

Venerable Tradition

Psalm 90:3-4 “*Thou dost turn man back into dust, and dost say, “Return, children of men.” For a thousand years in Thy sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night.*” (NAS)
2 Peter 3:8 “*But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*” (NAS)

Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 2, page 39 “Though the Bible contains no direct statement that the seventh thousand will be the epoch of Christ’s reign, the great Sabbath Day of restitution to the world, yet the venerable tradition is not without a reasonable foundation.”

Chamber’s Encyclopedia, 1881, Vol. VI, page 458-9 [Millennium] “Millennium designates a certain period in the history of the world, during which the kingdom of Messiah will, according to tradition, be visibly established on the earth. This idea originated proximately in the Messianic expectations of the Jews...but was connected by the Christians with the *Parousia*, or Second Coming of Christ. In the first century of the church, millenarianism (the Greek equivalent of which, *chiliasm*, from *chiloi*, a thousand, is the term employed by the Fathers) was a widespread belief, to which the book of Daniel, and more particularly the pictorial predictions of the Apocalypse (Chaps. 20 and 21), gave an apostolical authority.

“In the Mosaic account of creation, we find the primitive ground for making the victorious era of the church last a thousand years. That account was regarded by the Jews and by the Judaic Christians as a type of the destinies of creation. Now, by a strict literal interpretation of the 4th verse of the 90th Psalm, it was supposed that a day of God was arithmetically equal to a thousand years; hence the six days of creation were understood to indicate that the earth would pass through 6000 years of labor and suffering, to be followed by a seventh day—that is, 1000 years of rest and happiness.”

The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1905, Vol. X, page 605 [Sabbatical Year and Jubilee] “The week of Creation consisted of seven days, the last being the Sabbath. The Feast of Weeks is so called because it occurs seven weeks after Passover, the fiftieth day being Pentecost. These days are parallel to the years of shemittah and yobel [Sabbath and Jubilee]. The duration of the world is 7,000 years, the seven thousandth year being the millennium, the Great Sabbath of the Lord.”

Book of Jubilees,* translated from the Ethiopic (written in 135-105 BC, though some hold it was in 332-320 BC) by E.J. Goodrich in 1888. Chapter 1:24 “...The law and the testimony for the weeks and the jubilees, each year according to all its number and the jubilees according to years from the day of the new creation, when heaven and earth were created new, and also all creation according to the powers of heaven and all the creation of the earth, until then when the sanctuary of the Lord will be made in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, and all the luminaries will be renewed for a healing and for peace and for a blessing for all the chosen of Israel, that it may be thus from this day on and to all the days of the world.”

Chapter 4:28-29 “And in the end of the nineteenth jubilee, in the seventh week, in the sixth year thereof, Adam died, and all of his sons buried him in the land of the creation of Adam, and he was the first to be buried in the earth, and he lacked seventy years of one thousand years; for one thousand years are like one day in the testimony of heaven, and therefore it was written concerning the tree of knowledge “On the day on which ye shall eat thereof ye shall die.” And for this reason he did not complete the years of this day; for in it he died.”

Chapter 50:3 “Concerning this I have ordained for thee the weeks of years and the jubilees, from the days of Adam to this day...and jubilees will pass by until Israel shall be cleansed from all fornication and guilt and uncleanness and contamination and sin and transgression, and shall dwell in all the land in safety, and no Satan and no evil one will injure him, and the land will be cleansed from that time on and to eternity.”

Book of Enoch,* Slavonic version found in Russia and Serbia was likely written somewhere about the beginning of the Christian era, but founded on earlier traditions and writings. Enoch 32:4 and 33:1 read: “I blessed the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, on which he rested from all his works. And I appointed the eighth day also, that the eighth day should be the first-created after my work, and that the first seven revolve in the form of the seventh thousand, and that at the beginning of the eighth thousand there should be a time of not-counting, endless, with neither years nor months nor weeks nor days nor hours.”

Accordingly, we may understand Psalm 90:3-4 to indicate that for 6000 years God has allowed man to be turned “back into dust” and in the seventh thousand says “*Return, ye children of men.*”
Psalm 90:12 (ESV) “*So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.*”

* We are not advocating the apocryphal books of Jubilees or Enoch as an authoritative source for interpreting Scripture, nor that these writings are original, but simply to document the history of Jewish tradition and thought.