

## Does God have a 6,000 year plan for man?

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### Theory

Based on scripture, historical sources, and tradition, the earth will exist for 6,000 years prior to the millennial (1,000 year) reign of Christ. In other words, God has given humans 6,000 years to rule themselves prior to the millennial reign of Christ. The earth will exist for a total of 7,000 years prior to the new heaven and new earth. The tribulation will begin 3.5 years just before the end of the 6,000 year time period.

### Scripture used to support the theory

Genesis 1:31, 2:1-3 – “**31** And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. **1** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. **2** And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. **3** And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

Exodus 20:8-11 – “**8** Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. **9** Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: **10** 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, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: **11** For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

Psalms 90:1-4 – “**1** Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. **2** Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. **3** Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. **For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.**”

2 Peter 3:1-10 – “**1** This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: **2** That ye 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 Saviour: **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? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. **5** For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: **6** Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: **7** But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. **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; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

Hebrews 4:1-11 – “**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 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.”

### **Words of Elijah**

Edward Gibbon states in his 1776 work “THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE”:

The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ. **As the works of the creation had been finished in six days, their duration in their present state, according to a tradition which was attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed to six thousand years.** By the same analogy it was inferred that this long period of labor and contention, which was now almost elapsed, would be succeeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thousand years; and that Christ, with the triumphant band of the saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the last and general resurrection. – Volume 1, page 403

### **Jewish belief**

From Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the whole Bible, regarding Leviticus 25:

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/leviticus/25.html>

The law of Moses laid a great deal of stress upon the sabbath, the sanctification of which was the earliest and most ancient of all divine institutions, designed for the keeping up of the knowledge and worship of the Creator among men; that law not only revived the observance of the weekly sabbath, but, for the further advancement of the honour of them, added the institution of a sabbatical year: *In the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, v. 4.* **And hence the Jews collect that vulgar tradition that after the world has stood six thousand years (a thousand years being to God as one day) it shall cease, and the eternal sabbath shall**

**succeed—a weak foundation on which to build the fixing of that day and hour which it is God’s prerogative to know.**

From Albert Barnes’ commentary (Isaiah 52:13):

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/cmt/barnes/isa052.htm>

A great number [Jews] believe that he [the Messiah] is yet to come, but they are strangely divided about the time and the circumstances of his coming. **Some expect him at the end of 6000 years.** Kimchi, who lived in the twelfth century, believed that the coming of the Messiah was very near. Some have fixed the time of the end of their misfortunes to a.d. 1492, others to 1598, others to 1600, others yet later. Last of all, tired out with these uncertainties, they have pronounced an anathema against any who shall pretend to calculate the time of the coming of the Messiah.'

The Jewish Talmud contains the teachings and opinions of thousands of rabbis on a variety of subjects. Here are specific traditions related to the millennium from the Jewish Talmud:

[http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin\\_97.html](http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_97.html)

R. Kattina said: **Six thousand years shall the world exist, and one [thousand, the seventh], it shall be desolate**, as it is written, And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

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 R. 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 that day,' and it is further said, A Psalm and song for the Sabbath day, 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.

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,

## **Belief among early Christians and others**

Irenaeus (2<sup>nd</sup> century – c. 202 AD) was an early ‘Church Father’ and Bishop in the church. He was supposedly a hearer of Polycarp, who in turn was a disciple of John the Apostle. Irenaeus writes in his work *Against Heresies*:

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103528.htm>

**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. Genesis 2:2 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; 2 Peter 3:8 and in six days created things were completed: **it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand year.** (Book 5, 28:3)

Bardesan lived from 154 to 222 AD (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bardaisan>). From *The Book of the Laws of Various Countries*:

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0862.htm>

Bardesan, therefore, an aged man, and one celebrated for his knowledge of events, wrote, in a certain work which was composed by him, concerning the synchronisms with one another of the luminaries of heaven, speaking as follows:—

Two revolutions of Saturn, 60 years;  
5 revolutions of Jupiter, 60 years;  
40 revolutions of Mars, 60 years;  
60 revolutions of the Sun, 60 years;  
72 revolutions of Venus, 60 years;  
150 revolutions of Mercury, 60 years;  
720 revolutions of the Moon, 60 years.

And this,” says he, “is one synchronism of them all; that is, the time of one such synchronism of them. So that from hence it appears that to complete 100 such synchronisms there will be required six thousands of years. Thus:—

200 revolutions of Saturn, six thousands of years;  
500 revolutions of Jupiter, 6 thousands of years;  
4 thousand revolutions of Mars, 6 thousands of years;  
Six thousand revolutions of the Sun, 6 thousands of years;  
7 thousand and 200 revolutions of Venus, 6 thousands of years;  
12 thousand revolutions of Mercury, 6 thousands of years;  
72 thousand revolutions of the Moon, 6 thousands of years.”

