

7 Seals (Rev. 6:1-8:1)

Including Views on Interpretation

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Progression of 7 Cycles

- Commission
 1. 7 seals: scouts
 - Prosecution of war
 2. 7 trumpets: effects on earth
 3. 7 symbolic accounts: characters
 4. 7 bowls: more effects on earth
 - Elimination of evil
 5. 7 messages about Babylon: seductress
 6. white horse: power source
 7. white throne: all evil
- culmination

A. The Seven Seals

Content of the 7 Seals

1. Rider on white horse 6:1-2
2. Rider on red horse 6:3-4
3. Rider on black horse 6:5-6
4. Rider on pale horse 6:7-8
5. Souls of martyrs 6:9-11
6. Cosmic judgment of Second Coming
6:12-17
- (Promise: sealing; many nations 7:1-17)
7. Introducing God 8:1

Meaning of the Riders

- Compare with Zech. 1:8-17, where four riders are God's scouts and angelic agents.
- Each brings a particular judgment.
 - White: conquest
 - Red: war
 - Black: famine
 - Pale: death
- Christ the Lamb governs all of them.

Security
in time
of trouble.



B. What Are the Different Views?



Four Ways of Interpreting the Seals

1. **Roman Empire**
2. **Final Crisis**
3. **Church History**
4. **Repeated Pattern**

So what do they look like?



Why Look at Others' Views?

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

Understanding Our Time

- What is our era of redemptive history?
 - ◆ When does it begin?
 - ◆ When does it end?

