

Interpreting Revelation

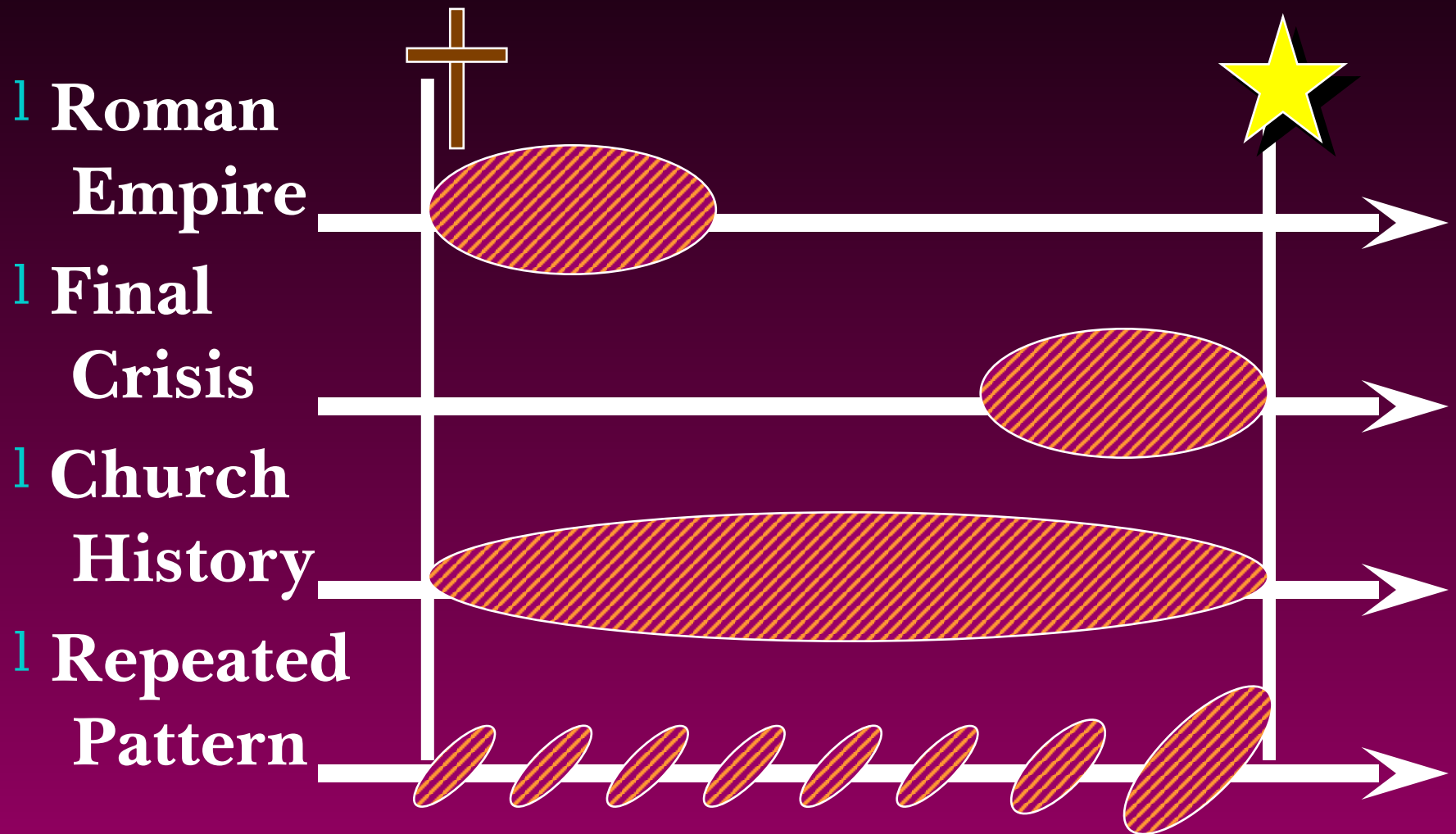


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Issues in Interpretation: Basic Points

- 1 **A. Four Major Schools of Interpretation**
- 1 **B. Symbolism Is Multifaceted**
- 1 **C. See a Fourfold Fulfillment of the Symbols in Revelation**

Summary of Views



God-Centered Symbolism



God in theophany is rich,
multifaceted,
nonexhaustible,
Trinitarian.



