination: The first beast is granted authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation. It will have immense power and will be worshiped by those who do not follow Christ. The beast is seen as establishing a global government or empire, characterized by its blasphemy and opposition to God.
* Persecution of the Saints: The beast will wage war against the saints (believers in Christ) and bring about a time of intense suffering and persecution for those who refuse to worship the beast.
* Economic Control: The beast, through the false prophet, will enforce a system where people must receive a "mark" on their right hand or forehead to buy or sell anything. This "mark of the beast" is associated with the number 666, and those who refuse to accept it will be unable to participate in the economy, leading to severe hardship.
* Deception and Blasphemy: The beast is characterized by its blasphemy against God, and it will deceive the inhabitants of the earth through miraculous signs and wonders. This deception will lead many to worship the beast and reject God.
* Final Judgment: According to dispensationalist eschatology, the reign of the beast will ultimately be brought to an end by Christ at His Second Coming. The beast, along with the false prophet, will be defeated and cast into the lake of fire, marking the end of their reign of terror and the beginning of Christ's millennial kingdom.

In summary, in the dispensational view, the beast in Revelation represents a future, powerful, and evil political leader who will establish a global empire, persecute believers, enforce economic control through the mark of the beast, and lead the world in rebellion against God, but will ultimately be defeated by Christ.

### Who is the False Prophet?

The false prophet is the **second beast** mentioned in Revelation 13. He arises from the earth, in contrast to the first beast, who comes from the sea. This distinction often symbolizes that the false prophet may come from a more stable or established religious background, as opposed to the chaotic origins of the first beast.

The false prophet is described as having **two horns like a lamb** but speaking like a dragon. The lamb-like appearance suggests that he will appear gentle, harmless, and even Christ-like, as the lamb is a symbol of Christ. However, the dragon-like speech indicates that, despite his benign appearance, his words and actions are inspired by Satan (the dragon in Revelation).

### What Does the False Prophet Do?

* Promotes Worship of the First Beast: The primary role of the false prophet is to direct worship toward the first beast. He does this by performing signs and wonders, which deceive the inhabitants of the earth. His miracles are designed to validate the authority and power of the first beast, leading people to believe in and worship the beast.
* Performs Miraculous Signs: The false prophet performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of people. These miraculous acts are intended to convince the world of the divine authority of the first beast and to authenticate the false prophet's own authority as a religious leader.
* Sets Up the Image of the Beast: The false prophet instructs the people to create an image of the first beast. He then has the power to give breath to this image, causing it to speak and even kill those who refuse to worship it. This image of the beast becomes an object of worship, and those who do not comply face persecution or death.
* Enforces the Mark of the Beast: The false prophet plays a key role in enforcing the economic system tied to the "mark of the beast." He causes all people, regardless of their status, to receive a mark on their right hand or forehead. This mark is necessary for buying and selling, effectively forcing people into economic and social compliance with the beast's regime. Those who refuse the mark are unable to participate in the economy, leading to significant hardship.
* Deception: The false prophet is a master of deception, using religious imagery, miracles, and persuasive speech to lead people astray. His deception is so powerful that it convinces many to follow the first beast, worship its image, and take its mark, sealing their allegiance to the beast and their fate in the final judgment.

### Who is the Harlot?

In the dispensational view of eschatology, the **Harlot** in the Book of Revelation, also known as "Babylon the Great" or the "Whore of Babylon," is a symbolic figure representing a powerful and corrupt religious, political, and economic system that dominates the world in the end times. This figure is described in detail in Revelation 17 and 18.

* Babylon the Great: The Harlot is identified with "Babylon the Great," which in dispensational eschatology is often interpreted as a symbolic representation of a future global system that embodies spiritual and moral corruption. This system is characterized by its opposition to God and its persecution of the saints.
* Apostate Religion: The Harlot is often seen as a symbol of a false, apostate religious system that will rise to power during the end times. This system is viewed as being deeply intertwined with political and economic power, leading the nations of the world into idolatry and immorality.
* Riding the Beast: The Harlot is depicted as riding a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns. This beast is often identified with the first beast of Revelation 13, representing a powerful political leader or empire. The fact that the Harlot is riding the beast suggests that she has influence and control over this political power, at least for a time.

### What Does the Harlot Do?

* Spiritual and Moral Corruption: The Harlot is described as being drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus, symbolizing her role in the persecution of believers. She leads the inhabitants of the earth into spiritual fornication, which represents idolatry and the worship of false gods. The Harlot's influence causes nations and their leaders to commit acts of moral and spiritual depravity.
* Economic Power and Luxury: Revelation 18 emphasizes the Harlot's wealth and luxury, depicting her as being clothed in fine garments and adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls. This imagery suggests that the system she represents is one of immense economic power, characterized by excessive wealth and materialism. The Harlot is also described as having made the merchants of the earth rich through her trade, indicating that this system has a global economic impact.
* Alliance with Political Powers: The Harlot is said to commit fornication with the kings of the earth, meaning she forms alliances with political leaders and governments. These alliances allow her to exert influence over the world's political systems, leading them into corruption and rebellion against God.
* Persecution of Believers: The Harlot is explicitly associated with the persecution and martyrdom of Christians. She is described as being "drunk with the blood of the saints," indicating that the system she represents is responsible for widespread persecution and violence against those who remain faithful to God.
* Ultimate Betrayal and Destruction: In Revelation 17:16, the Harlot's alliance with the political powers turns against her. The beast and the ten horns (symbolizing the ten kings or nations that support the beast) ultimately hate the Harlot, stripping her of her wealth and power, devouring her flesh, and burning her with fire. This represents the self-destructive nature of evil and the eventual downfall of the corrupt system she embodies.

