



Sabbath rest was used to depict this aspect of the covenant through Israel's entering the Promised Land.

The Hebrew word for the Sabbath "rest" in Exodus 20:11 and Deuteronomy 5:14 is "nuwach" (Strong's No. 5117). The same word is used in several passages to refer to Israel's entering into the Promised Land and conquering it.

**Exodus 20:11** For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, **and rested (5117) the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day,** and hallowed it.

**Deuteronomy 5:14** **But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God:** in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant **may rest (5117) as well as thou.**

**Deuteronomy 3:20** **Until the LORD have given rest (5117) unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and until they also possess the land which the LORD your God hath given them beyond Jordan:** and then shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you.

**Deuteronomy 12:10** **But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest (5117) from all your enemies** round about, so that ye dwell in safety;

**Deuteronomy 25:19** Therefore it shall be, **when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest (5117) from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it,** that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.

**Joshua 1:13** **Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest (5117), and hath given you this land.** 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them; 15 **Until the LORD have given your brethren rest (5117), as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it,** which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising.

**Joshua 21:44** **And the LORD gave them rest (5117) round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers:** and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.

**Joshua 23:1** And it came to pass a long time after that **the LORD had given rest (5117)** unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.

**Joshua 22:4** And now **the LORD your God hath given rest (5117) unto your brethren, as he promised them:** therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan.

From these passages we see that the Sabbath, which was a seventh day of rest after six days of work contained a promise that God's people would be the head of nations and live in peace from their enemies. Hebrews 3 and 4 discuss the Sabbath rest of God's people in just this way.

**Hebrews 3:10** Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. **11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.**) **12** Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. **13** But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. **14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;** **15** While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. **16** For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. **17** But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? **18 And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?** **19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.**

Hebrews 3 is discussing how some of the Israelites were not allowed into God's rest because of their unbelief. He also challenges us not to repeat this error. Hebrews 4 continues the same exhortation and explanation.

**Hebrews 4:1** **Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest,** any of you should seem to come short of it. **2** For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. **3 For we which have believed do enter into rest,** as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, **if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.** **4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.** **5** And in this place again, **If they shall enter into my rest.** **6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein,** and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: **7** Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. **8 For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.** **9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.** **10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own**

**works, as God did from his. 11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest,** lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Verses 1-4 informs us that God has rested from His work on the Sabbath day of the creation week. So, Hebrews affirms that God's Sabbath rest was the seventh day after the six days of creation. And yet, Hebrews states that God invites us to enter into this rest with Him (Hebrews 4:1, 3, 5-6, 9). Thus, Hebrews concludes that there remains for us a Sabbath rest to enter into.

According to Hebrews, this Sabbath rest was not fulfilled when the Israelites entered into the Promised Land under Joshua. For, long after this David restates God's invitation showing that it was still unfulfilled and thus referred to something besides the Promised Land.

**Psalm 95:7** For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. **To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation,** and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: **9** When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. **10** Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, **It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: 11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.**

The question is, what is the Sabbath rest that we can enter into through faith in Christ Jesus as spoken of here in Hebrews?

Two things are apparent about this Sabbath rest that remains. First, it is somehow related to the seventh day of God's rest, which was preceded by the six days of creation. And second, it also involves a promise that God's people will be the head of nations and living at peace. Clearly, this second aspect of the Sabbath rest that remains has not yet occurred. But the New Testament does speak of it. In fact, the disciples ask Jesus about this very thing before He ascended to heaven after His resurrection.

**Acts 1:6** When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, **Lord, wilt thou at this time restore (600) again the kingdom to Israel?** **7** And he said unto them, It is not for you to know **the times** or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Here in Acts 1, we see that the disciples ask if Jesus was going to restore the kingdom to Israel at that time in accordance with God's promise. However, Jesus tells them that it is not for them to know the times or the seasons in which God would accomplish this. The Greek word for restore that is used here is Strong's No. 600.

600 **apokathistemi** {ap-ok-ath-is'-tay-mee}

TDNT - 1:387,65 from **575** and **2525**

v

**1)** to restore to its former state

2) to be in its former state

Authorized Version (KJV) Translation Count — **Total: 8**

AV - restore 7, restore again 1; 8

Peter uses a related word in his sermon in Acts 3:19 to speak of the “times of restitution” that they spoke with Jesus about in Acts 1:6-7. In this sermon, Peter couples this restoration of the kingdom of Israel with something he calls the “times of refreshing.”