Symbolism of
Revelation is
multifaceted.

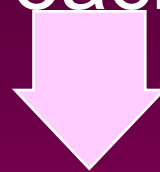
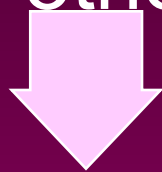
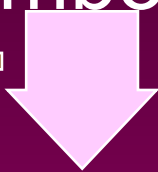
Starting with Repeated Pattern

Symbol



General
principle

Embodied in other approaches



A. Four Major Views about Interpretation

Why Look at Others' Views?

- 1 **Learn from others.**
- 1 **Don't blindly adopt an approach.**
- 1 **Choice of view affects interpretation of all of Revelation.**
- 1 **No one view fits all the Scripture.**

Time of Fulfillment

When is the primary fulfillment?



- 1 The four views differ about the primary time of fulfillment of Revelation.

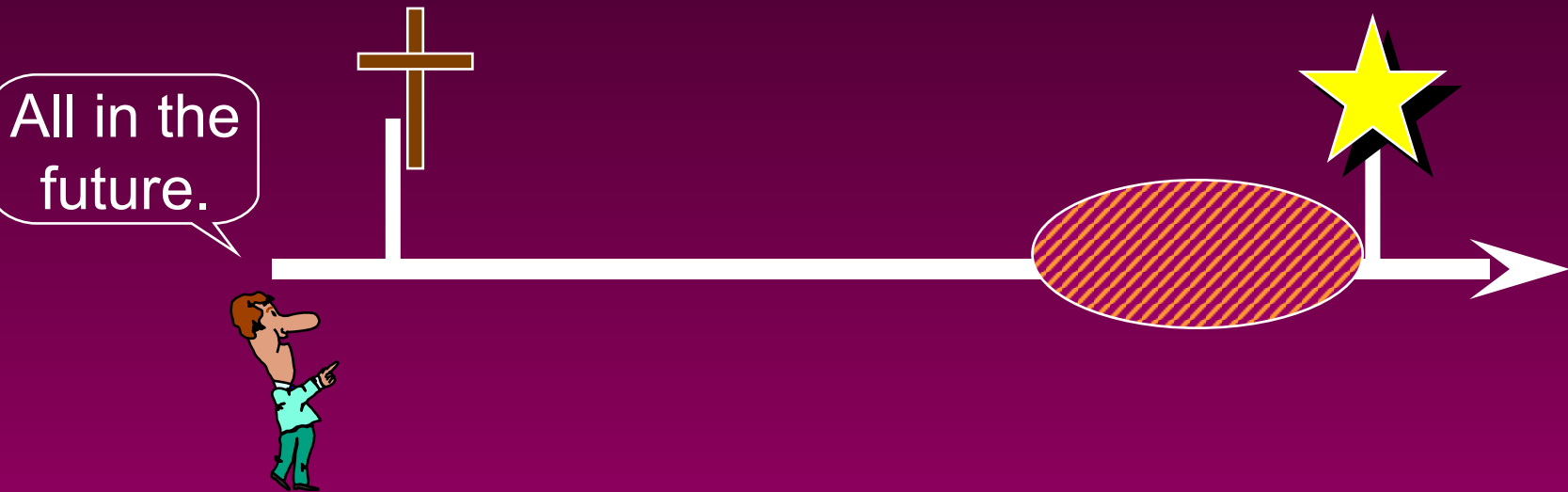
Roman Empire View (Preterist)

- 1 Beckwith (pp. 334-35): “the book [is] fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem and the fall of the Roman Empire.”



