

# Interpreting Revelation



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## A. Clarity of Revelation

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# Revealing (1:1)

God's  
plan



unveiling, disclosure

Christ knows  
our need

show, not  
keep in the dark

to his servants (you!)

made known

The revelation of  
Jesus Christ,  
which God gave  
him to show his  
servants the things  
that must soon  
take place. He  
made it known ...

# Blessing for Reading (1:3)

“Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it.”



- **The only book of the Bible with an explicit blessing for reading. Extra encouragement.**
- **“Keep” means it’s practical. Strengthening the heart, not tickling the fancy.**

# Are Its Symbols Difficult?

Yes

- Unfamiliar
- Apocalyptic
- Need OT background

No

- It's obvious.

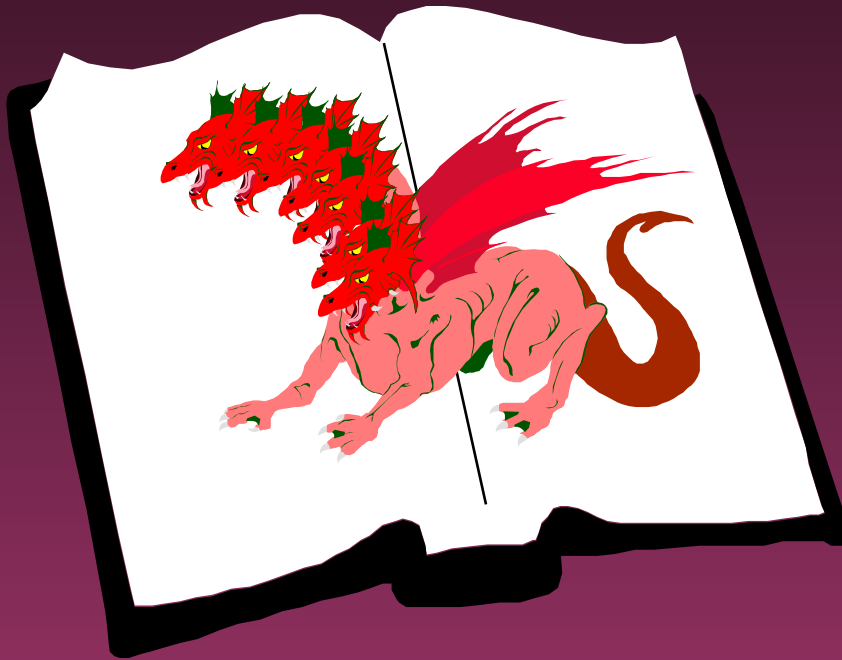


Fearsome!  
Hideous!



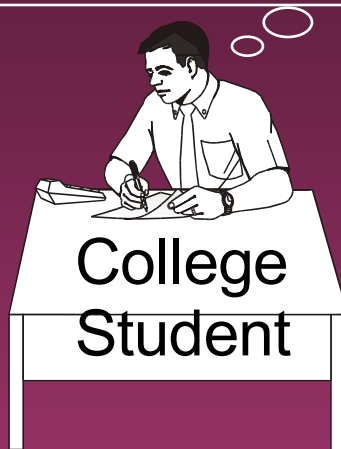
# It's Simple

- A picture book, not a puzzle book.
- For children also.

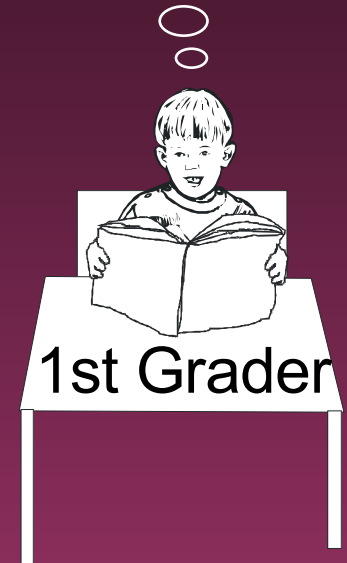


# See the Whole

Hmm.... Let's see now. What does the "locust" of Rev. 9 mean? The "horse" part must refer to one of the months of the Chinese calendar. "Crowns of gold" must refer to Babylonian kings. "Women's hair" surely suggests that it is women who will bring about the final downfall of mankind. "Scorpion tails" ... hmm... Now let me see.



