

# The Millennial-Week & Sabbath Rest

## The Biblical Evidence

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The Millennial Week chronology (Chiliasm) was pervasive among those writers who were close to the Apostles, those who looked for the Kingdom of God to be established on the earth at Christ's return in fulfillment of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants. (The writers who opposed Chiliasm were those who denied that the earth will be restored and had instead adopted Plato's heavenly-destiny paradigm). While these writers mentioned that Christ's return would occur after 6000 years from creation, none of them gave a very full explanation of the biblical support for such a theory. The primary justification offered was based on Psalm 90:4, "*a thousand years in Your sight are as the day, yesterday which has past,*"<sup>1</sup> which was interpreted by Peter in 2 Peter 3:8 as, "*with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day.*" These millennial "Days" were then linked to the six days of creation week, with Christ's Kingdom being the Millennial Sabbath parallel to the Sabbath on which God is said to have rested.

But does Psalm 90 and Peter's use of it provide sufficient evidence for Chiliasm? Why would the early Christians so universally accept this as fact based on Psalm 90 and Peter's citing it? To answer this question, it is first necessary to understand why Psalm 90 was written.

### Moses & Chiliasm:

Many Christians are unaware that Psalm 90 was written by Moses who also wrote Genesis. This Psalm was intended to resolve the apparent conundrum raised in Genesis.

*Genesis 2:16-17 NKJV*

*16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, **for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**"*

Yet Adam ate the forbidden fruit, and he did not die on that same day, but in his 930<sup>th</sup> year.<sup>2</sup> Lest someone suppose that God was not referring to physical death, once Adam sinned, God repeated his sentence.

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<sup>1</sup> My translation of the Septuagint

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 5:5

*Gen. 3:19 NKJV*

*19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.*

The first thing we should notice about Moses' prayer in Psalm 90 is that it concerns "death" having passed upon Adam (and consequently all mankind) followed by the anticipation of the removal of the curse and the resurrection. This includes "how long" between these two events. Here is the Psalm in its entirety.

*Psalm 90 ESV*

*1 A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

In the first two verses, Moses referenced the creation week in Genesis 1.

*3 You return man to dust and say, "Return, O children of man!"*

This refers specifically to the eventual outcome of God's threat that Adam would die within the same day he ate the forbidden fruit. Adam died at the age of 930, which was explained by Moses with the following words:

*4 For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.*

This verse completely resolves the conundrum established between God's threat to Adam that he would die the same "day" he sinned and his eventual death sixty years short of a millennium later. Moses was not saying that any 24-hour day is like a millennium in God's sight. He was referring exclusively to the specific "day" in Genesis 2:17, "For in THE DAY that you eat of it you will surely die." It was that particular "day" in this threat that God reckoned as a thousand years. It is called "yesterday" that is "past" because that first millennium had gone by when Moses wrote this after the exodus.

Yet the same verse also likens that first millennial "Day" to "a watch in the night?" When this was written, prior to the Roman occupation of Israel, the 12 hours of night were divided into 3 "watches" of 4 hours each. Smith's Bible Dictionary explains as follows:

*"The Jews, like the Greeks and Romans, divided the night into military watches instead of hours, each watch representing the period for which sentinels or pickets remained on duty. The proper Jewish reckoning recognized only three such watches, entitled the first*

or "beginning of the watches," (Lamentations 2:19) the middle watch, (Judges 7:19) and the morning watch. (Exodus 14:24; 1 Samuel 11:11) These would last respectively from sunset to 10 P.M.; from 10 P.M. to 2 A.M.; and from 2 A.M. to sunrise. After the establishment of the Roman supremacy, the number of watches was increased to four, which were described either according to their numerical order, as in the case of the "fourth watch," (Matthew 14:25) or by the terms "even," "midnight," "cock-crowing" and "morning." (Mark 13:35) These terminated respectively at 9 P.M., midnight, 3 A.M. and 6 A.M."<sup>3</sup>

Thus a "watch" of four hours was 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the night hours and 1/6<sup>th</sup> of a whole 24-hour day. Consequently, the first millennial "Day" was as "a watch in the night," meaning that the first millennium was 1/6<sup>th</sup> of a larger whole. Thus the whole period of time is 6,000 years, six millennia, or "six days." Moses also wrote: "For in **six days** the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and **rested on the seventh day**. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."<sup>4</sup>

Moses continues in Psalm 90, speaking about God's wrath and judgement upon sin which is the death of all mankind since "the wages of sin is death."<sup>5</sup>

*5 You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning: 6 in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers. 7 For we are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed. 8 You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. 9 For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. 10 The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. 11 Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you?*

Moses' then turned to the topic of the hope of the resurrection and the duration of time until the curse of death is removed for God's people.