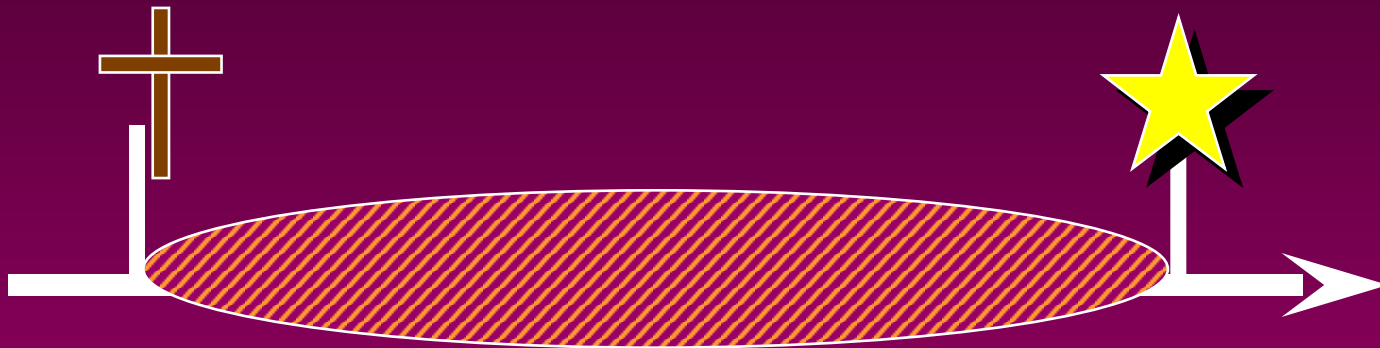
Final Crisis View (Futurist)

- 1 Fulfillment occurs in the events of the final crisis immediately preceding the Second Coming.



Church History View (Historicist)

- 1 Morris (p. 17): “setting out ... the history of western Europe ... until the second coming of Christ.”
- 1 Rev 6-19 is in chronological order.