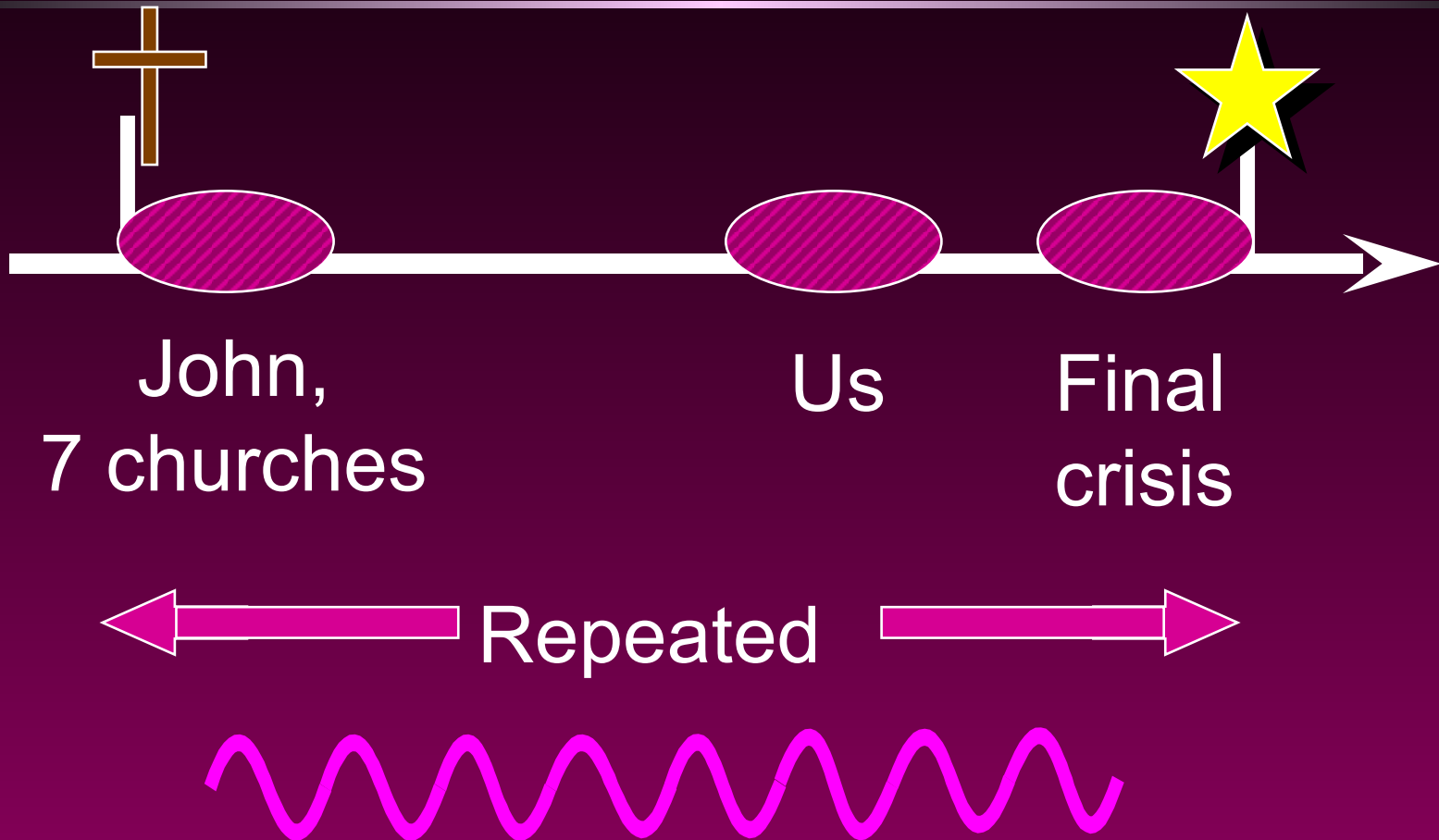


Time of Fulfillment

When is the primary fulfillment?



Foci of Fulfillment



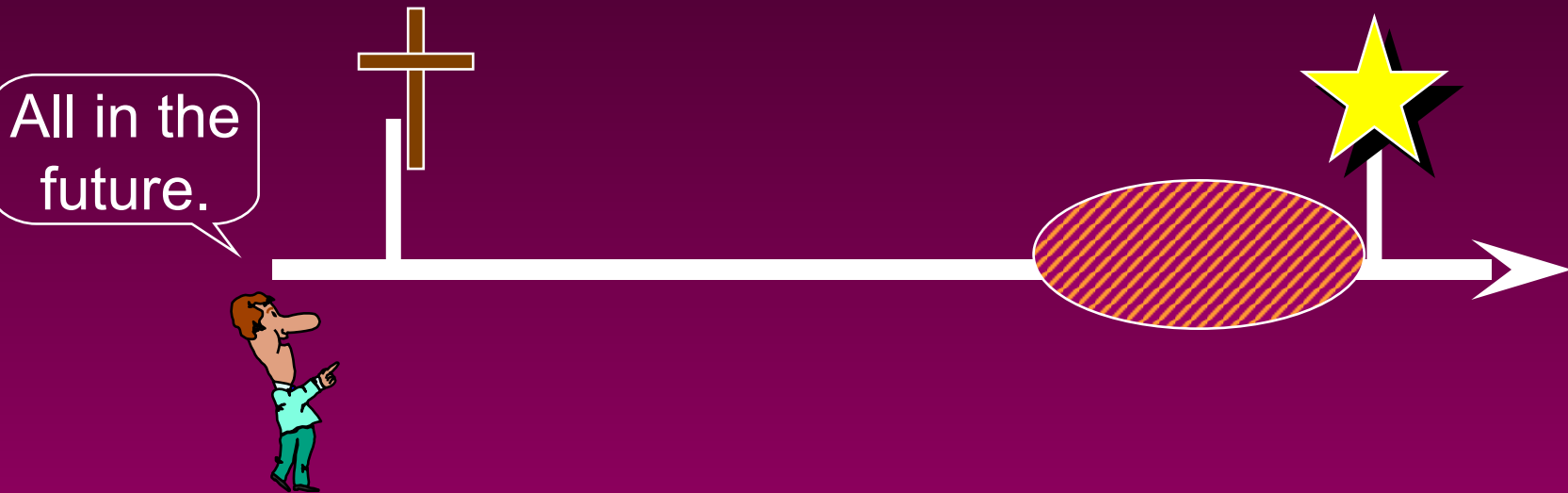
Roman Empire View (Preterist)

