

The Last Days: Why Should I Care?

Vern S. Poythress, Ph.D., Th.D.
Westminster Theological Seminary

A. The Future and the Present

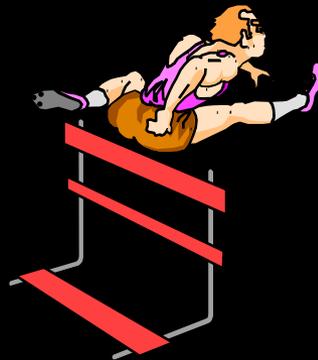
Nonconsummation Goals

Present action

fixed by

Goal

- ◆ Save money
- ◆ Spend money
- ◆ Promote revolution
- ◆ Political activism
- ◆ Passive meditation
- ◆ Children's security
- ◆ Personal pleasure
- ◆ Communist society
- ◆ Democratic peace
- ◆ Nirvana



Consummation Goals

Present action

- ◆ **Obey (Rev. 3:3)**
- ◆ **Eternal life**
- ◆ **Purity (3:4)**
- ◆ **In Christ (3:20)**

Christocentric Goal

- **Rule (Rev. 22:1)**
- **Life (1:18; 22:2)**
- **Purity (19:11; 21:27)**
- **1 Cor. 15:45;
Phil. 3:21; Eph. 1:10**

← **IN CHRIST** →

B. Expectation

Wait for Christ

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ...

– Titus 2:11-13

Christ to be Honored

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

– Philippians 2:9-11

C. Orientation Now

Christ as Central

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

– Col. 3:1-4

Experience and Hope

Fulfillment Now

- ◆ **New life**
- ◆ **Purity**
- ◆ **Assurance**

Fulfillment To Come

- ◆ **Resurrection**
- ◆ **Perfect Purity**
- ◆ **Unfailing**

D. Understanding God's Purposes --Especially in the Old Testament

Promises of God

I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

– Gen. 3:15

... in you [Abram] all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

– Gen. 12:3

Promises of God Fulfilled

Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.

– Galatians 3:16

Symbols

- ◆ **Sacrifices**
- ◆ **Tabernacle**
- ◆ **Priesthood**
- ◆ **Land**
- ◆ **Sacrifice of Christ**
- ◆ **Body of Christ (John 2:21)**
- ◆ **High priesthood**
- ◆ **Earth (Rom. 4:13)**