**Acts 3:19** Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when **the times of refreshing (403) shall come from the presence of the Lord.** 20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: 21 **Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution (605) of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.**

605 **apokatastasis** {ap-ok-at-as'-tas-is}

TDNT - 1:389,65 from **600**

n f

1) restoration

a) of a true theocracy

b) of the perfect state before the fall

Authorized Version (KJV) Translation Count — **Total: 1**

AV - restitution 1; 1

In the phrase “times of refreshing,” which Peter mentions here the word for refreshing is Strong’s No. 403 in the Greek.

403 **anapsuxis** {an-aps'-ook-sis}

TDNT - 9:664,1342 from **404**

n f

1) a cooling, **refreshing**

Authorized Version (KJV) Translation Count — **Total: 1**

AV - refreshing 1; 1

This term, the “times of refreshing” relates back to the Sabbath rest of God, which Exodus 31:17 and 23:12 describe as a time of refreshing.

**Exodus 31:17** It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: **for in six days (3117) the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day (3117) he rested, and was refreshed (5314).**

**Exodus 23:12** Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, **may be refreshed (5314).**

The Hebrew word translated as refreshing is Strong’s No. 5314. We can see that it is very similar in meaning to the Greek word “anapsuxis,” which Peter used to

discuss the times of refreshing, which would accompany the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.

05314 **naphash** {naw-fash'}  
TWOT - 1395 a primitive root

v

1) (Niphal) to take breath, refresh oneself

Authorized Version (KJV) Translation Count — **Total: 3**

AV - refreshed 3; 3

The times of restoration of the kingdom of Israel and the times of refreshing are clearly references to the Sabbath rest that is discussed in Hebrews 3-4.

The fact that this time of refreshing to is referred to as far back as Exodus is why Peter states in Acts 3:19-21 that the “the times of restitution” were “spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Likewise, this is why Hebrews states that “the gospel” of the kingdom was “preached, as well as unto them,” way back when these comments were made originally in the Pentateuch.

In Philippians, Paul reflects on this same concept, where he says that our kingdom is in heaven until Jesus, our Savior, returns from there.

**Philippians 3:20** For **our conversation (4175) is in heaven;** from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

The word translated as “conversation” is the Greek word “politeuma,” which refers to a governmental structure.

4175 **politeuma** {pol-it'-yoo-mah}  
TDNT - 6:516,906 from **4176**

n n

1) the administration of civil affairs or of a commonwealth

2) the constitution of a commonwealth, form of government and the laws by which it is administered

3) a state, commonwealth

a) the commonwealth of citizens

Authorized Version (KJV) Translation Count — **Total: 1**

AV - conversation 1; 1

Notice that both Jesus and His/our kingdom are in heaven and that Paul’s use of the phrase “from whence also” indicates that not only Jesus, but also His/our kingdom will come to us from heaven upon His return. Jesus himself was the first to comment on this kingdom before his crucifixion, which He said was not then of this world.

**John 18:33** Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? **34** Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? **35** Pilate answered, Am

I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, **My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight,** that I should not be delivered to the Jews: **but now is my kingdom not from hence.** 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, **Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born,** and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

In saying that His kingdom is not now of this world, Jesus speaks of a time when His kingdom will be of this world. This is what the disciples were asking Jesus about in Acts 1:6 where they ask Jesus when he would restore the kingdom to Israel. From Philippians 3:20 and Acts 3:19 we see that Jesus will restore the kingdom to Israel when He returns from heaven. And from Hebrews 4 and Acts 3:19 we learn that this coming of the kingdom at Jesus' return is connected to God's Sabbath rest, which we are invited to enter.

The Book of Revelation picks up on both concepts in presenting the coming of the kingdom of God at Jesus' return. Revelation 14:12 speaks of God's people resting from their labors in the Kingdom of God, just as Hebrews 4:9-11 discusses.

**Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints:** here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: **Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.**

**Revelation 2:3** And hast borne, **and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured,** and hast not fainted.