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



Final Crisis View (Futurist)

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



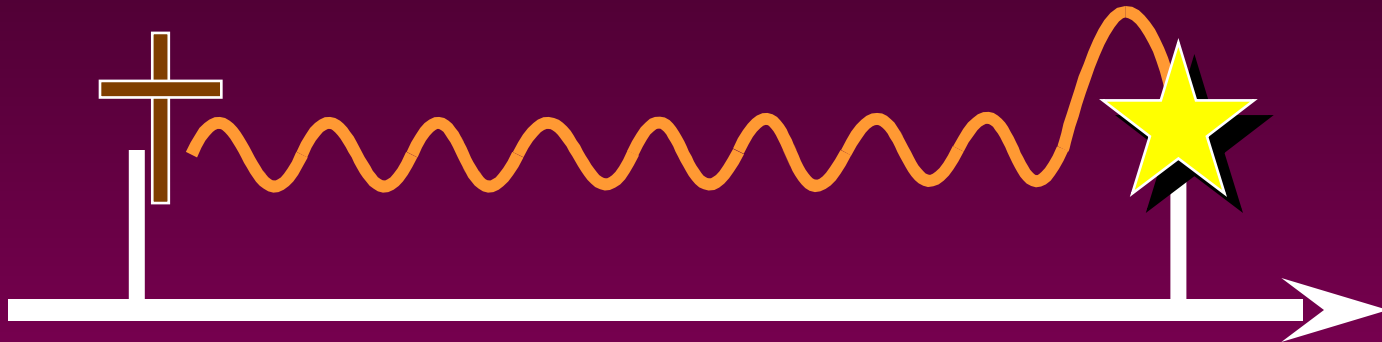
Church History View (Historicist)