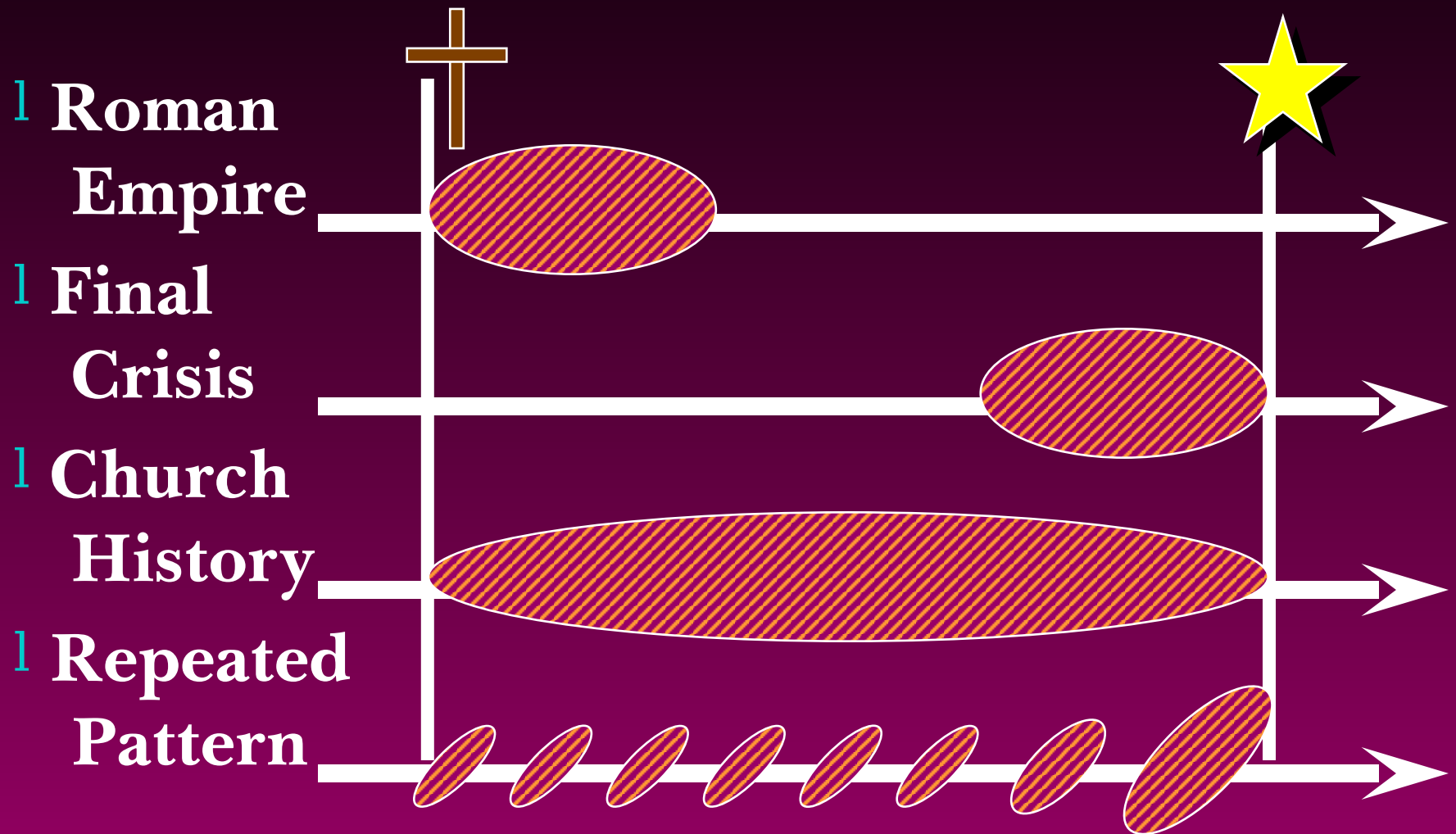


Repeated Pattern View (Idealist)

- 1 Tenney (p. 143): “... represents the eternal conflict of good and evil which persists in every age.”



Summary of Views



B. How the Four Major Views Work in Practice

Interpreting Rev 13:1-8 (Beast)

1 **Roman
Empire**

1 **Final Crisis**

1 **Church
History**

1 **Repeated
Pattern**

1 **Roman
Emperor/Empire**

1 **Final Antichrist**

1 **The Pope**

1 **Persecuting dominion
wherever it appears**

Locusts of Rev. 9:1-11

1 **Roman
Empire**

1 **Final Crisis**

1 **Church
History**

1 **Repeated
Pattern**

1 **Roman decadence**

1 **Future locusts; or evil
powers**

1 **Islamic invasion**

Interpreting Rev 9:1-11 (cont.)

1 Church History

1 Islamic invasion

n crowns

n women's hair

n five months

Mohammed opens
his mission

612

150 years

762

Caliphate to
Baghdad

Interpreting Rev. 9:1-11 (cont.)

1 **Roman
Empire**

1 **Final Crisis**

1 **Church
History**

1 **Repeated
Pattern**

1 **Roman decadence**

1 **Future locusts; or evil
powers**

1 **Islamic invasion**

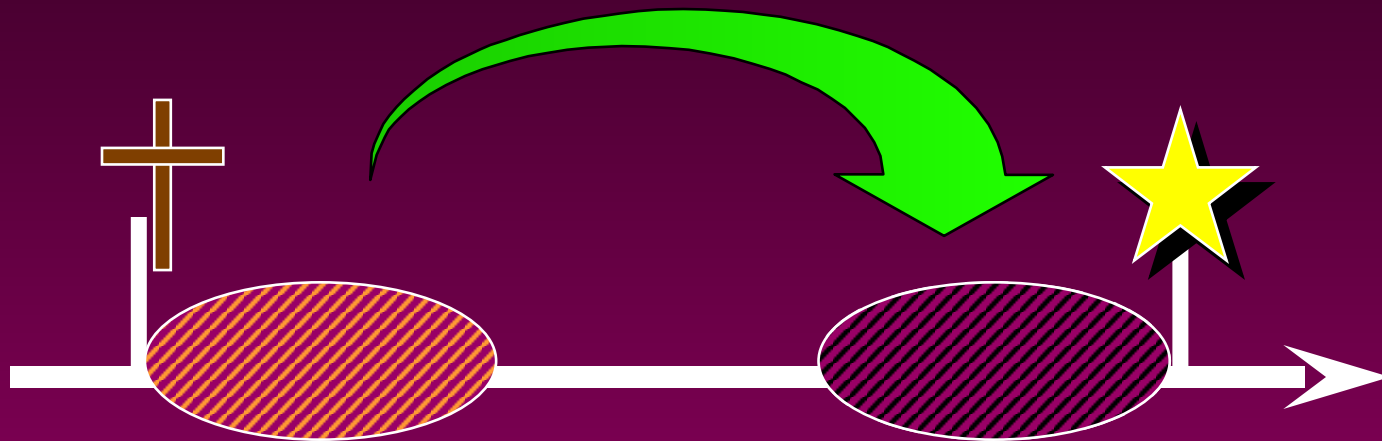
1 **Powers of evil in the
wicked at all times**