Awesome!  
It's a monster!



# Confidence in God

Don't be the "expert."

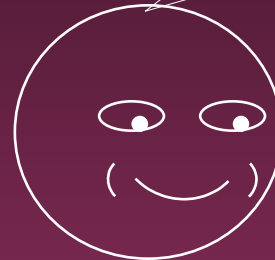
You can't possibly  
understand  
without my help!

You're right.  
I give up.



Encourage.

Look at God's  
greatness!





# The Majesty of Christ

- Christ is our friend (John 15:14-15).
- He is also our majestic, awesome king!

Not a tame lion!



## B. Symbolism

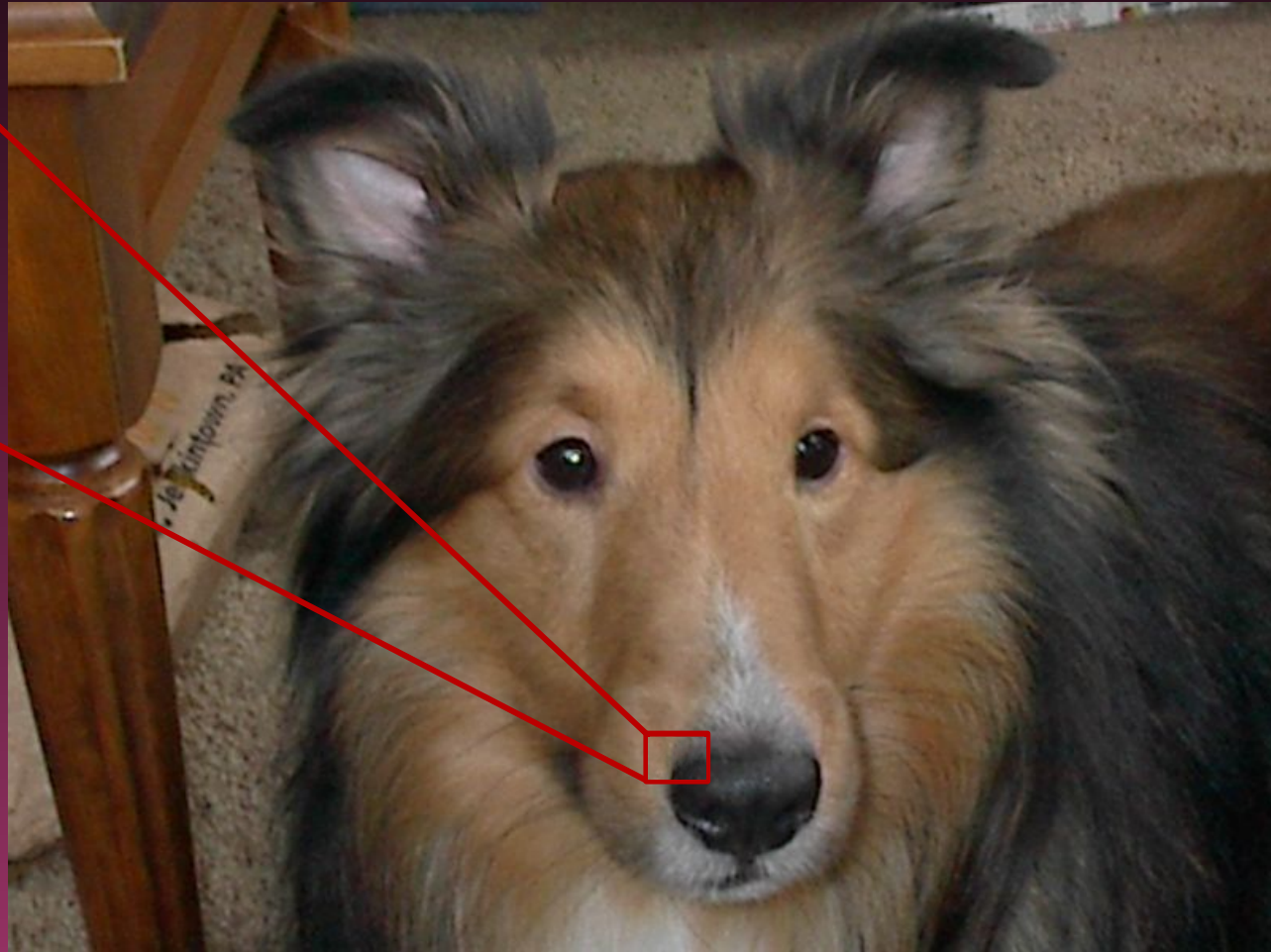
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# Why the Dispute over Revelation?