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

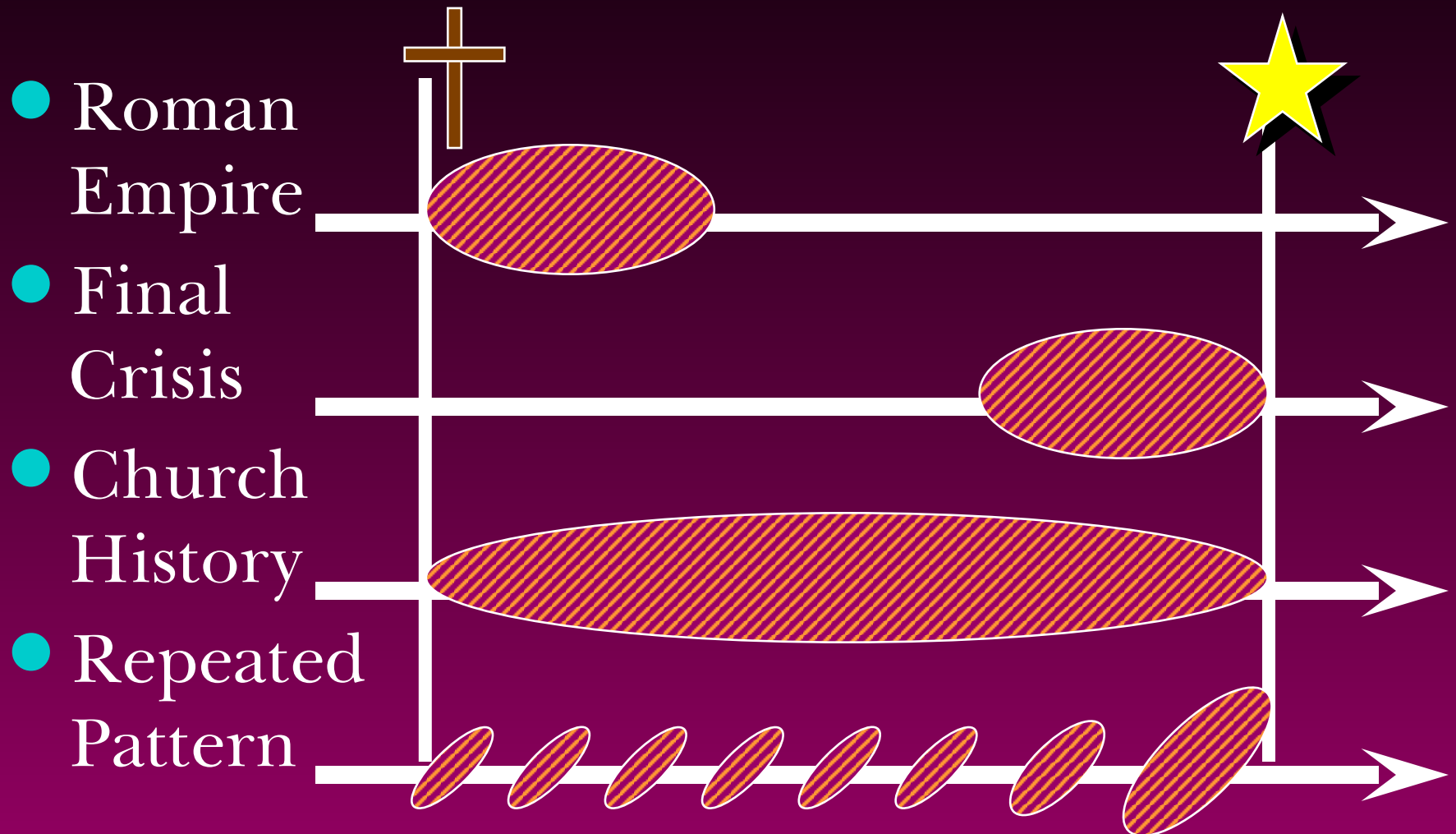


Repeated Pattern View (Idealist)

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



Summary of Views



C. How do the Different Views Work?

Interpreting Rev 6:1-8 (Riders)

- Roman Empire
- Final Crisis
- Church History
- Repeated Pattern
- Conquest, wars, famine, death in Roman Empire
- Opening events of the final tribulation
- Nerva; Pertinax; Caracalla; Valerian
- Conquest, wars, famine, death wherever they appear

Interpreting Rev 6:9-11 (Souls)

- Roman Empire
- Final Crisis
- Church History
- Repeated Pattern
- Martyrs in Empire
- Martyrs in the final tribulation
- Diocletian persecution
- Martyrs throughout history

D. Evaluating the Four Views

Attractions of the Schools

RE

FC

CH

RP

I'm not sure.
They all look good.



Insightful!



God Is Involved with Us

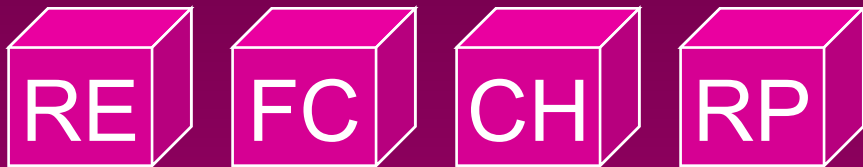
- Roman Empire
- Final Crisis
- Application NOW
- Repeated
- God loves 7 churches.
- God will come.
- God loves us NOW.
- God is the same at all times.

God is
central.



Some Truth in All Four

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



All apply the
same spiritual
principles.