Inherit the World

For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

– Romans 4:13

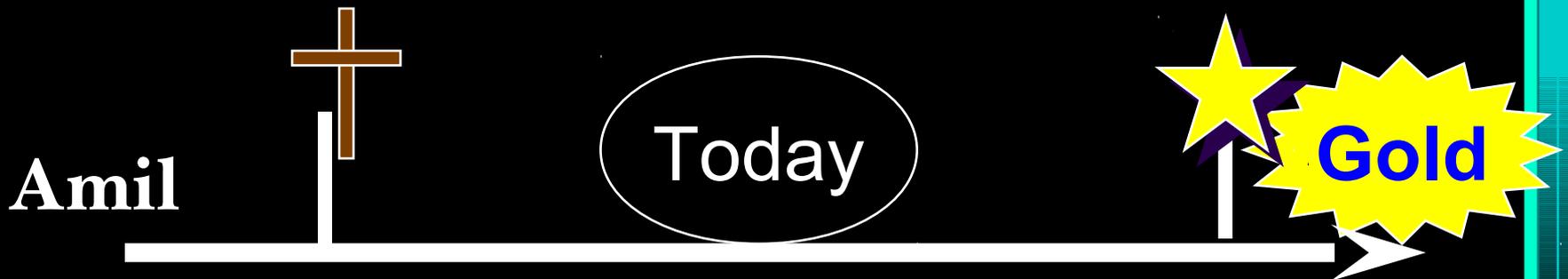
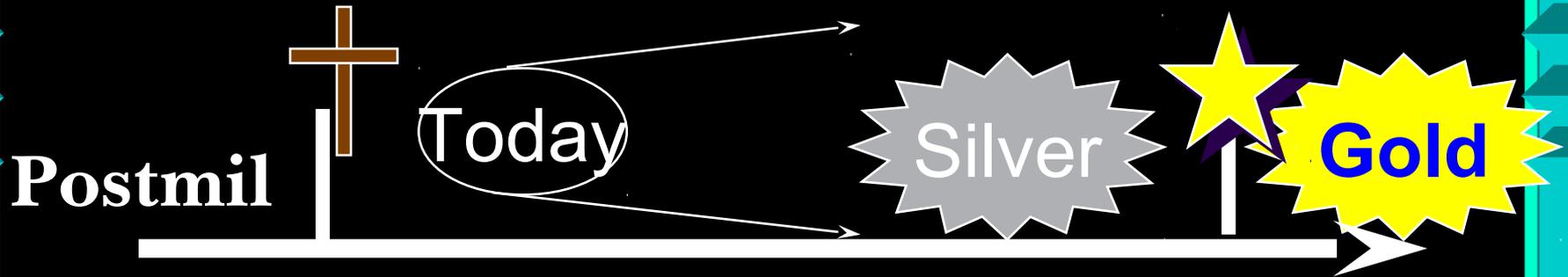
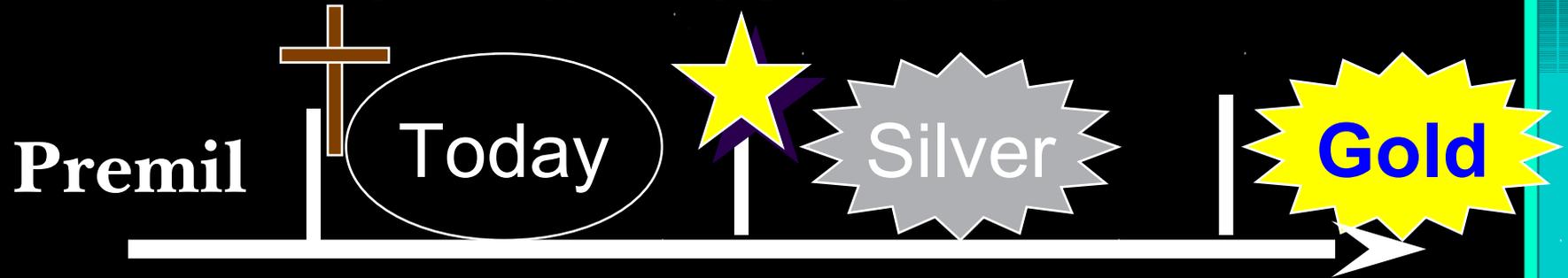
For all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.