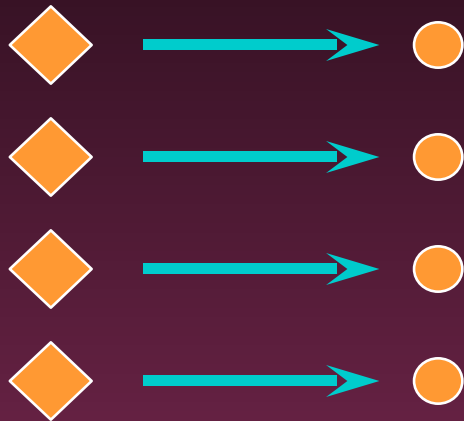
Due to:  symbolism

# Meaning of a Symbol



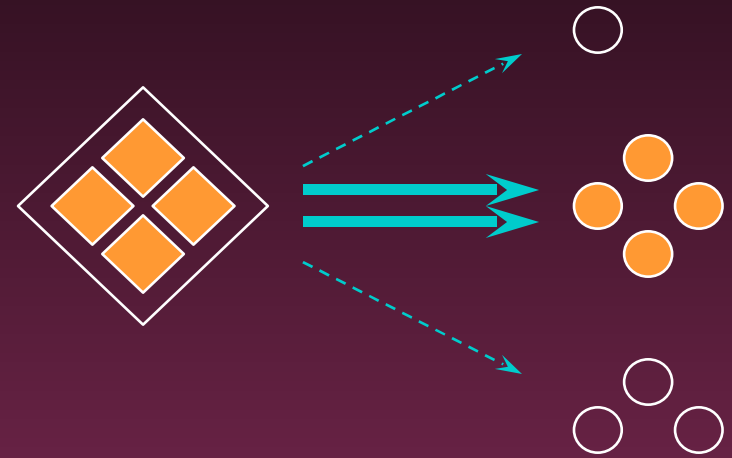
# Two Approaches to Symbols

## 1. Code



- One referent
- Meaning = referent
- Isolated

## 2. Multifaceted



- Multiple allusions
- Multifaceted impact
- Holistic

