

Quotes From The Ancients Concerning God's Prophetic Week of Thousand-Year Days

Aside from those who were entrusted to write the New Testament, ancient writings from both early church leaders and Jewish commentators, reveal the common belief that Christ (the Messiah) would rule over the earth for a seventh great Day lasting one thousand years. They believed that this Millennial Sabbath would be preceded by six great Days of equal length - for a total of seven thousand years. This great Week of redemption reveals the approximate time of Christ's return, enough to mark this present generation as the one that will witness the end of this present age. These ancient quotes prove that this was the common teaching of the church during the first few centuries until false teachings crept in. Thus, the Great Week is not a new revelation, but a restoration of truth once held by the foundational apostles of the church.

The Epistle of Barnabus (fellow apostle with Paul):

And God made in six days the works of His hands; and He finished them on the seventh day, and He rested on the seventh day and sanctified it. Consider, my children, what that signifies, He finished them in six days. The meaning of it is this: that in six thousand years the Lord God will bring all things to an end, for with Him, one day is as a thousand years; as Himself testifieth, saying behold this day shall be as a thousand years. Therefore children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, shall all things be accomplished. And what is it that He saith, and He rested the seventh day? He meaneth this; That when His Son shall come and abolish the season of the wicked one, and judge the ungodly, and shall change the sun and the moon, and the stars, then he shall gloriously rest in that seventh day.¹

Irenaeus, 150 AD:

For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reason the Scripture says, "Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their

¹Barnabus, The Epistle of Barnabus – The Anti-Nicene Father, (Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), Vol.1, pp. 146-147

adornment, And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; and God rested upon the seventh day from all His works." This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the Day of the Lord is as a thousand years; And in six days created things were completed; it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand years.²

Lactantius, 300 AD:

Because all the works of God were finished in six days, it is necessary that the world should remain in this state six ages - that is six thousand years. Because having finished the works he rested on the seventh day and blessed it; it is necessary that at the end of the six thousandth year all wickedness should be abolished out of the earth and justice should reign for a thousand years.³

Hippolytus, pre-Constantinian era:

And 6,000 years must needs be accomplished, in order that the Sabbath may come, the rest, the holy day "on which God rested from all His works." For the Sabbath is the type and emblem of the future kingdom of the saints, when they "shall reign with Christ," when He comes from heaven, as John says in his Apocalypse: for "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years." Since, then, in six days God made all things, it follows that 6,000 years must be fulfilled.⁴

Methodius, late 3rd or early 4th century:

...these things, being like air and phantom shadows, foretell the resurrection and the putting up of our tabernacle that had fallen upon the earth, which at length, in the seventh thousand of years, resuming again immortal, we shall celebrate the great feast of true tabernacles in the new and indissoluble creation...for since in six days God made the heaven and the earth, and finished the whole

²Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* – The Anti-Nicene Fathers, (Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), Vol. 1, p. 557

³Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* – The Anti-Nicene Fathers, (Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), Vol. VII, p. 211

⁴Hippolytus, *On the Hexameron, Or Six Days' Work*. From *Fragments from Commentaries on Various Books of Scripture*.

world, and rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made, and blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, so by a figure in the seventh month, when the fruits of the earth have been gathered in, we are commanded to keep the feast to the Lord, which signifies that, when this world shall be terminated at the seventh thousand years, when God shall have completed the world, He shall rejoice in us...⁵

Gaudentius, Bishop of Brescia (friend of St. Ambrose, died 410):

We expect that truly holy day of the seventh thousand years, that shall come after those six days, or six thousand years of time, which, being finished, shall begin that holy rest for all true saints and for all faithful believers in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁶

Bishop Victorinus, late 3rd century:

...that true and just Sabbath should be observed in the seventh millenary of years. Wherefore to those seven days the Lord attributed to each a thousand years; for thus went the warning: "In Your eyes, O Lord, a thousand years are as one day." Therefore in the eyes of the Lord each thousand of years is ordained, for I find that the Lord's eyes are seven. Wherefore, as I have narrated, that true Sabbath will be in the seventh millenary of years, when Christ with His elect shall reign.⁷

Commodianus, likely 4th century:

Adam was the first who fell, and that he might shun the precepts of God, Belial was his tempter by the lust of the palm tree. And he conferred on us also what he did, whether of good or of evil, as being the chief of all that was born from him; and thence we die by his means, as he himself, receding from the divine, became an outcast from the Word. We shall be immortal when six thousand years are accomplished.⁸

⁵ Methodius, Banquet of the Ten Virgins, The Anti-Nicene Fathers, (Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), Vol. VI, p. 344.

⁶ (Tract 10) (Rossi, G. The Christian Trumpet)

⁷ Victorinus, Commentary on the Creation. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol 7.

⁸ Commodianus, On Christian Discipline, from Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol, 4.

Ancient Jewish Commentaries:

Rabbi Elias, 200BC:

The World endures six thousand years: two thousand before the Law, two thousand under the Law, and two thousand under Messiah.⁹

Rabbi Ketina (from Gemara, a Jewish commentary on the Talmud):

The world endures six thousand years and one thousand it shall be laid waste, that is, the enemies of God shall be destroyed, whereof it is said, "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that Day." As out of seven years every seventh is a year of remission, so out of seven thousand years of the world, the seventh millennium shall be the millennial years of remission, that God alone may be exalted in that Day.¹⁰

Various quotes from the Talmud, a Jewish commentary on the Old Testament:

The Holy One, blessed be He; He will not renew His world until after seven thousand years.¹¹

Abaye said: it will be desolate two thousand, as it is said, After two days will he revive us: in the third day, he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

It has been taught in accordance with Rabbi Kattina: Just as the seventh year is one year of release in seven, so is the world: one thousand years out of seven shall be fallow, as it is written, "And the Lord alone shall be exalted in the day," and it is further said, A Psalm and song for the Sabbath day (Psalm 92:1), meaning the day that is altogether Sabbath - and it is also said, "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past (Psalm 90:4).

⁹ Bishop Burnett, *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*, (London: 1816) p. 408

¹⁰ Bishop Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, (London: 1817), Vol. 2, p. 373)

¹¹ Talmud, Sanhedrin 97-b

The Tanna debe Eliyyahu teaches: The world is to exist six thousand years. In the first two thousand there was desolation; two thousand years the Torah flourished; and the next two thousand years is the Messianic era (Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Danhedrin Folio 97a)

In 1552 AD, Bishop Latimer stated his belief that the present age would end around 2000 AD. The concept is scriptural even though his calculations were in error.

The world was ordained to endure, as all learned men affirm, 6,000 years. Now of that number, there be passed 5,552 years, so that there is no more left but 448 years.

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