*12 So **teach us to number our days** that we may get a heart of wisdom. 13 Return, O LORD! **How long?** Have pity on your servants! 14 Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. 15 Make us glad **for as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil.***

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<sup>3</sup> Smith's Bible Dictionary, Article "Watches of the Night," [https://biblehub.com/topical/w/watches\\_of\\_night.htm](https://biblehub.com/topical/w/watches_of_night.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Exod. 20:11 ESV

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 6:23

16 Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children.  
17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and **establish the work of our hands**  
upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!

At first glance, Moses' plea to God to "teach us to number our days" may seem like an individual considering his own short lifespan in which he learns wisdom. Yet, it also refers to the lifespan of all humanity under the curse of death. Note the clause "How long?" refers to when the Lord will return, and "as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil," refer to the entire time from when the curse of death was placed upon all mankind until victory over death is accomplished in the resurrection. Then the statement, "establish the work of our hands" refers to the removal of the curse upon the ground. God told Adam, "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."<sup>6</sup> Adam and all mankind have toiled in futility against the curse. But in the resurrection, man's work will no longer be futile.<sup>7</sup> God will "establish the work of our hands" as the prophets declare.<sup>8</sup>

That fact that Psalm 90 resolves the problem of Adam's death on the same day he ate the forbidden fruit is also shown by the ancient Jewish interpretation of this passage. It is articulated in the Jewish apocryphal book called, "Jubilees," written about 150 years before Christ's birth.<sup>9</sup>

*"... Adam died, and all his sons buried him in the land of his creation, ... And he lacked seventy years of one thousand years; **for 'one thousand years are as one day'** in the testimony of the heavens and therefore was it written concerning the tree of knowledge: **'On the day that ye eat thereof ye will die.'** **For this reason he did not complete the years of this day; for he died during it.**"<sup>10</sup>*

Second century Christians had the same understanding as the Jews — that "the Day" in this passage referred to the first millennium and explained Adam's death. The following quotations from Justin and Irenaeus illustrate this.

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<sup>6</sup> Gen. 3:17-19 NKJ

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Heb. 4:3 LGV [http://www.4windsfellowships.net/LGV/LGV\\_Hebrews.pdf](http://www.4windsfellowships.net/LGV/LGV_Hebrews.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Isa. 65:12

<sup>9</sup> Machiela, Daniel, The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon, p. 16

<sup>10</sup> Book of Jubilees, IV, 29-30

*“For as Adam was told that in the day he ate of the tree he would die, we know that he did not complete a thousand years. We have perceived, moreover, that the expression, ‘The day of the Lord is as a thousand years,’ is connected with this subject. And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem.”<sup>11</sup>*

*“Thus then, in the day that they did eat, in the same did they die, ... for since ‘a day of the Lord is as a thousand years,’ he did not overstep the thousand years, but died within them, thus bearing out the sentence of sin. ... [T]hat he [Adam] did not overstep the thousand years, but died within their limit, it follows that, in regard to all these significations, God is indeed true.”<sup>12</sup>*

### **Peter & Chiliasm:**

We now need to turn our attention to Peter’s handling of this Psalm. He applied it to the anticipated long delay until Christ returns. Peter, at the end of his ministry, referenced Psalm 90. That Peter fully understood the above points from the prayer of Moses is evident from how he applied it to the delay in Jesus’ return.