# Decoding by the Schools

Beast



Roman Emperor

Beast



Future Antichrist

Beast



Pope

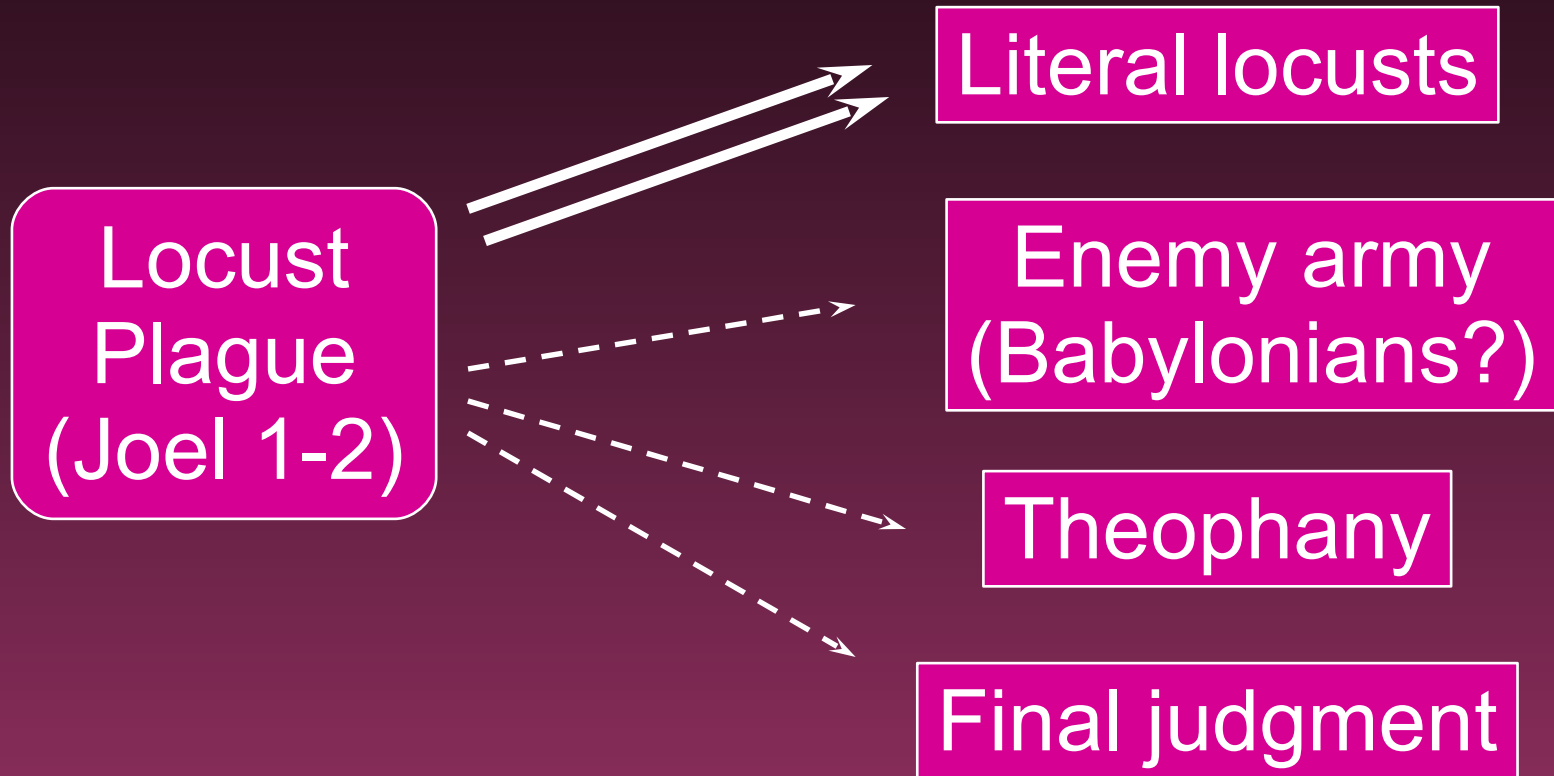
Beast



Idolatrous  
Government

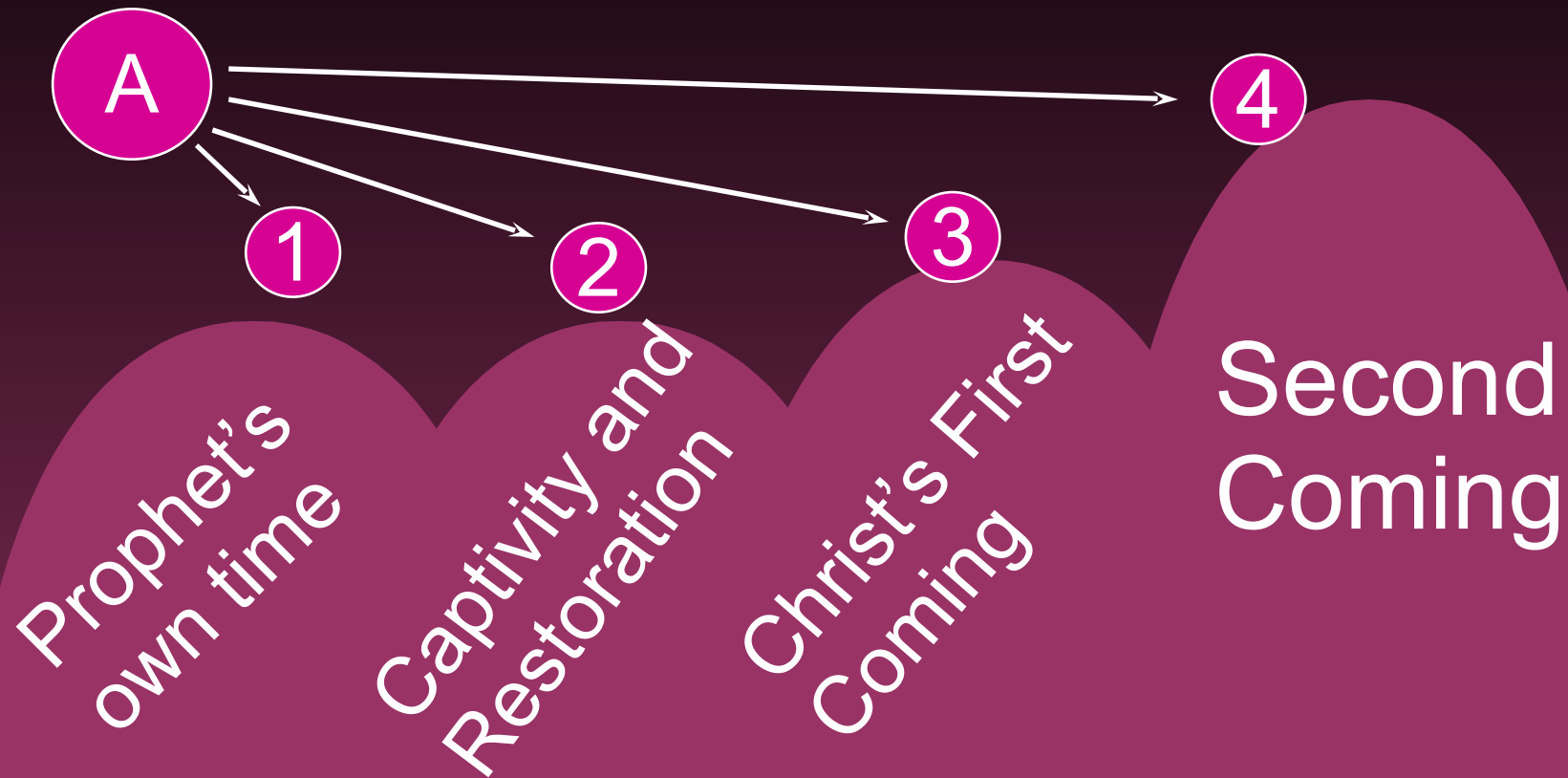
# Prophecy is Poetic

## Day of the Lord



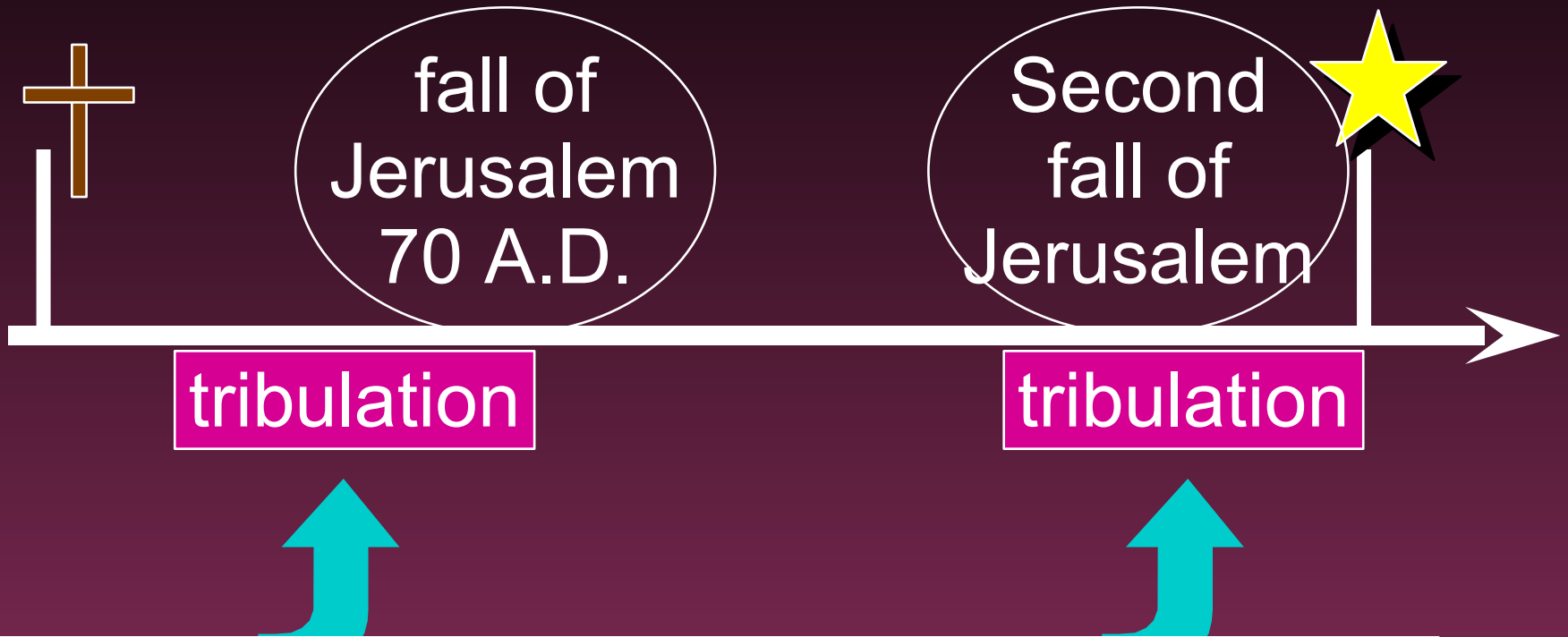


# Expanded Understanding of Prophetic Fulfillment



Adapted from Irving Jensen, *Bible Study Charts*

# Olivet Discourse (Luke 21)



Double Perspective of Olivet Discourse

Adapted from Irving Jensen, *Bible Study Charts*

# Rev. 17:9 Has Two Referents

7 heads of the Beast



7 hills  
on which  
the woman sits.

(17:9)

7 kings,  
5 of whom  
have fallen.

(17:10)

# More Than Two Planes of Interacting Meaning

For

Beast

- Referent (Roman Emperor?).
- Hideous monstrosity (repulsiveness).
- Combination of beasts from Daniel 7.
- With background of Genesis 1-3, where beasts are subordinate to man.