**Revelation 1:9** I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and **in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,** was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

So, we have learned that the Sabbath rest of God is the seventh day of the creation week during, which God rested from His work and was refreshed. Likewise, the Sabbath also prophetically symbolizes the coming kingdom of God and a time of refreshing or resting, during which Jesus will restore the Kingdom of Israel and God's people will rest from their labors.

But there remains one final, crucial relationship between the Sabbath and the coming kingdom of God that should not be overlooked. Just as the Sabbath day is the seventh day after six preceding days, so shall the kingdom of God be the seventh millennium, after six preceding millennia. Three passages make this conclusion abundantly clear.

Revelation 20 repeatedly states no less than six times that Christ's reign will comprise a period of one thousand years (a single millennium).

**Revelation 20:** 1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, **and bound him a thousand years,** 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till **the thousand years** should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; **and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.** 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until **the thousand years** were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, **and shall reign with him a thousand years.** 7 And when **the thousand years** are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

But how do we know that the millennial reign of Christ will be preceded by 6,000 years? Again, we defer to the apostle Peter, who spoke on this topic on several occasions.

In his second epistle, Peter says that in the last days scoffers will come who will wonder why Jesus has not returned as He promised.

**2 Peter 3:**3 Knowing this first, that **there shall come in the last days scoffers,** walking after their own lusts, 4 **And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? ...**8 **But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.** 9 **The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness;** but is longsuffering to us-ward, 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;**

There are two details from Peter's letter that confirm that he was simply referring back to Jesus' own teaching on the issue of his return and the coming of the kingdom of God. These can be seen by comparing 2 Peter 3 with Matthew 24 and Luke 12.

**Matthew 24:**42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had **known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.** 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. 45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. 48 **But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth**



**his coming;** 49 And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

**Luke 12:39** And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known **what hour the thief would come, he would have watched,** and not have suffered his house to be broken through. 40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. 41 Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? 42 And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 44 **Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.** 45 **But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;** and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; 46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. 47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. 49 I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?

In these passages we see that both Peter and Jesus are discussing Jesus' return. Both mention those who mistakenly think that Jesus' coming has been delayed. And both refer to this coming as a thief in the night. (The "thief in the night" metaphor is used to refer to Jesus' return in several other places in the New Testament including 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4, Revelation 3:3, and Revelation 16:15.)

By this, we know that Peter is simply drawing from Jesus' own teachings about his return and the coming of the kingdom of God. However, in the midst of reminding his readers of Jesus teaching Peter says something very curious. As a means of combating the hypothetical criticisms of those who question the timing Jesus' return as if it were behind schedule or later than expected Peter is adamant that they not be ignorant of one thing.

**2 Peter 3:3** Knowing this first, that **there shall come in the last days scoffers,** walking after their own lusts, 4 **And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? ... 8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.** 9 **The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness;** but is longsuffering to us-ward, 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;**

So, what is the one thing, which Peter considers so critical to understanding the timing of the Lord's return? It is that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. Peter is directly quoting Psalm 90 and applying it to the Lord's teachings on his return, the coming of the kingdom of God, which is the Sabbath rest that remains for us to enter. Here is the verse from Psalm 90 that Peter is quoting from.

**Psalm 90:4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past,** and as a watch in the night. (KJV)

**Psalm 90:4 For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by,** or like a watch in the night. (NIV)

Psalm 90 compares a thousand years of God's timetable with two things: 1) one day and 2) a watch in the night. But why is Peter quoting Psalm 90 as an explanation for the timing of Jesus' return.

A look at Matthew's account of this parable reveals a further relationship between Jesus' teaching on His coming to restore the kingdom to Israel and Psalm 90. This connection, which was understood by Peter, is Jesus' reference to His return as the coming of the thief during a watch of the night.

**Matthew 24:43** But know this, that if the goodman of the house had **known in what watch the thief would come**, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Luke's account of Jesus' teaching on His coming provides further details of the connection that Peter made between Jesus' coming as a thief in the night and Psalm 90. Just before Luke's account of the thief in the night parable, we find another parable, which Jesus also uses to describe His return. In this parable, Jesus describes Himself as a Lord returning from a wedding.

**Luke 12:36** **And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding;** that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. 37 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. 38 **And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.**

The thing to note is that in these parables Jesus describes his coming in conjunction with a watch of the night. Psalm 90, which Peter directly quotes, compares a thousand years with a watch of the night and with a day. Having heard Jesus give this teaching on his return, it is no stretch to imagine that Peter invokes Psalm 90 because he saw Jesus' parables as itself potentially invoking Psalm 90.