2 Peter 3 NKJ

*1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 **But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.** 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night ...*

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<sup>11</sup> Justin, Dialogue with Trypho, ch. LXXXI

<sup>12</sup> Irenaeus, Against Heresies V, XXIII, 2

In this epistle, Peter twice stated that he was reminding his readers of things they already knew from previous apostolic teaching.<sup>13</sup> As such, he did not need to go into great detail, only nudge their memories. In verses 1 & 2 the reminder concerned the words of Jesus as well as that of the prophets. Notice he did not quote what specific words he was referring to, but expected his readers to understand from past preaching and teaching, from his reminder as well as from Paul's letters.<sup>14</sup>

The subject under discussion was the long delay anticipated before Jesus would return, just as Moses requested, *"Teach us to number our days"* and then asked *"How long?"* Peter then told his readers, *"Do not forget this one thing,"* and then cited Moses' prayer in Psalm 90:4. The words, *"do not forget"* implies that they already were fully aware of the implications of Moses' Psalm from previous oral teaching, of the connection between this Psalm and the delay in the return of Christ. Traditionally, both Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 have been interpreted as a generic statement, meaning merely that God does not keep time as we do, thus making when Christ will return an unsolvable mystery. Yet there is much more to Peter's words just as there is far more to Moses' words than just a general principle that we are clueless concerning God's timetable.

In applying Psalm 90 to this question, Peter paraphrased what Moses wrote: *"Do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years."* As in Psalm 90:4, that "one day" refers to the specific "Day" in God's warning to Adam (Gen. 2:17) which Moses called *"yesterday"* that is *"past"* in Psalm 90:4. That particular "Day" lasted a thousand years, the first millennium, and was 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the whole period until the resurrection (*"as a watch in the night"*). Peter took this one step farther, adding something that Moses did not actually say, *"and a thousand years as a day."* In Peter's second statement, a millennium is as *"a Day."* Was this just a generic statement? Or did Peter do exactly what Moses did by referring to a very specific passage in Genesis, the six days of creation? When he added the second statement, *"a thousand years as a day,"* Peter was apparently referring to each millennium that had elapsed since that first millennial Day, that each of these millennia is equivalent to (or symbolized by) the six days of the creation week in Genesis 1. In other words, the "Day" in God's threat to Adam was a millennium. Then each successive millennium was also a parallel to each "day" in the creation week. If so, then it necessarily implies that Christ's Kingdom will be the ultimate "Sabbath" – the seventh Day, the seventh millennium from creation. If this is so, Peter reminded his readers of Moses' request in Psalm 90:12-15: *"Teach us to number our days, ... how long will it be? ... according to the days You have afflicted us, and the years we have seen evil."* Notice that Peter applied these things to the delay in Jesus'

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<sup>13</sup> 2 Pet. 1:15, 2 Pet. 3:1

<sup>14</sup> 2 Pet. 3:15-16

return (v. 9), exactly the same anticipation that Moses spoke of in Psalm 90:12,13,15. Consequently, “*teach us to number our days*” is a request for God to teach us the revealed chronology (which is fully contained in the Bible), from creation until the resurrection at Jesus’ return. It is no coincidence that Moses is also the one who meticulously recorded for us all of the chronological information from creation until the Israelite’s entrance into the Promised Land.

Peter and his readers were certainly aware that Moses went on to liken the first millennium to “*a watch in the night,*” 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the complete whole. Likewise, the period of time under the curse was specifically mentioned by Moses, as well as the subject of chronology itself, that is numbering the days and years of all mankind until the resurrection at Jesus’ return. Thus Peter’s citing Psalm 90:4 only served as a reminder of the entire Psalm and all of its implications, pointing to 6000 years until the resurrection.

There is another important clue in Peter’s statement:

*2 Pet. 3:5-7*

*5 For this they willfully forget: that **by the word of God** the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 **by which the world that then existed perished**, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which **are now preserved by the same word**, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

The “*word of God*” held back the water from the dry land for a time. Yet “*by which*” (word) the pre-flood world also perished. There is one statement in Genesis which gives the length of the delay before the flood would come, and thus indicated exactly when it would come from the time God spoke it to Noah.

*Genesis 6:3*

*3 And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet **his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.**”*

The flood came at the end of that delay of 120 years. However, Peter stated that the judgement by fire of the present world is now being delayed “*by the same word.*” How is this possible? It is because God gave Israel a specific calendar to follow, the Sabbatical – Jubilee calendar described in Leviticus 25. On that calendar, years were to be divided into weeks, with the Israelites farming the land for six years, and then allowing the land to rest on the seventh (Sabbath) year. After seven of these cycles (equaling 49 years), there was a special 50<sup>th</sup> year, called the Year of Jubilee. This special year symbolized the coming Kingdom. When Genesis 6:3 is interpreted as Jubilee years (which occur every

50 regular years), the total is also 6000 years. Interpreted this way, Genesis 6:3 has both the flood and the Day of the Lord predicted exactly "*by the same word.*" The flood was 120 years from God's threat, and the Day of the Lord is 120 Jubilee years from creation (120x50=6000). While this interpretation of both Genesis 6:3 and 2 Peter 3:5-7 may seem rather obscure, we should keep in mind that Peter was reminding his readers of things that had already been taught to them orally.