# God-Centered Symbolism

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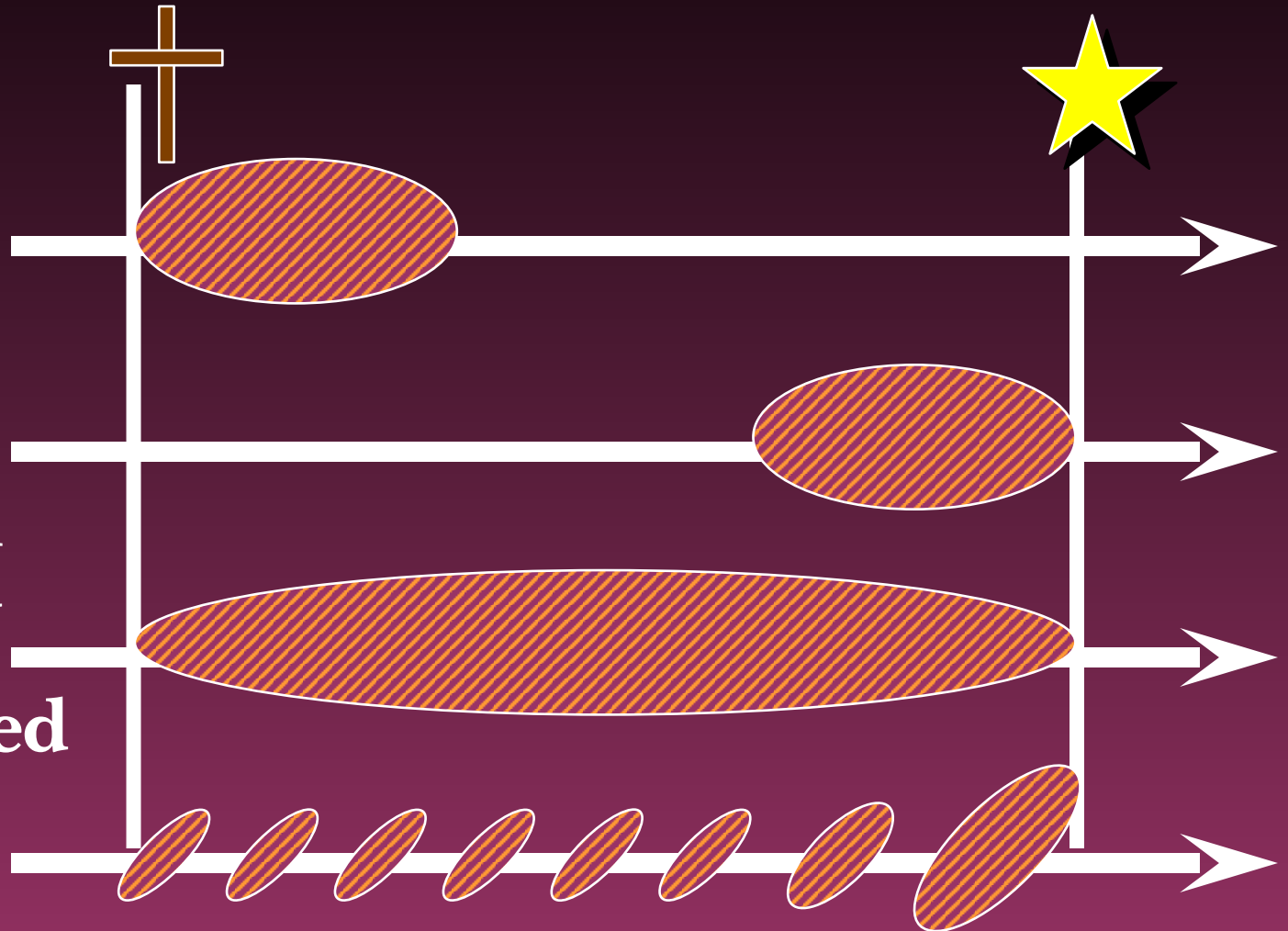
God in theophany is rich,  
multifaceted,  
nonexhaustible,  
Trinitarian.