– Genesis 13:15

E. Understanding Controversies

1. The Millennium

Millennial Positions



Two Premillennialisms

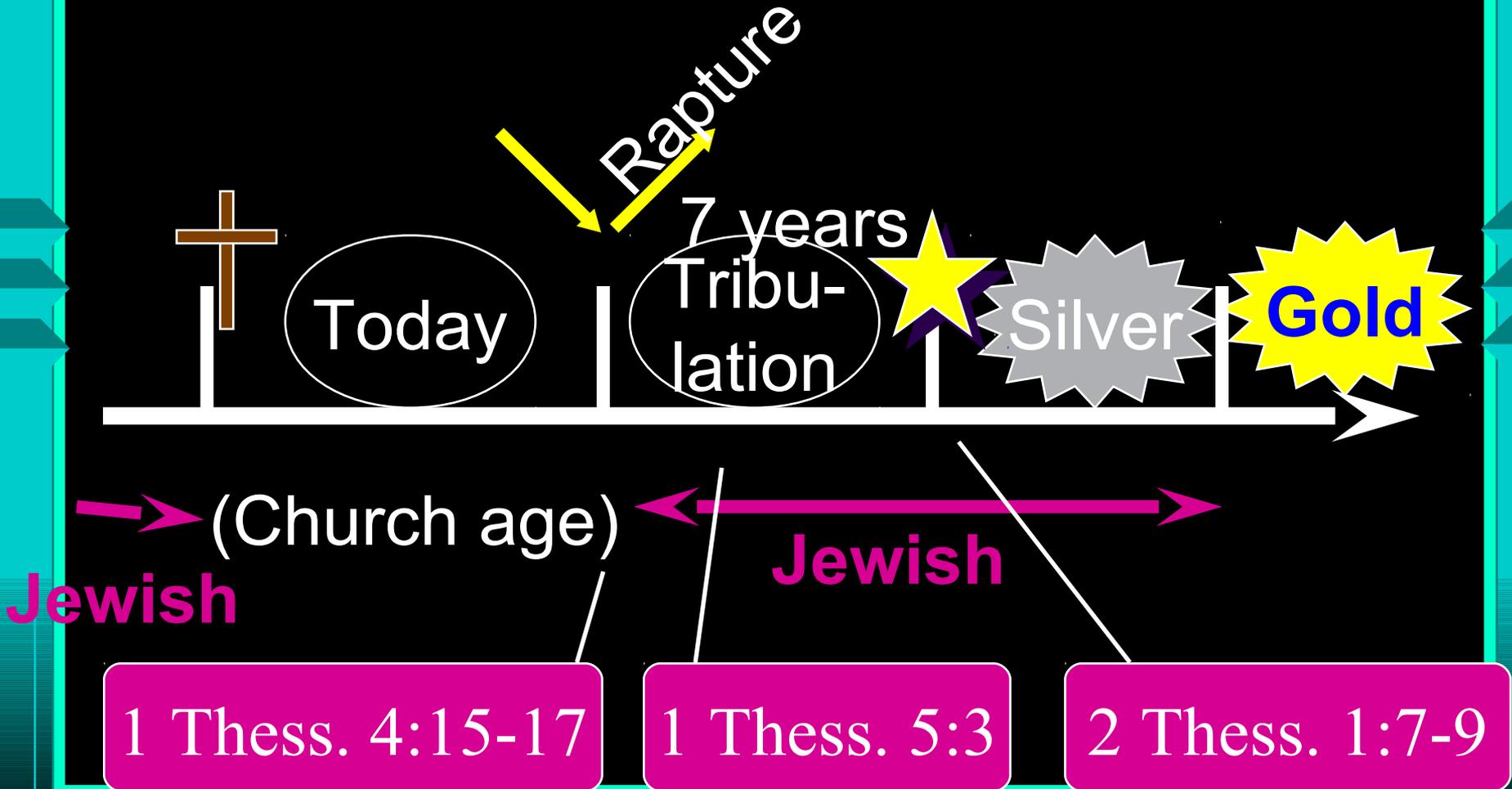
Classic premillennialism



Dispensational premillennialism



Dispensational Premillennialism



2. Israel and the Church

Two Peoples or One?

Dispensational:

Two Peoples:
Israel & the Church

Before Christ comes

After Christ comes

Covenantal:

One People:
Company of
the saved

In Old Testament
and New Testament

Salvation in Christ

justified in Christ

– Galatians 2:17

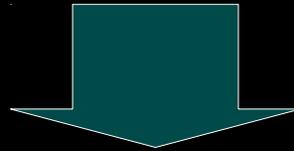
might reconcile us both [Jews and Gentiles]
to God in one body through the cross

– Ephesians 2:16

For he himself is our peace, who has made
us both one. – Ephesians 2:14

Salvation Implies Unity

One way of salvation
in Christ



One company of saved
in Christ

3. Unity in God's Plan

Underlying Issues

- ◆ **Symbolism in the Old Testament**
- ◆ **Unity of promise and fulfillment**
- ◆ **Climax in Christ**

Fulfillment in Christ

For all the promises of God find their Yes in him [Christ]. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