Therefore, in his epistle, Peter explains this connection to his readers, speaking of the Lord's return in accordance with Psalm 90. What Peter is saying to his readers is that Psalm 90 is crucial to not misunderstanding the timing of the Lord's return.

But, what does the statement that a thousand years is as a day or a watch in the night have to do with the timing of Jesus' return? Peter's application of Psalm 90 to the timing of Jesus' return has been taken two ways.

Some have taken Peter to simply be saying that God doesn't reckon time as we do. However, the early Church clearly understood Peter to be making a much more precise commentary. (We will look at the early church's remarks momentarily.)

Specifically, when we take Peter's connection of Jesus' return in conjunction with Psalm 90's declaration that a thousand years is as one day or a watch in the night, we arrive at the idea that the timing of Jesus' return corresponds somehow to thousand-year periods.

There is good reason to conclude that the biblical relationship between a thousand years and one day (which is reflected in both Psalm 90 and Peter's epistle) originates early in scripture. In Genesis 2:18, God tells Adam that if he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would die in the same day that he ate the fruit. And yet we know from Genesis 4:5 that Adam lived to be nine hundred and thirty years old. Thus, Adam died within 1,000 years of when he ate the fruit. Adam's lifespan connects with God's declaration in Genesis 2 to indicate that, as Peter and Psalms explain, a day with the Lord is as a thousand years.

When this relationship of one day and a thousand years is connected to the concept of the Sabbath as it is in Hebrews, we derive the concept of that Christ will return to establish his kingdom on earth after sixth thousand years of history have passed. In this way, the millennial kingdom spoken of by Revelation is a Sabbath millennium preceded by 6,000 years of history. Peter's epistle along with Hebrews informs us that the apostles understood these connections and passed them on to the early church.

Though Jesus taught on his return, a study of his remarks on the subject show that his discussion of the timing of his coming was not spelled out clearly or openly. He used the metaphor of a thief in the night, he spoke of delays or a long period of time, the need to be watchful, that he didn't know the hour in which he would come, and that only the Father knew the day and the hour. Put simply, he never says how long it would be before he came back. Instead he gave signs by which we can know when his return was soon to occur. Likewise, though we can conclude that the apostles understood that Christ's coming would initiate the Jewish Messianic kingdom on earth at the start of the seventh millennium from creation, we don't have any New Testament statements from them declaring exactly how much time remained until Jesus returned.

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There are, however, a few places in the scripture which may potentially hint at the amount of time that would occur between Jesus' first coming and his return. The first occurs in Hosea.

**Hosea 6:1** Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. **2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up,** and we shall live in his sight. 3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

The interesting thing to note about Hosea 6 is that it follows the following remarks from Hosea 5:6 and 15, which speaks of the Lord withdrawing Himself from those who seek Him.

**Hosea 5:6** They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them...**15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.**

Several of Jesus' own comments about going away where He will not be able to be found refer directly back to Hosea 5:6 and 15.

**John 7:33** Then said Jesus unto them, **Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.** 34 **Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me:** and where I am, thither ye cannot come. 35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

**John 8:14** Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: **for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.**

**John 8:21** Then said Jesus again unto them, **I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.** 22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. 23 **And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.**

**John 13:30** He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night. 31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. 33 Little children, **yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.**

**Matthew 23:39** For I say unto you, **Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.**

**Luke 13:35** Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, **Ye shall not see me, until *the time* come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.**

In each of these six cases we see Jesus discussing His going away to heaven after His death and resurrection, which Peter spoke of in Acts 3:21. In these passages Jesus plainly echoes Hosea 5:6 and 15, that though they seek Him they will not be able to find Him until they acknowledge that He is from God. Yet, Hosea says that in the second day God will revive us and in the third day raise us up and we will live in His sight. This may be similar to Jesus' parable in Luke 12:36-38 where he speaks of his return in the second or third watch of the night.

Connecting Jesus' remarks in Luke 12, his other parables about his return, his comments about going away, Hosea 5-6, Psalm 90, and Peter's epistle may perhaps be suggestive of the idea that Jesus would remain in heaven for two millennia or so after His ascension. (Jesus' stay in heaven is also described in John 3:12, Ephesians 4:8-10, Psalm 110:1-3, and Hebrews 10:12-13.)