**These things did Bardesan thus compute when desiring to show that this world would stand only six thousands of years.**

Hippolytus of Rome (170 – 235 AD) was a 3<sup>rd</sup> century theologian in the church at Rome. He was supposedly a disciple of Irenaeus ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolytus\\_of\\_Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolytus_of_Rome)). We find in the *Fragments from the Scriptural Commentaries of Hippolytus*, On Daniel, Second Fragment:

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0502.htm>

**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**. And they are not yet fulfilled, as John says: five are fallen; one is, that is, the sixth; the other is not yet come.

Note that John refers to seven kings in the Book of Revelation, not seven sets of years (in this Hippolytus appears to be mistaken).

Victorinus of Pettau (died 303 or 304 AD) was a Bishop and martyr in the early church ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorinus\\_of\\_Pettau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorinus_of_Pettau)). In his writing *On the Creation of the World*, Victorinus stated:

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0711.htm>

... 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. Zechariah 4:10 Wherefore, as I have narrated, **that true Sabbath will be in the seventh millenary of years, when Christ with His elect shall reign.**

Methodius of Olympus (died c. 311 AD), was an ancient 'Church Father', bishop, and martyr ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint\\_Methodius\\_of\\_Olympus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Methodius_of_Olympus)). He wrote in his *Banquet of Ten Virgins*:

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/062309.htm>

For since in six days God made the heaven and the earth, and finished the whole world, and rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made, and blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, Genesis 2:1 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. (Discourse 9, Chapter 1)

Lucius Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius was an early Christian author (c. 240 – c. 320 AD) who became an advisor to the first Christian Roman emperor, Constantine I, guiding his religious policy as it developed,

and tutor to his son (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lactantius>). Lactantius wrote in *Divine Institutes, Book VII, Of a Happy Life*:

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/07017.htm>

Therefore let the philosophers, who enumerate thousands of ages from the beginning of the world, **know that the six thousandth year is not yet completed, and that when this number is completed the consummation must take place**, and the condition of human affairs be remodelled for the better, the proof of which must first be related, that the matter itself may be plain. God completed the world and this admirable work of nature in the space of six days, as is contained in the secrets of Holy Scripture, and consecrated the seventh day, on which He had rested from His works...

**Therefore, since all the works of God were completed in six days, the world must continue in its present state through six ages, that is, six thousand years.** For the great day of God is limited by a circle of a thousand years, as the prophet shows, who says In Your sight, O Lord, a thousand years are as one day. And as God laboured during those six days in creating such great works, so His religion and truth must labour during these six thousand years, while wickedness prevails and bears rule. And again, since God, having finished His works, rested the seventh day and blessed it, at the end of the six thousandth year all wickedness must be abolished from the earth, and righteousness reign for a thousand years; and there must be tranquillity and rest from the labours which the world now has long endured. (Chapter 14)

Commodianus was a Christian Latin poet, who flourished about AD 250 (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commodian>). He wrote in his work *On Christian Discipline*:

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0411.htm>

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.** (*On Christian Discipline, XXXV. Of the Tree of Life and Death*)

Though the Epistle of Barnabas (appears in 4<sup>th</sup> century *Codex Sinaiticus*, handwritten copy of the Greek Bible) is not inspired scripture or used as canon within the Church of Christ, it does show that there was a belief among those who professed Christianity that there would be a literal thousand year reign of Christ on the Earth, and a 6,000 year plan for humans prior to that:

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/barnabas-lightfoot.html>

Moreover concerning the Sabbath likewise it is written in the Ten Words, in which He spake to Moses face to face on Mount Sinai; *And ye shall hallow the Sabbath of the Lord with pure hands and with a pure heart.* And in another place He saith; *If my sons observe the Sabbath then I will bestow My mercy upon them.* Of the Sabbath He speaketh in the beginning of the creation; *And God made the works of His hands in six days, and He ended on the seventh day, and rested on it,*

*and He hallowed it. Give heed, children, what this meaneth; He ended in six days. He meaneth this, that in six thousand years the Lord shall bring all things to an end;* for the day with Him signifyeth a thousand years; and this He himself beareth me witness, saying; *Behold, the day of the Lord shall be as a thousand years. Therefore, children, in six days, that is in six thousand years, everything shall come to an end. And He rested on the seventh day.* this He meaneth; when His Son shall come, and shall abolish the time of the Lawless One, and shall judge the ungodly, and shall change the sun and the moon and the stars, then shall he truly rest on the seventh day. (Epistle of Barnabas 15:1-5)

## Age of the earth

James Ussher's dating of the earth is widely adopted by many Christian scholars. According to Wikipedia:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Ussher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Ussher)

James Ussher (sometimes spelled *Usher*, 4 January 1581 – 21 March 1656) was Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland between 1625 and 1656. He was a prolific scholar, who most famously published a chronology that purported to establish the time and date of the creation as the night preceding Sunday, 23 October 4004 BC, according to the proleptic Julian calendar.

Ussher's chronology represented a considerable feat of scholarship: it demanded great depth of learning in what was then known of ancient history, including the rise of the Persians, Greeks and Romans, as well as expertise in the Bible, biblical languages, astronomy, ancient calendars and chronology. Ussher's account of historical events for which he had multiple sources other than the Bible is usually in close agreement with modern accounts – for example, he placed the death of Alexander in 323 BC and that of Julius Caesar in 44 BC.