Strengths of Different Views

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1 Roman Empire | 1 Relevance to 7 churches. |
| 1 Final Crisis | 1 Climax at Second Coming (22:20; 19:11-21). |
| 1 Church History | 1 Draw a line between the two dates. |
| 1 Repeated Pattern | 1 Seize common principle; Satan as unoriginal. |

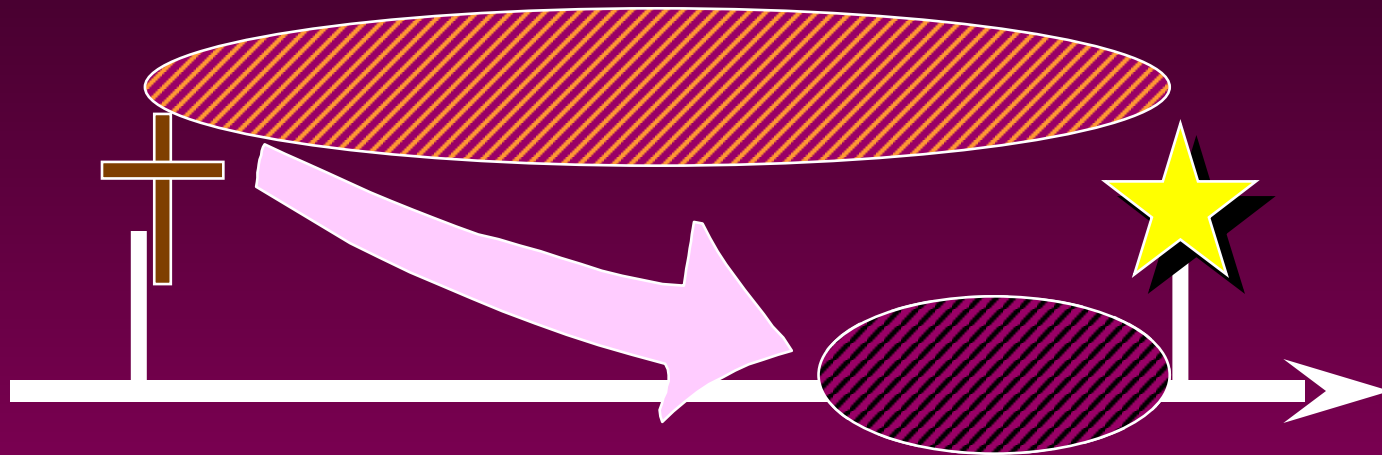
Transition from Roman Empire to Final Crisis View