This same two to three day theme may also be present in the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10.

**Luke 10:33** But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, 34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 **And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.**

Here the word for "pence" is the Greek word denarion (Strong's #1220).

**1220 denarion** {day-nar'-ee-on}

of Latin origin;; n n

AV - penny 9, pence 5, pennyworth 2; 16

denarius = "containing ten"

1) A Roman silver coin in NT time. It took its name from it being equal to ten "asses", a number after 217 B.C. increased to sixteen (about 3.898 grams or .1375 oz.). It was the principal silver coin of the Roman empire. **From the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, it would seem that a denarius was then the ordinary pay for a day's wages.** (Mt. 20:2-13)

The definition of this word indicates that it was a standard day's wage as indicated by Jesus' words in Matthew 20:2-13.

**Matthew 20:2** And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny (1220) a day, he sent them into his vineyard...9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, **they received every man a penny (1220).**

In the Good Samaritan parable, Jesus indicates that the Samaritan pays the innkeeper two pence, which would have been two denarion, or two day's wages. It is possible then to consider that the Samaritan would return after two days. However, the Samaritan also tells the innkeeper that there may be some extra time beyond those two days.

Other allusions could also perhaps be considered involving a period of 2-3 days. These may include the fall of Jericho and possibly the Transfiguration. Of course, if we were to suppose that such passages speak of a 2,000-year period and then add 2,000 years to the amount of time recorded in the Old Testament prior to Christ's birth (approximately 4,000 years), the total would be around 6,000 years.

Here a question arises as to whether or not the apostles understood these verses from Hosea, John, Luke, and Matthew in the way we have outlined above. There are a couple of questions worth pursuing here. First, did the apostles understand that the number of days referred to in these passages as incidental or as definitive and relevant? Second, did the apostles receive additional, explanatory teaching directly from Jesus about the timeframes mentioned in these passages? Or, did the apostles simply ponder these things after Pentecost, recalling Jesus' words and considering their potential relevance but without deciding definitively either way?

On the one hand, if the apostles did not understand the numbers in these passages to be relevant but considered them incidental, then in some sense the interpretations outlined above could be characterized as inventing new meaning which the apostles didn't pick up on. This idea is admittedly not too savory. On the other hand, if the apostles did pick up on the relevance of these numbers, wouldn't that force them to conclude that there would necessarily be an interval of 2 millennia between Jesus' two advents? If so, how can we say that the apostles didn't know for sure how much time would transpire before Jesus' return?

The answer to these questions depends on whether the apostles had received direct teaching from Jesus explaining the relevance of these numbers. We know that with some other parables, Jesus did in fact speak to the apostles afterward and explicitly spell out the significance of each of the relevant details to them, such as in Matthew 13. But in Matthew 13, this type of direct explanation only occurs after the apostles specifically ask Jesus for more information. It does not appear to be Jesus' automatic habit and the absence of such explanations throughout much of the gospels prevents us from concluding such explanations were a regular or universal occurrence. This leaves open the possibility that the apostles did not receive direct teaching from Jesus affirming or identifying the relevance of the numbers mentioned in the passages above from Hosea, John, Luke, and Matthew. And this, in turn, leaves open another possibility and creates some leeway. So long as the apostles were not told specifically by Jesus that the numbers had particular significance, it remains very plausible that the apostles could have pondered the potential significance of these numbers without being bound to a specific, definitive conclusion on the matter. In this way, the apostles would have been able to remain open about the possibility that Jesus could return in their

lifetimes and the possibility that he might not return for perhaps as long as two millennia. Moreover, in this scenario, the idea that the apostles themselves perceived the potential relevance of the number of days mentioned in these passages would not necessitate that the apostles likewise concluded there would necessarily be two millennia before Jesus' return. So long as they considered this a possibility but not a definitive teaching from Christ himself, they could have maintained openness regarding the amount of time before Jesus' return. And, the apostles could have still credited Jesus as the source of the concept that he would return after "2 days."

