

## I. Biblical Foundation

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup> 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." (<sup>ESV</sup> Genesis 2:16-17)

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. <sup>2</sup> Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. <sup>3</sup> You turn men back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, O sons of men." <sup>4</sup> *For a thousand years in your sight are like a day* that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. <sup>5</sup> You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning-- <sup>6</sup> though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered. (<sup>NIV</sup> Psalm 90:1-6)

But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until *the day of judgment* and destruction of the ungodly. <sup>8</sup> But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that *with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (<sup>ESV</sup> 2 Peter 3:7-9)

I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. *They came to life* and reigned with Christ *for a thousand years*. <sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead did not *come to life* until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. (<sup>ESV</sup> Revelation 20:4-5)

## II. Intertestamental Literature

And at the end of the nineteenth jubilee in the seventh week, in the sixth year, Adam died. And all of his children buried him in the land of his creation. And he was the first who was buried in the earth. And he lacked seventy years from one thousand years, *for a thousand years are like one day* in the testimony of heaven and therefore it was written concerning the tree of knowledge, "In the day you eat from it you will die." Therefore he did not complete the years of this day because he died in it. (*Jubilees* 4.29-30; *OTP*, 2:63-64)

After this [the death of Eve], all her children buried her with great weeping. Then, when they had mourned for four days, the archangel Michael appeared to them and said to Seth, "Man of God, do not prolong mourning your dead more than six days, because the seventh day is a sign of the resurrection, the rest of the coming age, and on the seventh day the LORD rested from all his works." Then Seth made the tablets. (*The Life of Adam and Eve* 51.1-3; *OTP*, 2:294)

[After Adam's transgression. God expels him into the earth from which he had been taken. But he does not wish to destroy him in the age to come. Word "28."] And I said to him, 'You are earth, and *into the earth once again you will go*, out of which I took you. And I will not destroy you, but I will send you away to what I took you from. *Then I can take you once again* at my second coming.' And I blessed all my creatures, visible and invisible. And Adam was in paradise for 5 hours and a half. And I blessed the 7th day which is the sabbath in which I

rested from all my doings. [God shows Enoch the epoch of this world, the existence of 7000 years, and the eighth thousand is the end, neither years nor months nor weeks nor days. Word "29."] On the 8th day I likewise appointed, so that the 8th day might be the 1st, the first-created of my week, and that it should revolve in the revolution of 7000; so that the 8000 might be in the beginning of a time not reckoned and unending, neither years, nor months, nor weeks, nor days, nor hours like the first day of the week, so also that the eighth day of the week might return continually. (2 *Enoch* 32.1-33.1; *OTP*, 1:154-56)

### III. Early Church

"The Sabbath is mentioned at the beginning of the creation thus: 'And God made in six days the works of His hands, and made an end on the seventh day, and rested on it, and sanctified it.' Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, 'He finished in six days.' This implieth that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifieth, saying, 'Behold, to-day will be as a thousand years.' Therefore, my children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. 'And He rested on the seventh day.' This meaneth: when His Son, coming again, shall destroy the time of the wicked man, and judge the ungodly, and change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day." (*The Epistle of Barnabas*, 15; *ANF*, 1:146)

"For Isaiah spake thus concerning this space of a thousand years: 'For there shall be the new heaven and the new earth, and the former shall not be remembered' ... 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; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place." (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, 81; *ANF*, 1:239-40)

"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 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 year." (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5.28.3; *ANF*, 1:557)

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. The tree of the apple being tasted, death has entered into the world. By this tree of death we are born to the life to come... This has pleased Christ, that the dead should rise again, yea, with their bodies; and those, too, whom in this

world the fire has burned, when six thousand years are completed, and the world has come to an end. (Commodian, *Instructions*, 35, 80; ANF, 4:209, 218)

“But if any one should prefer to differ in these points, let him first say, whether a period of time be not easily reckoned from the creation of the world, according to the Book of Moses, to those who so receive it, the voice of prophecy here proclaiming: ‘Thou art God from everlasting, and world without end.... For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday: seeing that is past as a watch in the night.’ For when a thousand years are reckoned as one day in the sight of God, and from the creation of the world to His rest is six days, so also to our time, six days are defined, as those say who are clever arithmeticians. Therefore, they say that an age of six thousand years extends from Adam to our time. For they say that the judgment will come on the seventh day, that is in the seventh thousand years.” (Methodius, *Fragments: Extracts from the Work on Things Created*, 9; ANF, 6:381)

“But since the things which have been spoken concerning the end of the world and the conclusion of the times are innumerable, those very things which are spoken are to be laid down without adornment, since it would be a boundless task to bring forward the testimonies. If any one wishes for them, or does not place full confidence in us, let him approach to the very shrine of the heavenly letters, and being more fully instructed through their trustworthiness, let him perceive that the philosophers have erred, who thought either that this world was eternal, or that there would be numberless thousands of years from the time when it was prepared. For six thousand years have not yet been completed, and when this number shall be made up, then at length all evil will be taken away, that justice alone may reign.” (Lactantius, *The Epitome of the Divine Institutes*, 70; ANF, 7:253)