1 Add a second fulfillment



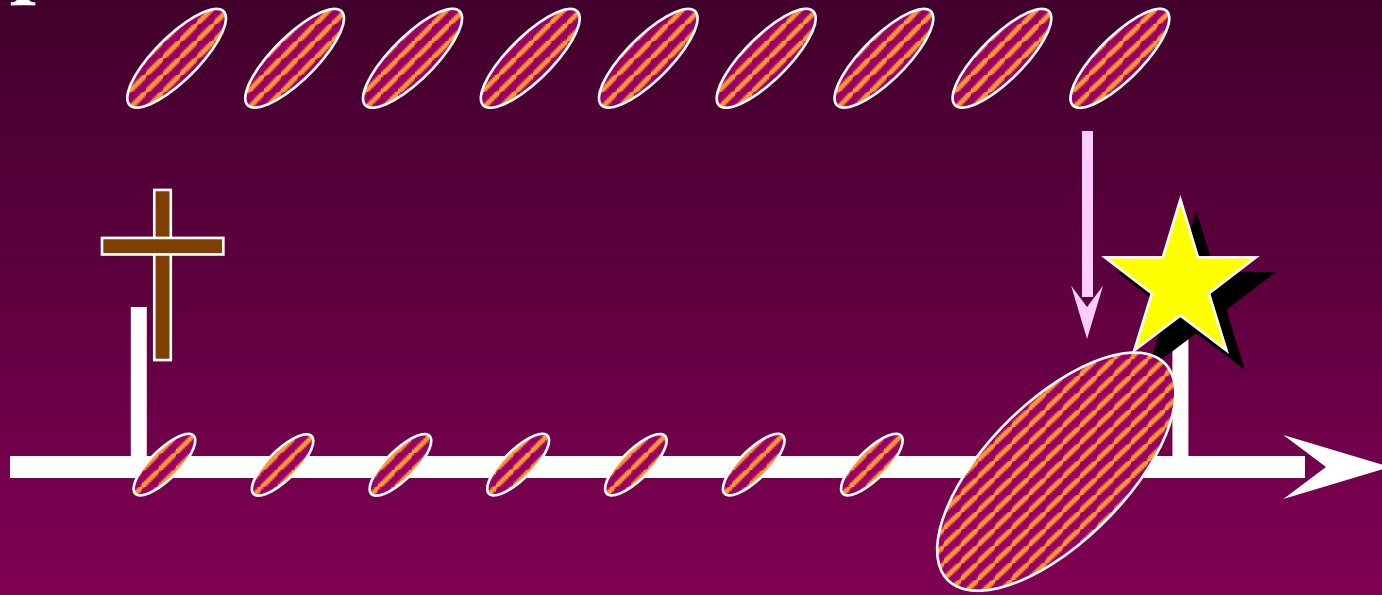
Transition from Church History to Final Crisis View