But, while hints of a 2,000-year period between Christ's comings would work quite well with the amount of time that occurred prior to and since Christ's first coming, recognition of these hints is not critical to the notion that there would be 6,000 years prior to the millennial kingdom. Regardless of what the apostles perceived from such passages in Hosea, John, Luke, and Matthew concerning the amount of time before Jesus' return, the bottom line is that there is a Biblical and apostolic connection between Psalm 90 and the thousand year reign of Christ, which is the Sabbath rest. That connection is not undermined by how much time the apostles anticipated might transpire before the Second Advent. And, given the biblical equation of the kingdom with the Sabbath rest, Revelation 20's identification of the kingdom with a 1,000-year period, and the relationship between one day and one thousand years, we have good reason to expect Christ to return at sometime around the coming of the 6,000th year from creation. (For a calculation of the amount of years before Christ as it is recorded in the Old Testament please see our chronology study.)

And this fits quite neatly with several details that we have already learned about the Sabbath and the coming Kingdom of God.

1. The Sabbath day is the seventh day following six preceding days.
2. A Sabbath rest remains for us to enter into.
3. Jesus will reign over the restored kingdom of Israel for one thousand years.
4. The millennial kingdom is the Sabbath rest that remains for God's people.
5. With God, a day is as a thousand years.

When we pull all of these scriptural details together we arrive at the conclusion that the 1,000-year kingdom of Christ is the seventh or Sabbath millennium, preceded by six millennia of human history. And this is exactly what Peter is teaching his readers, which he feels is crucial to not misunderstanding the timing of Jesus' coming.

Two additional factors support this conclusion. First, though the creation week is explicitly defined in Exodus 20 and 31 in terms of a week of literal 24-hour days, the Jews had Sabbaths of other things as well. In Exodus 21:1-3, the Hebrew slaves were to be released in the seventh year. Likewise, both Exodus 23:10-12 and Leviticus 25 state that the land was to be used to grow for six years and allowed to rest in the seventh or Sabbath year. In Leviticus 25, we also see that the after a space of seven Sabbaths of years (49 years) there was a jubilee year.

So we see that God kept seventh days and seventh years as holy and sacred times of rest and refreshing for His people. Knowing this is it at all surprising that the thousand year reign of Christ, which is also a Sabbath rest which remains for God's people would be a Sabbath of millenniums? Of course, not. Not only is this not unexpected, but it's basically required. And we see that Peter was, in fact, directing the readers of his epistle to this very conclusion. By saying that a day with the Lord is as a thousand years, Peter is in effect teaching that there is a Sabbath of millenniums just as there was a Sabbath of days.

Secondary support for the Sabbath millennium comes by way of the early Church, which clearly understood and clearly held to this position. Knowing that both Hebrews and Peter discussed the topic in their epistles, and seeing that they got it from Old Testament scripture, we can see why the early Church exhibited such a universal consensus on the matter. The following are quotes from the early Church, which demonstrate the orthodoxy and ancient origin of the belief that the reign of Christ will be a seventh 1,000 years after a preceding 6,000 years of human history.

The epistle of Barnabus, written at about 100 A.D. says the following.

“Further,(16) also, it is written concerning the Sabbath in the Decalogue which [the Lord] spoke, face to face, to Moses on Mount Sinai, "And sanctify ye the Sabbath of the Lord with clean hands and a pure heart."(17) And He says in another place, "If my sons keep the Sabbath, then will I cause my mercy to rest upon them."(18) **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."**(19) 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(20) with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifieth,(21) saying, "Behold, to-day(22) will be as a thousand years."**(23) **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,(24) and judge the ungodly, and change the-sun, and the moon,(25) and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day.**” – Barnabus, CHAP. XV.--THE FALSE AND THE TRUE SABBATH.

Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John the Apostle, has even more to say.

“He says also: "And he will cause a mark [to be put] in the forehead and in the fight hand, that no one may be able to buy or sell, unless he who has the mark of the name of the beast or the number of his name; and the number is six hundred and sixty-six,"(5) that is, six times a hundred, six times ten, and six units. [He gives this] as a summing up of the whole of that **apostasy which has taken place during six thousand years.**



3. **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.**"(6) **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;(7) 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, CHAP. XXVIII.--THE DISTINCTION TO BE MADE BETWEEN THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED. THE FUTURE APOSTASY IN THE TIME OF ANTI-CHRIST, AND THE END OF THE WORLD.