Peter's second epistle was written just before his martyrdom. It was intended to prepare his readers for "*an abundant entrance into the age-enduring Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*"<sup>15</sup> He reminded his readers that "*the prophetic word*" (the words of the prophets) had been "*confirmed*" when Jesus gave Peter, James, and John a brief glimpse of His coming Kingdom on the Mount of Transfiguration. This confirmation to the Apostles, having been chosen by Jesus to be eyewitnesses of a special preview of His coming Kingdom, was the basis of the apostolic preaching which Peter wanted his readers to recall. It was to assure them of the certainty of the prophecies which had been confirmed through the Transfiguration experience.

Let's review Mark's account of that incident before considering Peter's commentary.

*Mark 8:38 – 9:7 KJV*

*38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

*9:1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. 2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. 3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. ... 7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.*

The Mount of Transfiguration experience was a preview of the coming of Christ's Kingdom meant to confirm the prophets' predictions to these disciples. In particular, the voice which came from heaven, "*This is My beloved Son...*" was God's announcing that Jesus was the "Son" of God, the King to be installed on Mount Zion prophesied in Psalm 2.

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<sup>15</sup> 2 Peter 1:11 my translation



*Psalm 2:6-9 LXX (My translation)*

6 "But I have been made King by him on Sion his holy mountain, 7 declaring the decree of the Lord: ***the Lord said to me, 'You are my Son,*** today have I begotten You. 8 Ask of me, and I will give You the nations as Your inheritance, and the ends of the Land for Your possession. 9 You shall shepherd<sup>16</sup> them with a rod of iron; thou shalt shatter them like a potter's vessel."

In this Psalm, God called Christ His "Son," and announced to Him the inheritance which would be His – to govern all the nations, and to inherit the whole Land. This is Christ's Kingdom, the inheritance, promised to Him by the Father. On the Mount of Transfiguration, the disciples were given a preview of the Father's transferring the sovereignty of the earth to His Son – a vision of the coming Kingdom.

Immediately after Jesus announced to the disciples that some among them would see the coming of His Kingdom, Mark recorded the fulfillment of that promise: "***after six days*** Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into a high mountain ... and was transfigured before them." On the Mount of Transfiguration Peter, James, and John received a vision of the future fulfillment of Psalm 2, vividly experiencing a preview of the coming of Christ and the transfer of the Kingdom to Him. Their experience was not unlike John's later visions on Patmos where he also saw this transfer of sovereignty to Christ in much greater detail. It is significant that the vision of Jesus' coming Kingdom took place "*after six days*" according to both Matthew and Mark.

However, Luke's account seems to present a real problem. "*Now it came to pass, ***about eight days after these sayings,*** that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray.*"<sup>17</sup> This is sometimes presented as a discrepancy in the Bible. But it is deliberate. Luke was dating the event from the time when Jesus made the prediction. It was literally eight days from the time Jesus made the prediction until they went up to the mountain. Why then do Matthew and Mark say "after six days?" The answer is that Matthew and Mark were counting from the first day of the week – Sunday. Jesus made the statement on a Friday. "After eight days" would be the following Saturday. But Matthew and Mark chose to record the actual day of the week – Saturday – when this vision took place. "*After six days*" means after the first six days of the week, on the Sabbath Day. The Jews did not have names for the days of the week as we do. Instead, they called them by the same numbering used in the creation account. Day one was Sunday by our reckoning. Thus both passages are correct. This apparent discrepancy

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<sup>16</sup> See also the Greek text of Rev. 12:5 & 19:15

<sup>17</sup> Luke 9:28

actually shows that the Transfiguration experience occurred on the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath.

The mountaintop transfiguration experience of Peter, James, and John was modeled after Moses' experience on Mount Sinai.