– 2 Cor. 1:20

One Salvation in Christ

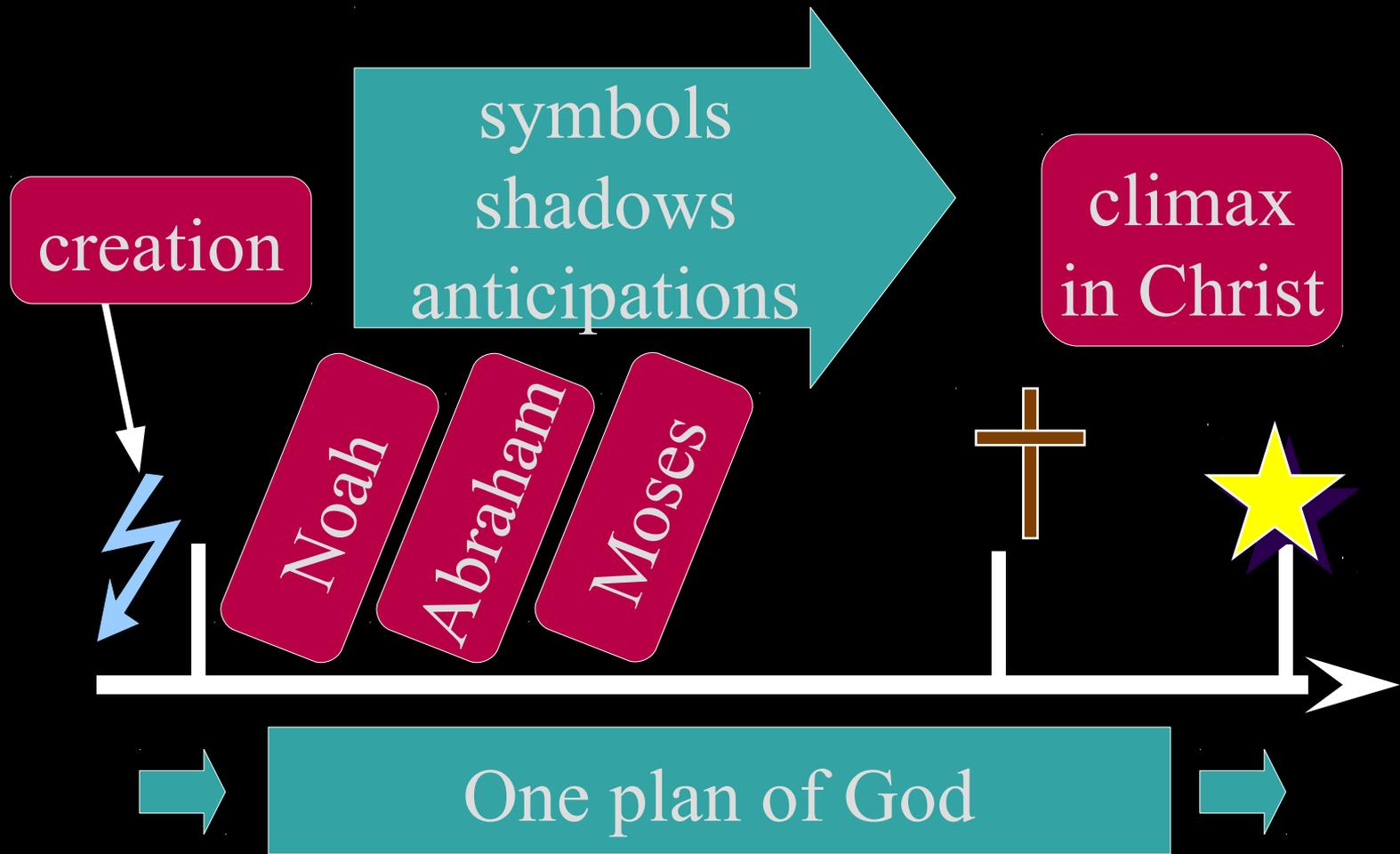
And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

– Acts 4:12

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

– 1 Tim. 2:5

Understanding the Old Testament



Principles for Interpretation

- ◆ Old Testament has symbols
- ◆ Symbols have symbolic meaning (more than surface)
- ◆ Symbols point to Christ
- ◆ Symbols are superseded when Christ comes

Principles for Symbols

- ◆ **Animal sacrifices then, not now**
- ◆ **Temple of dead stones then, not now**

But he was speaking about the temple of his body. – John 2:21

You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood. – 1 Peter 2:5

4. Interpreting Revelation