"2. And there is therefore in this beast, when he comes, a recapitulation made of all sorts of iniquity and of every deceit, in order that all apostate power, flowing into and being shut up in him, may be sent into the furnace of fire. **Fittingly, therefore, shall his name possess the number six hundred and sixty-six, since he sums up in his own person all the commixture of wickedness which took place previous to the deluge, due to the apostasy of the angels. For Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge came upon the earth,** sweeping away the rebellious world, for the sake of that most infamous generation which lived in the times of Noah. And [Antichrist] also sums up every error of devised idols since the flood, together with the slaying of the prophets and the cutting off of the just. **For that image which was set up by Nebuchadnezzar had indeed a height of sixty cubits,** while the breadth was six cubits; on account of which Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, when they did not worship it, were cast into a furnace of fire, pointing out prophetically, by what happened to them, the wrath against the righteous which shall arise towards the [time of the] end. For that image, taken as a whole, was a prefiguring of this man's coming, decreeing that he should undoubtedly himself alone be worshipped by all men. **Thus, then, the six hundred years of Noah, in whose time the deluge occurred because of the apostasy, and the number of the cubits of the image for which these just men were sent into the fiery furnace, do indicate the number of the name of that man in whom is concentrated the whole apostasy of six thousand years,** and unrighteousness, and wickedness, and false prophecy, and deception; for which things' sake a cataclysm of fire shall also come [upon the earth]." – Irenaeus, CHAP.XXIX.--ALL THINGS HAVE BEEN CREATED FOR THE SERVICE OF MAN. THE DECEITS, WICKEDNESS, AND APOSTATE POWER OF ANTICHRIST. THIS WAS PREFIGURED AT THE DELUGE, AS AFTERWARDS BY THE PERSECUTION OF SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO.

Justin Martyr speaks similarly, even apparently using a comparable argument as Irenaeus' first quote.

**"For as Adam was told that in the day he ate of the tree he would die, we know that he did not 240 complete a thousand years. We have perceived, moreover, that the expression, 'The day of the Lord is as a thousand**

years,'(1) 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 (2) 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. Just as our Lord also said, "They shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal to the angels, the children of the God of the resurrection.'(3)" – Justin Martyr, CHAP. LXXXI.--HE ENDEAVOURS TO PROVE THIS OPINION FROM ISAIAH AND THE APOCALYPSE.

**“But I and others, who are fight-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years(7) in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged,[as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.” – Justin Martyr, CHAP. LXXX.--THE OPINION OF JUSTIN WITH REGARD TO THE REIGN OF A THOUSAND YEARS. SEVERAL CATHOLICS REJECT IT.**

Likewise, Papias, who was himself a disciple of John the Apostle, along with several other men known as Clemens, Pantaenus, and Ammonius, are also said to have taught similarly.

**“Taking occasion from Papias of Hierapolis, the illustrious, a disciple of the apostle who leaned on the bosom of Christ, and Clemens, and Pantaenus the priest of [the Church] of the Alexandrians, and the wise Ammonius, the ancient and first expositors, who agreed with each other, who understood the work of the six days as referring to Christ and the whole Church.” – Papias, IX. (5)**

And these are not alone.

**“The Sabbath is the type and symbol of the future kingdom of the saints, when they shall reign with Christ after He comes from heaven, as John says in his Revelation. For “a day with the Lord is as a thousand years.” (c. 205, W), 5.179” – Hyppolytus**

**“The true Sabbath will be in the seventh millennium of years, when Christ will reign with His elect. (c.280, W) 7.358” – Victorinus**

**“The first seven days in the divine arrangement contain seven thousand years. (c. 250, W), 5.503. [This is not necessarily talking about the days of creation.] – Cyprian**

**“This world will be terminated at the seventh thousand years. At that time, God will have completed the world and will rejoice in us. (c. 290, E) 6.344.” – Methodius**

These quotes demonstrate two things regarding the millennial Sabbath. First, there was a consensus on this subject among the early Church. Second, this consensus,

which included the more prominent writers who themselves had direct connections back to the apostles along with Peter's second epistle indicates the apostolic origin of this belief.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, when we combine the testimony of the early Church with the epistles of Second Peter and Hebrews it is hard to object to the conclusion that the millennial reign of Christ will be the seventh, or Sabbath millennium, which will occur after around 6,000 years of human history.