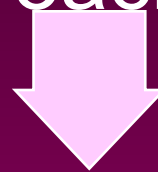
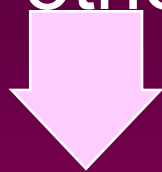
Ways of Interpreting

Symbol



General
principle

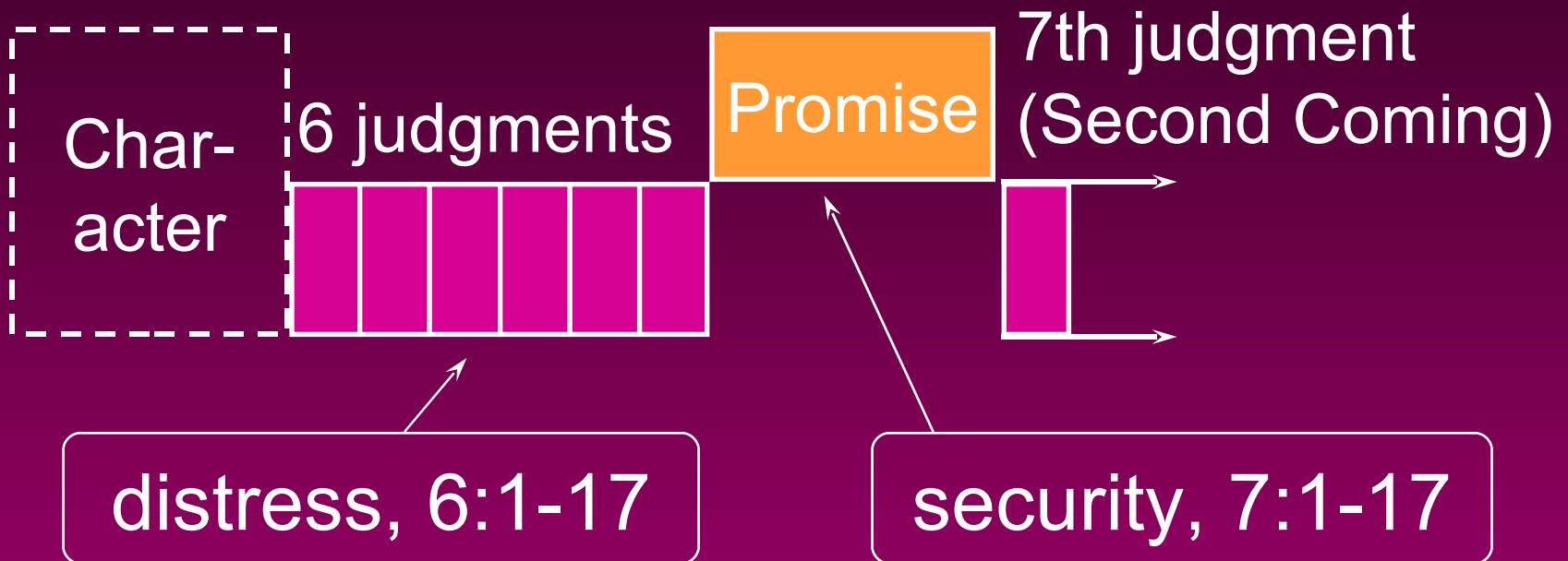
Embodied in other approaches



E. Wrapping Up the Cycle of Seals

The Promise-Interlude (7:1-17)

- **Promise of protection and security for the saints assures us in the midst of distress.**



Interpreting the 144,000

- Symbolic meaning for numbers
 - 7 indicates completeness, Rev. 15:1; Gen. 2:1-3.
 - 1000 indicates a large amount, 2 Pet. 3:8.
 - 12 indicates the people of God, Luke 22:29; Rev. 21:12-14.
 - 4 indicates the four directions of the compass, encompassing all the earth, Zech. 6:5.
- 12,000 in Rev. 7 = 12×1000 , people of God in their multitude.

Seventh Seal: Silence in 8:1

- Silence in awe of God's presence, as in Hab. 2:20; Isa. 41:1; Zeph. 1:7; Zech. 2:13.
- When God appears, he makes a new world. But the vision of this new world is delayed until Rev. 21-22.