*Exodus 24:16-18*

*16 Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, **and the cloud covered it six days**. And **on the seventh day** He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. 18 **So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain**. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.*

God's glory was concealed for six days in the cloud. Then on the seventh day Moses ascended Mount Sinai into the midst of the cloud. This was the weekly Sabbath.<sup>18</sup> In the Transfiguration experience, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into the mountain into the thick cloud<sup>19</sup> after the six days of the week, on the Sabbath day.

Peter himself explained how he and James and John interpreted what occurred on that *seventh day*. It was a preview of Jesus' coming Kingdom.

*2 Peter 1:16-19 (My literal translation)*

*16 For not by following cunningly devised myths did we make known to you **the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**, but having become eyewitnesses of His **majesty**. 17 For having received from God the Father honor and glory from the voice which came to Him from the magnificent glory: "**This is My beloved Son** in whom I am well pleased." 18 And we heard this voice carried from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.*

*19 And [so] we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you are rightly heeding as a lamp appearing in a dark place **until the Day dawns** and the Daystar<sup>20</sup> arises.<sup>21</sup>*

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<sup>18</sup> This can be shown from Exodus 16 using the six days of the week to provide manna, and then counting the dates and days provided until Moses went up into the mountain.

<sup>19</sup> Luke 9:34

<sup>20</sup> This is a reference to Christ (Rev.22:16).

<sup>21</sup> Most translations add "in your hearts" to the end of verse 20. However, this prepositional phrase is better understood as beginning the next verse. "In your hearts knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation."

Peter understood that in the Transfiguration experience he had witnessed “*the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*” in “*His majesty.*” The words “power” and “coming” were part of Jesus’ initial promise: “*there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power.*”<sup>22</sup> Mark’s Gospel was written from Peter’s recollections.<sup>23</sup> Peter obviously thought it necessary to have Mark record that their preview of Jesus’ Kingdom took place “*after six days,*” on the seventh day.

Peter then referred to the future arrival of the Kingdom as the dawning of “*that Day.*”<sup>24</sup> Like Genesis 2, Peter established a precedent, using the word “*Day*” in reference to Christ’s Kingdom, which Revelation also identifies as a millennium.<sup>25</sup>

### **Paul & Chiasm:**

Hebrews was one of Paul’s last epistles. In chapters 3-4, he expounded upon two Old Testament texts which refer to Christ’s coming Kingdom as “*the seventh day,*” the “*Sabbath,*” and “*God’s Rest.*” He stated plainly that the creation week in Genesis refers to God’s future Sabbath Rest in which believers will share. His two prophetic texts were Psalm 95:8-11 and Genesis 2:2-3. The two passages that Paul had before him when writing Hebrews 3-4 were as follows:

*Psalm 95:8-11 LXX (My translation)*

*8“This day, if you hear His voice, you should not harden your hearts as in the provocation, as in the day of testing in the wilderness 9 where your fathers tried me, they tested Me and saw My works. 10 Forty years I was disgusted with that generation. And I said, ‘They are always straying in their heart and they do not know my ways,’ 11 as I swore in My anger whether they shall enter into My rest.”*

*Genesis 2:2-3 LXX*

*2 And God finished on the sixth day his works which he made, and he ceased on the seventh day from all his works which he made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he ceased from all his works which God began to do.*

Psalm 95 was an exhortation by David to Israel not to follow the example of their forefathers “this day,” when God’s people would be given a second opportunity to inherit the Promised Land. David understood that Israel had failed to realize the

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<sup>22</sup> Mark 9:1 KJV

<sup>23</sup> Eusebius, Church History, Book II, ch. 15

<sup>24</sup> 2 Pet. 1:19

<sup>25</sup> Rev. 20:1-5

promise to Abraham of the eternal land inheritance. He foresaw the ultimate fulfillment of the permanent Abrahamic land inheritance as future.<sup>26</sup> David warned against repeating the Kadesh Barnea “rebellion” when Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years until that whole generation died off. Only their children went into the land that God promised to Abraham. And even then, they did not attain under Joshua the permanent rest and possession of the land God promised to Abraham and his Seed. Israel was ejected from the land during the Babylonian captivity and again in AD 70.

In Hebrews 3-4, Paul turned to Psalm 95 and Genesis 2:2-3, using these two texts to repeat and emphasize David’s warning. Like David, he reminded his readers of the future promise of the eternal land inheritance, which he called the “*Sabbath Rest*,” and the “*seventh day*.”