1 Compress the time line



Transition from Repeated Pattern to Another View

- 1 Find a primary fulfillment of the pattern



C. Evaluating the Views

God-Centered Symbolism

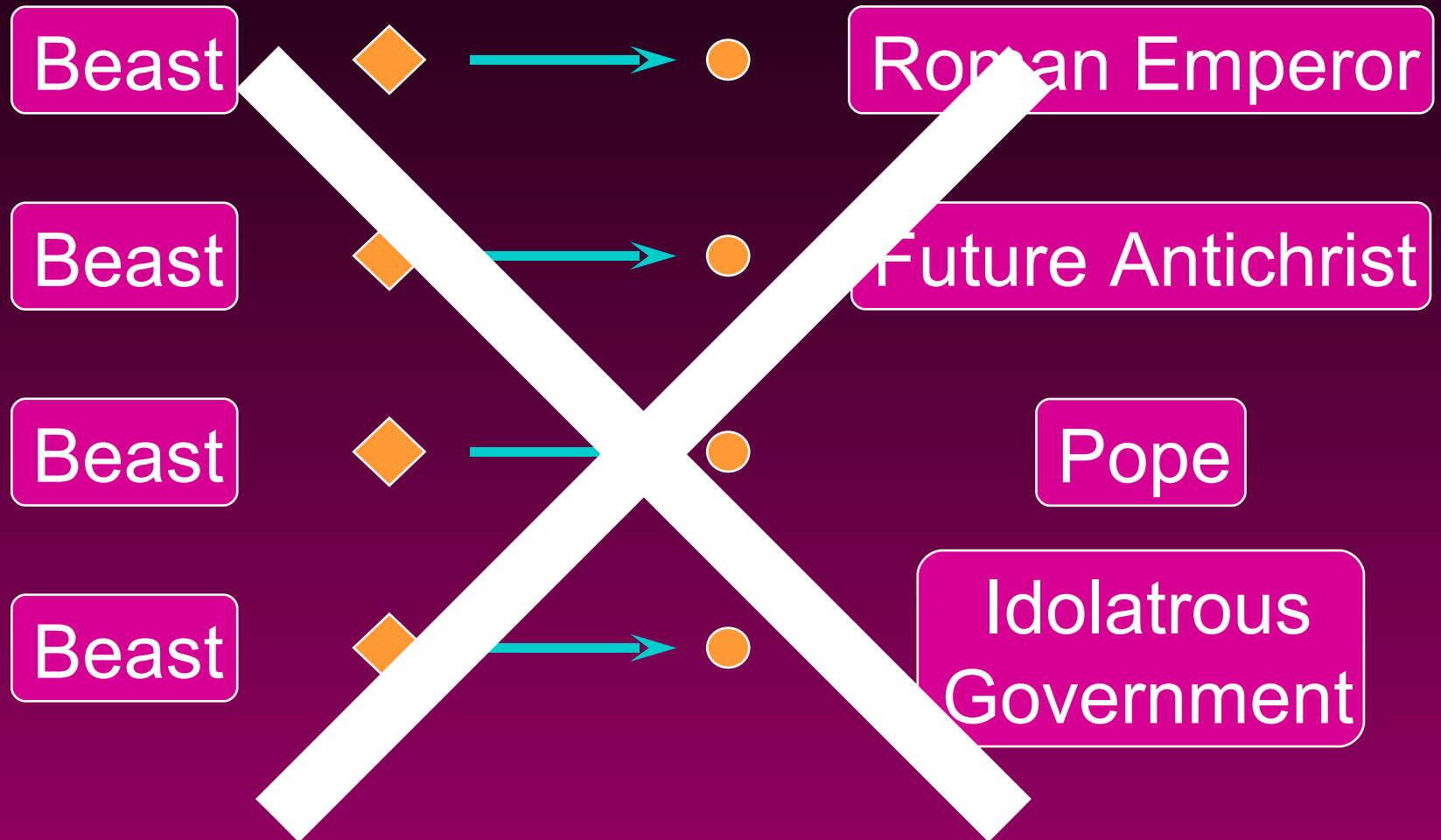


God in theophany is rich,
multifaceted,
nonexhaustible,
Trinitarian.



Symbolism of
Revelation is
multifaceted.

Schools' Decoding is Inadequate



D. A Positive Approach

Attractions of the Schools

RE

FC

CH

RP

I'm not sure.
They all look good.



Insightful!



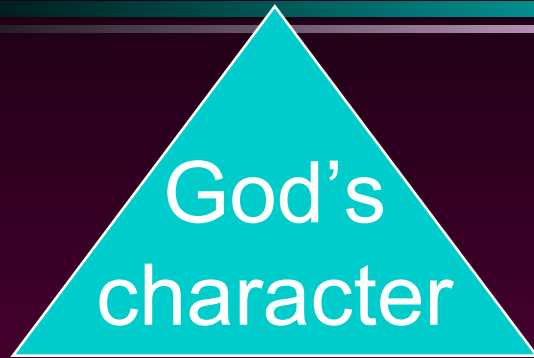
God Is Involved with Us

- 1 Roman Empire
- 1 Final Crisis
- 1 Application NOW
- 1 Repeated
- 1 God loves 7 churches.
- 1 God will come.
- 1 God loves us NOW.
- 1 God is the same at all times.

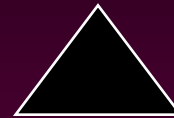
God is
central.



Satan's Repeated Pattern



Satan's
Pattern

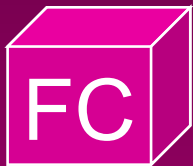


Nothing
new here.

- 1 Satan as a creature must imitate God; he cannot create anything new.
- 1 Since God is the same, Satanic counterfeiting is the same for all times.
- 1 Spiritual war shows a constant pattern.
- 1 Satan suffers repeated defeats.

Some Truth in All Four

- 1 God is always the same.
- 1 God rules all history.
- 1 Spiritual warfare is always the same.



All apply the
same spiritual
principles.

Evidence for Multiple Fulfillment

- 1 **Flexible imagery**
- 1 **Availability of images to people in all times**
- 1 **Internal evidence pointing in more than one direction**
- 1 **Necessity of repeating counterfeiting**

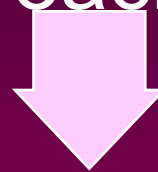
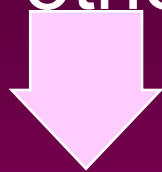
Starting with Repeated Pattern

Symbol



General
principle

Embodied in other approaches



Fourfold Interpretation

A Symbol



represents

- | | |
|------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Roman | 1 First century embodiment |
| 1 Final | 1 Final embodiment |
| 1 Church | 1 Embodiment NOW |
| 1 Repeated | 1 A general principle |