### Revelation 6 to 20

In the dispensational view of eschatology, the **Tribulation** is a future seven-year period of intense suffering, judgment, and upheaval on the earth that is largely described in Revelation 6 to 20. It is considered a central event in God's plan for the end times, marking the final opportunity for humanity to repent before Christ's return. The Tribulation is divided into two halves, with the latter half, known as the **Great Tribulation**, being especially severe.

#### 1. The Rapture of the Church (Pre-Tribulation Event)

* Dispensationalists often believe that the Tribulation begins after the Rapture, where all true believers in Christ are caught up to meet the Lord in the air and are taken to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
* The Rapture is seen as a means of protecting the Church from the coming wrath of God that will be poured out during the Tribulation.

#### 2. The Rise of the Beast/Antichrist

* After the Rapture, a charismatic and powerful leader, known as the Antichrist, emerges. He is connected to the first beast described in Revelation 13.
* The Antichrist forms a political alliance with ten nations (symbolized by the ten horns on the beast) and establishes a global government. He initially presents himself as a man of peace and makes a covenant with Israel, allowing them to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 9:27) and sacrifices restart.

#### 3. The Beginning of the Tribulation

* The signing of the covenant with Israel marks the official start of the seven-year Tribulation period.
* During the first three and a half years, the Antichrist consolidates his power and enforces peace, but this peace is deceptive and temporary.

#### 4. The Seal Judgments (Revelation 6)

* The Tribulation begins with the breaking of the seven seals, which unleash a series of catastrophic judgments on the earth:
  + First Seal: The rider on a white horse, often associated with the Antichrist, symbolizes conquest.
  + Second Seal: The rider on a red horse brings war and bloodshed.
  + Third Seal: The rider on a black horse brings famine.
  + Fourth Seal: The rider on a pale horse brings death through war, famine, and plague.
  + Fifth Seal: The martyrs cry out for justice.
  + Sixth Seal: Cosmic disturbances (earthquakes, darkened sun, blood moon) cause widespread terror.
  + Seventh Seal: Silence in heaven, leading to the trumpet judgments.

#### 5. The Trumpet Judgments (Revelation 8-9)

* The seventh seal introduces the trumpet judgments, which intensify God's wrath:
  + First Trumpet: Hail, fire, and blood destroy a third of the earth's vegetation.
  + Second Trumpet: A fiery mountain is thrown into the sea, turning a third of it into blood and killing sea life.
  + Third Trumpet: A star called Wormwood falls, poisoning a third of the fresh water.
  + Fourth Trumpet: A third of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened, reducing daylight.
  + Fifth Trumpet: Demonic locusts torment humanity for five months.
  + Sixth Trumpet: Four angels release an army that kills a third of humanity.
  + Seventh Trumpet: Announces the coming of God's kingdom and the final judgments.

#### 6. The Abomination of Desolation

* At the midpoint of the Tribulation (three and a half years), the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel and commits the Abomination of Desolation by desecrating the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, likely by setting up an image of the beast/himself to be worshiped (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15).
* This event marks the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the second half of the seven years, which is characterized by unprecedented persecution and suffering.

#### 7. The Great Tribulation

* The last three and a half years are marked by the most severe judgments and persecution.
* The Mark of the Beast is introduced, requiring all people to receive a mark on their right hand or forehead to buy or sell (Revelation 13:16-17). Those who refuse the mark face economic hardship and persecution.
* The Bowl Judgments (Revelation 16) are poured out, bringing further catastrophic events:
  + First Bowl: Painful sores on those with the mark of the beast.
  + Second Bowl: The sea turns to blood, killing all marine life.
  + Third Bowl: Rivers and springs turn to blood.
  + Fourth Bowl: The sun scorches people with intense heat.
  + Fifth Bowl: Darkness and pain in the beast's kingdom.
  + Sixth Bowl: The Euphrates River dries up, preparing the way for the kings of the east and the Battle of Armageddon.
  + Seventh Bowl: A great earthquake and hailstorm devastate the earth.

#### 8. The Battle of Armageddon

* The final battle between the forces of the Antichrist and Christ takes place at Armageddon (Revelation 16:16).
* The nations of the world, led by the Antichrist, gather to wage war against Israel and Jesus Christ.
* This battle marks the climax of the Tribulation and leads directly to the Second Coming of Christ.

#### 9. The Second Coming of Christ

* Jesus Christ returns to earth in glory, defeating the Antichrist and his armies at Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-21).
* The Antichrist and the False Prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire, and their forces are destroyed.

#### 10. The Binding of Satan and the Millennial Kingdom

* After the defeat of the Antichrist, Satan is bound and cast into the abyss which is sealed for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3).
* Christ establishes His millennial kingdom on earth, a period of peace and righteousness lasting 1,000 years.

**11. The Final, Final Battle**

* After the millennial reign of Christ, Satan is released from his bondage and goes out to deceive the nation to the four corners of the earth. He rallies an army whose number is like the sand of the sea and leads another rebellion against Christ. The army surrounds the saints before being consumed by fire from above. Satan, at the last, is thrown into the lake of fire with the beast and the false prophet. (Rev 20:7-10)