*Hebrews 3:5 – 4:11 (My translation)*

*5 And Moses was indeed faithful in all his household as a servant, as a witness of what would be spoken later. 6 But Christ is as a Son over His own household, of whose household we are if we clutch the confidence and rejoicing of the confirmed hope<sup>27</sup> unto the consummation,<sup>28</sup> 7 according to which<sup>29</sup> the Holy Spirit says:*

*[Quoting Psalm 95] “This day, if you hear His voice, 8 you should not harden your hearts as in the provocation, as in the day of testing in the wilderness 9 where your fathers tried me, they tested Me and saw My works. 10 Forty years I was disgusted with that generation. And I said, ‘They are always straying in their heart and they do not know my ways,’ 11 as I swore in My anger whether they shall enter into My Rest.”<sup>30</sup>*

*12 Beware brothers, if at that time<sup>31</sup> a wicked heart of unbelief shall<sup>32</sup> be found in any of you, in apostatizing from the living God. 13 But encourage one another each day until<sup>33</sup> that [day] which is called ‘This day,’ so that none from among you may be hardened by*

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<sup>26</sup> cf. Gen. 13:15, 17:8 & Psalm 37

<sup>27</sup> “The confirmed hope” is the permanent land inheritance of the Abrahamic Covenant. It was confirmed by God’s oath to Abraham (Heb. 6:13-20). It was taken hold of and proclaimed by Jesus Christ, and confirmed by the Apostles’ testimony (Heb. 2:3). It was further confirmed by supernatural signs of the Spirit of Christ accompanying the Apostles (Heb. 2:4). It was fully confirmed to the Apostles Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was confirmed to Paul’s readers by the eyewitness testimony of these Apostles.

<sup>28</sup> The end of the age (Matt. 10:22; Matt. 24:6,13,14; 1 Cor. 1:8; Rev. 2:26)

<sup>29</sup> Psalm 95 is a prophecy about the “consummation.”

<sup>30</sup> at the “consummation,” when Psalm 95:7-11 will be proclaimed

<sup>31</sup> ⦿⦿⦿⦿⦿ – referring to the “consummation” to which “*this day ...*” refers.

<sup>32</sup> future tense, referring again to the consummation.

<sup>33</sup> Most translations incorrectly render this, “while it is called Today.”

the seduction of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of the Christ<sup>34</sup> if we should clutch the original confirmed foundation unto the consummation, 15 when it is to be proclaimed:<sup>35</sup>

[Quoting again from Psalm 95] “This day, if you hear His voice, you should not harden your hearts as in the provocation.”

16 For some having heard, provoked [God], but not all who came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 Yet with whom was He disgusted forty years? Was it not the ones sinning, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear would not enter His Rest, except those who were unconvinced? 19 And we see that they were unable to enter because of disbelief.

4:1 We should fear then, if at that time<sup>36</sup> any of you might appear to have fallen short of the remaining promise<sup>37</sup> to enter into His Rest. 2 For we also have been told the good message as they were (but the message heard [by them] had no benefit, not having been mixed with faith in the hearers).<sup>38</sup> 3. For we – the ones who believed – are entering<sup>39</sup> the Rest, (just as He said:

[Quoting again Psalm 95] “As I swore in My anger, whether they shall come into My Rest,”<sup>40</sup>

although the labors have been performed<sup>41</sup> since the founding of the world.<sup>42</sup>

4 For He has declared somewhere **concerning the seventh [day] thus:**

[Quoting Gen. 2:2] “And God ceased in **the seventh day** from all His works.”

5 And thus again:

[Quoting again from Psalm 95] “whether they shall come into **My Rest.**”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> sharers in the inheritance of the “Son” in Psalm 2.

<sup>35</sup> The exhortation in Psalm 95, “This day...” is to be proclaimed at the consummation of the age.

<sup>36</sup> ○○○○○○ – “if at that time” refers to the future ‘Kadesh Barnea’ when the believer’s faith in God’s promise of the inheritance (Rest) will be put to the test in the time of great tribulation.

<sup>37</sup> The “remaining promise” is the future fulfillment of the promise of entering His rest implied in the quotation of Psalm 95. (Psalm 37 shows that David had the same understanding).