E. Insight of Roman Empire View

Evidence for Roman View

- 1 **Rev. 2-3.**
- 1 **General principle of relevance to original audience.**
- 1 **Nearness of the “time,” 1:1, 3; 22:10.**

F. Insight of Final Crisis View

The Endpoint of Fulfillment

- 1 **Endpoint when Christ comes, 22:12, 20.**
- 1 **For NT church, the Second Coming is next on the “calendar,” 2 Thess. 1-2.**
- 1 **22:10 is prayer associated with Second Coming (cf. 1 Cor. 16:22).**

Does Revelation Focus on an Earlier “Coming”?

- 1 Rev. 2:5; 2:16; 3:11 speak of Christ “coming”
- 1 He judges the churches, short of final judgment
- 1 This context qualifies 2:5, etc., but not 1:7; 2:12-17; 11:18; 22:7, 20; etc.
- 1 Rev. as a whole offers a cosmic context._

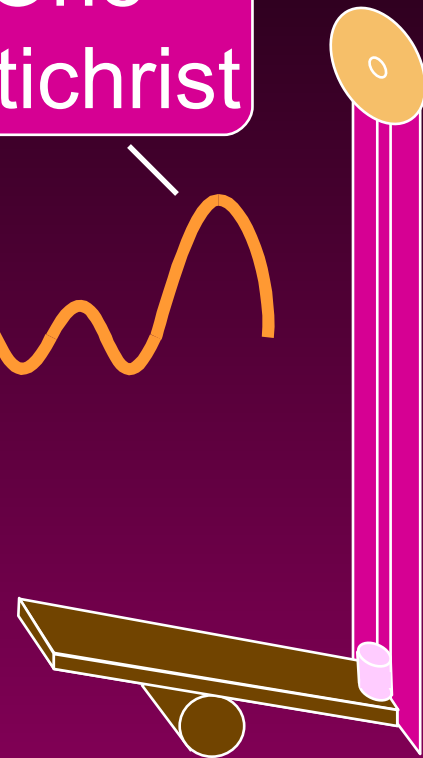
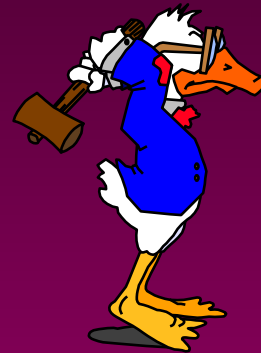
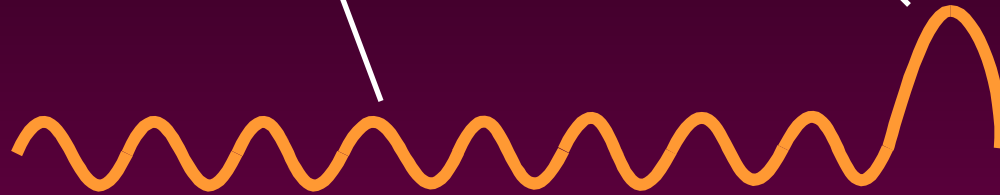
Nearness of Second Coming

- 1 Preliminary judgments foreshadow the climactic judgment.
- 1 Nearness is “structural”: 1 John 2:18.

Nearness

Many
antichrists

One
Antichrist



G. Insight of Repeated Pattern View

Universal Revelance

- 1 **Revelation is canon, relevant to now (2 Tim. 3:17).**
- 1 **Addresses servants of God, 1:1; 22:6, 18.**
- 1 **“he who has an ear,” 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.**
- 1 **Pattern of spiritual war is constant.**
- 1 **Flexible symbolism.**
- 1 **Rev. 1:1 references Dan. 2:45.**

Dan. 2:45 and Rev. 1:1; 4:1

aÁ deiÍ gene/sqai
meta\ tau=ta (Dan.
2:45 Theodotion)

**1 What? The
eschatological
kingdom of God.**

“what must take
place” aÁ deiÍ gene/sqai
meta\ tau=ta (Rev. 4:1)

**1 OT eschatological
prophecy, in the
process of realiz-
ation (inaugurated
eschatology)**

Daniel and John