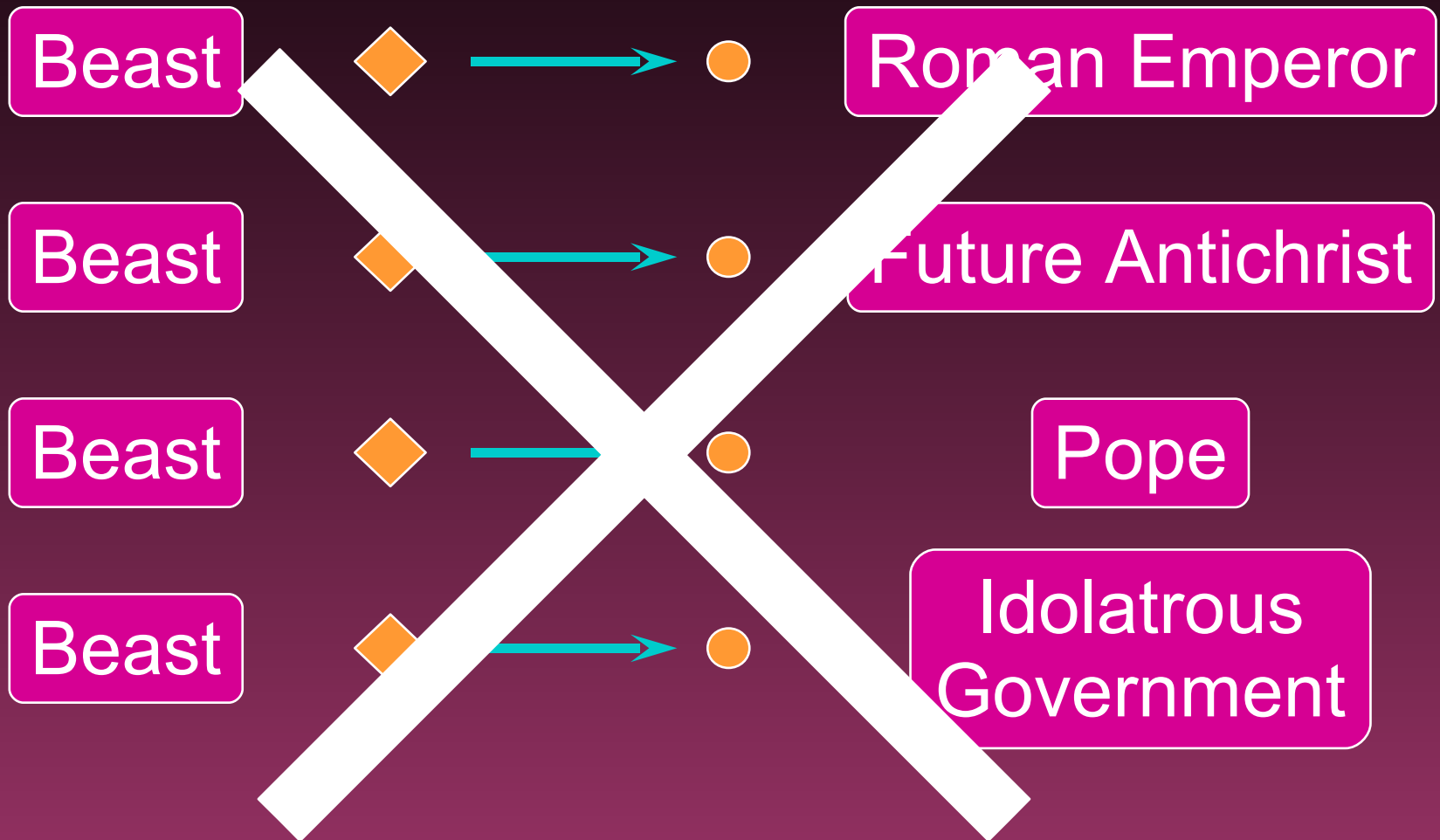
Symbolism of  
Revelation is  
multifaceted.

# Summary of Views

- Roman Empire
- Final Crisis
- Church History
- Repeated Pattern



# Schools' Decoding is Inadequate





# 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



# Fourfold Interpretation

A Symbol



represents

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