<sup>38</sup> The “good news” was preached to the Israelites at Kadesh Barnea by Joshua and Caleb, but they rejected it, (Num. 13:30; 14:6-9). “And all the congregation said to stone them with stones.” (Num. 14:10)

<sup>39</sup> Paul was still speaking from the perspective of the future Kadesh Barnea (the time of testing just before Christ’s Kingdom arrives) which he introduced in verse 1 with the words, “at such time.” This is why he used the present tense “we ... are entering,” and the aorist tense “the ones who believed,” just as in verse 1 he used the perfect tense “appear to have fallen short.” His verb tenses in verses 1-3 are from the perspective of the consummation of the age.

<sup>40</sup> Psalm 95:11 LXX

<sup>41</sup> Some translations read “finished.” But the Greek word means to occur, to come to be, to be performed.

<sup>42</sup> Contrasting the future “Rest” of Psalm 95 with the labor of mankind under the curse since the “foundation of the world.” It is the same contrasting relationship that the 6 days of creation had to the Creator’s Sabbath rest, and the 6 day work week has to the Sabbath day.

<sup>43</sup> Psalm 95:11 LXX

6 Since then it remains for some to enter into it, and those to whom it was previously announced did not enter because of stubbornness, He specifies another set day – ‘This day.’

7 After such a long time<sup>44</sup> He says in [the Psalm of] David, according as was previously proclaimed,<sup>45</sup>

[Quoting again from Psalm 95] “This day if you hear His voice, you should not harden your hearts.”<sup>46</sup>

8 For if Joshua [had provided] them the Rest, He<sup>47</sup> would not have been speaking of another day after those. 9 **Consequently, a Sabbath keeping<sup>48</sup> awaits the people of God.**

10 For the one entering into His Rest, he has also ceased from his own labors<sup>49</sup> just as God did from His.

11 Therefore, we should be diligent to enter into **that Rest**, so that none fall into the same pattern of stubbornness.

Paul understood the term, “this day,” in Psalm 95 to refer to the end times, when another opportunity to enter the Promised Land would be given to God’s people. In chapter 4, he went on to draw a most interesting conclusion from this Psalm regarding the future hope of believers. “We should fear then, if at that time any of you might appear to have fallen short of the remaining promise to enter into His Rest.” Paul inferred a second opportunity to enter “His rest” from this prophetic Psalm: “This day if you hear His voice, you should not harden your hearts. ... whether they shall enter My rest.” He then explained what the “Rest” was in Psalm 95. “‘As I swore in My anger, whether they shall come into My Rest,’ although the labors have been performed since the founding of the world.” Since God was speaking in this Psalm, “My Rest” refers to God’s rest. And this refers to the seventh day of creation when God rested from all His labor. The next clause, “although the labors have been performed since the founding of the world” refers to man’s toiling under the curse for the last six millennia which precede God’s Rest.

**Paul then unmistakably stated that our future hope, the promise of entering into God’s Rest, is the “seventh day.”** “For He has declared somewhere **concerning the seventh**

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<sup>44</sup> Such a long time after the rebellion in the wilderness David wrote this Psalm which placed the opportunity to realize God’s Rest in the future.

<sup>45</sup> Joshua and Caleb (Num. 14:6-9) and Moses (Deut. 1:29) previously pleaded with the Israelites at Kadesh Barnea to trust God and go into the Land.

<sup>46</sup> Psalm 95:8 LXX

<sup>47</sup> God through David in Psalm 95

<sup>48</sup> A Sabbath to be kept (a Sabbath awaits). Paul called the Kingdom age the “Sabbath.”

<sup>49</sup> When the faithful believer enters God’s rest (the 7<sup>th</sup> Millennium, the “Sabbatical”), he has reached the end of his own labors, just like God did at the very end of His creation labor.