Note that the organization 'Answers in Genesis' agrees with Ussher's date of 4004 BC. Reference the following: <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v1/n1/world-born-4004-bc>

Some argue the following with regards to Ussher's dating of creation:

[http://www.cogwriter.com/six\\_thousand\\_year\\_plan\\_6000.htm](http://www.cogwriter.com/six_thousand_year_plan_6000.htm)

There are several problems that can arise from using James Ussher's method:

- 1) The first is that Ussher's method did not seem to take into account that sometimes a son began the reign in a kingdom before his father king died (which, for one example, seems to started with with Solomon, see 1 Kings 1:32-43), hence the official chronologies often counted both co-reigns (hence this could contribute to possible over counting by Ussher).
- 2) He made some errors in some of his calculations.

3) James Ussher guessed that Solomon built the Jerusalem Temple in 1012 B.C., but it was likely decades later.

4) It is almost certain that the 6,000 years for humans to rule over themselves apart from direct contact with God began after Adam sinned, and hence left the Garden of Eden (cf. Genesis 3:24). It is possible that this could have taken one day to twenty or so years--the Bible is not specifically clear on this point.

Thus, it is possible that even if Ussher's calculations are close, that there still could be time left as he did not really attempt to prove when Adam and Eve were put out of the Garden of Eden--he only attempted to calculate the possible year of creation based upon his own limited understandings of biblical chronologies and other historical indicators (at least one of which seems to have been in error). Therefore, people who rely on Ussher's 4004 B.C. calculations to claim that the 6000 years are up seem to be relying on assumption as opposed to fact.

Some who now point to Ussher do so to discredit the idea of a 6000-7000 year plan. But since Ussher was not completely accurate, this does not dismiss the basic concept.

Other dates calculated for creation:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dating\\_creation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dating_creation)

The earliest post-exilic Jewish chronicle preserved in the Hebrew language, the Seder Olam Rabbah, compiled by Jose ben Halafta in 160 AD, dates the creation of the world to 3761 BC while the later Seder Olam Zutta to 4339 BC. The Hebrew Calendar has traditionally, since the 4th century AD by Hillel II, dated the creation to 3761 BC.

Many of the earliest Christians who followed the Septuagint [Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible] calculated creation around 5500 BC, and Christians up to the Middle-Ages continued to use this rough estimate: Clement of Alexandria (5592 BC), Julius Africanus (5501 BC), Eusebius (5228 BC), Jerome (5199 BC) Hippolytus of Rome (5500 BC), Theophilus of Antioch (5529 BC), Sulpicius Severus (5469 BC), Isidore of Seville (5336 BC), Panodorus of Alexandria (5493 BC), Maximus the Confessor (5493 BC), George Syncellus (5492 BC) and Gregory of Tours (5500 BC). The Byzantine calendar has traditionally dated the creation of the world to September 1, 5509 BC.

Bede was one of the first to break away from the standard Septuagint date for the creation and in his work *De Temporibus* ("On Time") (completed in 703 AD) dated the creation to 18 March 3952 BC but was accused of heresy at the table of Bishop Wilfrid, because his chronology was contrary to accepted calculations of around 5500 BC.

After the Masoretic text [authoritative Hebrew text of the Jewish Bible] was published, however, dating creation around 4000 BC became common, and was received with wide support. Proposed calculations of the date of creation using the Masoretic from the 10th century to the 18th century include: Marianus Scotus (4192 BC), Maimonides (4058 BC), Henri Spondanus (4051 BC), Benedict Pereira (4021 BC), Louis Cappel (4005 BC), James Ussher (4004 BC), Augustin Calmet (4002 BC), Isaac Newton (4000 BC), Johannes Kepler (April 27, 3977 BC)



[based on his book *Mysterium*], Petavius (3984 BC), Theodore Bibliander (3980 BC), Christen Sørensen Longomontanus (3966 BC), Melanchthon (3964 BC), Martin Luther (3961 BC), John Lightfoot (3960 BC), Cornelius Cornelii a Lapide (3961 BC) Joseph Justus Scaliger (3949 BC), Christoph Helvig (3947 BC), Gerardus Mercator (3928 BC), Matthieu Brouard (3927 BC), Benito Arias Montano (3849 BC), Andreas Helwig (3836 BC), David Gans (3761 BC), Gershom ben Judah (3754 BC) and Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller (3616 BC).

Among the Masoretic creation estimates or calculations for the date of creation only Archbishop Ussher's specific chronology dating the creation to 4004 BC became the most accepted and popular, mainly because this specific date was attached to the King James Bible.

Based on dates given above derived using the Masoretic text, the dates for the coming of Christ would vary between the following dates:

4192 BC (Marianus Scotus) + 6,000 = 1809 AD (no year '0')

...

4004 BC (James Ussher) + 6,000 = 1997 AD (no year '0')

...

3616 BC (Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller) + 6,000 = 2385 AD (no year '0')