*[day] thus: 'And God ceased in **the seventh day** from all His works' [quoting Genesis 2], And thus again: 'whether they shall come into **My Rest**'" [quoting Psalm 95]. Thus both of these passages speak of "the seventh day" according to Paul. In the latter passage it is "My Rest" which Paul calls "*the seventh day.*" And since it is that same "rest" in Psalm 95 which Paul refers to the future Kingdom and hope of believers, it is therefore clear that the future Kingdom is "*the seventh Day,*" which he also calls our "Sabbath keeping."*

While Moses did not link the seventh millennium to the future Kingdom, Peter apparently at least hinted at it by his adding to what Moses wrote, "*and a thousand years as a day.*" However, in the above passage, Paul left absolutely no doubt because he referred to our future Rest, the Kingdom of Christ, as "*the seventh day.*" He quoted Genesis 2:2 and applied it to the "Rest" described in Psalm 95:11, which he stated was future because Joshua did not give them the "Rest." Consequently, Paul taught that the six days of creation are parallel to the six millennia under the curse, and the "seventh Day" (that is the seventh millennium), is the Kingdom of Christ in which we will rest. Therefore, the early Christian writers were not taking liberties with the Scriptures. They had both the written text as well as oral teaching from the Apostles that Christ will return at the end of 6000 years from the curse placed upon creation.

### **John & Chiliasm:**

John was the only one of the three Apostles who had seen the great vision on the Mount of Transfiguration and had also outlived the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. His contribution to apostolic chiliasm comes from the twentieth chapter of Revelation. There he spoke of Christ's and the saints' rule over the nations as being for a thousand years. John did not mention the millennium of Christ's Kingdom as being preceded by six others. However, when adding his account to the information already provided by Moses, Peter, and Paul, we have all of the components of chiliasm's millennial week chronology explicitly taught in the Bible.

- The first millennium was the "Day" in which Adam would die. (Moses)
- The first millennium was also as "*a watch in the night,*" which is 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the whole, or one millennium of six. (Moses)
- The Kingdom of Christ is called a "Day" in the context of Moses' statement about God's millennial days. (Peter)
- Christ's future Kingdom is called the "*seventh day,*" "*keeping of Sabbath,*" and God's "Rest" – connecting it to the creation week (Paul)
- Christ's reign over the nations is clearly defined as a millennium. (John)

That the early Christians claimed the creation account was both history and prophecy should not come as a surprise given all of this evidence both from Moses, Peter, Paul, and John. Yet, there is one more reason to believe Chiliasm to be true:

*Isaiah 46:9-10 LXX*

9 "I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning."

The creation account describes "the beginning" – "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." God has been prophesying the "end" **from the creation account**. God has been declaring when the "end" will occur since Genesis chapter one, but in a mystery that was only progressively revealed.

That the biblical data confirms Chiliasm to be absolutely true and trustworthy does not imply that Moses, Peter, Paul, or John knew how far off Jesus' return actually was. There is no evidence that the Apostles or others before John's death attempted to construct a complete chronology, from creation to their time, using the wealth of chronological data in the Bible in order to see how much time remained.<sup>50</sup> Peter did not remind his audience of a specific date or where they were within a properly biblically-constructed chronology. He only reminded them of what they had already been taught concerning the interpretation of Psalm 90, how that correlated with "the prophets" and the commands of Jesus to His Apostles concerning when the end would come. So while both the Bible and the earliest Christians taught Chiliasm, any attempt to reconstruct a complete chronology from the biblical data, and any linkage of that chronology with our modern calendar, is subject to human error.

The primary obstacle facing anyone attempting to reconstruct a chronology of the Bible is which version of the Old Testament contains the correct chronological information. There are three vastly different versions of chronology, the Hebrew Text, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Greek Septuagint. By far the greatest discrepancies of these three sources occur in the genealogical records of Genesis, from Adam to Abraham. The Septuagint gives the greatest length for this period, and the Hebrew gives the shortest. However, only the Hebrew text allows for us to accept Chiliasm as being true, since the data found in both of the other sources places the 6000<sup>th</sup> year from creation long ago by greatly exaggerating the Genesis genealogies. Consequently, the Hebrew Text alone contains the chronological data that is compatible with Chiliasm because we have not yet reached the 6000<sup>th</sup> year using the Hebrew chronology. An ancient Jewish work, the Book of Jubilees, written at least 160 years before Christ, closely conforms to the modern

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<sup>50</sup> The earliest known Christian attempt to construct a timeline from the biblical chronological data was in the second century by Theophilus of Antioch using the Septuagint.



Hebrew chronological information, as does the second century Jewish work, Seder Olam, the second century Aramaic translation (Peshitta), and the fourth century Latin Vulgate. All of these bear witness to the antiquity of the shorter Genesis genealogical records found in the Hebrew Bible.