

- [1-2] a prayer of Moses, the man of God
- [1-2] my Lord, a refuge You have been to us in generation
 [3] and generation
 [4] before (the) mountains were born
 [5-6] and You formed earth and world
 [7] and from everlasting unto everlasting, You are God!
 [8-9] You turn back man into dust
 [10] and You say
- [3-4] “(you) turn back, [O] sons of Adam”
 [5-6]* because a thousand of years in Your eyes (two) (are) as a day of
 formerly [yesterday] 1000
 [7] when it passes over
 [8] and a watch in night
- [1] You sweep them away
 [9-10] a dream, they become
- [1] in (the) morning, like grass, they change
 [2-3] in (the) morning, it flourishes and has changed
 [4-5] to (the) evening, it withers and dries up
 [6] because we are spent in Your anger
 [7] and in Your wrath, we are dismayed
- [2] You have set our iniquities in front of You
 [8] our, (it) being hidden, to (the) light of Your face
 [9] because all of our days turn in Your wrath
 [10] we finish our years like a sigh
- [1-2]* (the) days of our years, among them, (are) sevens [seventy] years 70
 [3-4] and, if in strengths, eights [eighty] years 80
 [5-6] and their pride (is) trouble and iniquity
 [7-8] because it has passed away quickly, and we fly
 [9] who is knowing, (the) might of Your anger?
 [10] and – according to (the) fear of You – Your wrath?
- [1] to number our days –
- [3] thus, (You) make known
 [2] and we will bring a heart of wisdom
- [4-5] (You) turn back, [O] YHWH!
- [1]* unto when (is it)?
 [2] and relent over Your servants
 [3]* fill us in (the) morning (with) Your lovingkindness
 [3-4] and we will sing out and rejoice in all our days

Psalm 90 has three Hebrew words occurring six times: “year,” “to,” and “day.” There are no words occurring seven or ten times. With the emphasis on the restless vanity of human endeavor, the sixfold significance of these words may be a literary device. Taken together, these key words may form a literary title: “Years to Days,” or more likely, “Days to Years,” which is an exact quote from Numbers 14:34 where the phrase is doubly stated in Hebrew.

There is a notable absence of the word *rest* in this psalm. “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth... and rested on the seventh day” (Ex. 20:11). (See also the theme of rest in connection with Moses in Hebrews 3.) Instead of finding rest, Moses bemoans the vanity and brevity of earthly life. He yearns for a sense of value in it all, despite the restlessness and evil.

“a thousand of years in Your eyes” | The measure “thousand of years” would be a single literary element. However, the presence of “in Your eyes” brings the literary count up to two. The Hebrew dual word “eyes (two)” is used. God’s two eyes are in view. A twofold nature of the “thousand” may be implied: the thousand as seen through each of God’s eyes. In parallel, the corresponding value of human time is also presented with a twofold nature: “as a day... and a watch in night.” As God with two eyes saw the thousand years, so His people experienced yesterday and last night. In this equivalence, the thousand years corresponds with a complete day. God’s two eyes correspond with a complete day being day + night.

The number *thousand* may be a composite value that reflects three tenfold literary identities in alignment: (10) x (10) x (10) = 1000. Moses uses three divine names: God, *Elohim* (3x); (my) Lord, *Adoni* (2x); and LORD, *YHWH* (1x). These three names are developed through the 30 literary elements in the “heaven” subject column, allowing three tenfold literary identities to rise into action. These three may form the thousandfold stature of years, as seen through divine eyes: (*Elohim*) x (*Adoni*) x (*YHWH*) = 1,000-fold.

“sevens [seventy] years... eights [eighty] years” | These are counted as two literary elements each, in keeping with pattern observed elsewhere in Scripture. The full values of 70 and 80 are carried as special numbers in the overall literary count (see below).

“unto when (is it)?” | As with a title “Days to Years,” Moses may craft a response to this question by his placement of “day”/ “days” in this psalm. The association of 1000 years with “day” provides the macrostructure for this response. Four instances of “day”/ “days” are placed prior to the programmatic question “until when,” and two instances are placed afterwards. This layout corresponds with two-thirds of the general time conversion value being complete with the line, “fill us in (the) morning ...

[4-5] **make us rejoice** as (the) **days** of, You **afflicted** us

[6] (the) **years** of –

[5] we **have seen** evil

[7-8] **let** (there) **be shown** to Your servants, Your **work**, and Your **majesty** upon their sons

[9-10] and **let** (there) **be**, (the) favor of my **Lord**, our **God**, upon us

[1-2] and (the) work of our hands (**two**), **establish** upon us

[3-4]* and (the) work of our hands (**two**) –

[5] **establish it!**

... (with) Your lovingkindness” (that is, 18-fold of 27-fold); and one-third of the general time conversion value remaining until the end of the psalm (that is, the remaining 9-fold of “days,” “days,” and “years” – see table below). Thus, the answer to the question “until **when**” may be given in the immediate context: 4000 years; then God’s “turning back” with lovingkindness on a significant “**morning**,” over against the prevailing theme of death; then 2000 years. The identification of this design may be authorized in context: “to number our days, thus, (You) make known, and we will bring a heart of wisdom.” If this is so, “the heart of wisdom” is for the person understanding his place in God’s story, in the measure of the age. (For the possibility of similar macrostructural devices used elsewhere, see the translations and studies of 1 & 2 Peter.)

“and work of our hands (two), establish it” | Psalm 90 has an overarching tone of sadness. Resurrection is not clearly featured here. Moses, perhaps more than any other, was personally acquainted with death in the generations of God’s covenant people. His life mission was to shepherd an entire generation to its death in the wilderness – a 40-year assignment. Moses appeals twice that something of value would arise from the inescapable death of God’s people. The two instances of “hands (two)” total to four hands: a twentyfold literary value. Moses is asking that this twentyfold, overshadowed as they are by the summary “we have seen evil,” will nonetheless be redeemed in some way. It may be that this twentyfold points to the younger generation, from birth up to age 20, who were rising to enter God’s rest (see Numbers 14:29-31). This generation, more than anything else, constituted the “work of our hands” on Moses’ last watch. These fourfold hands may also serve as a prayer for redemption for the four thousandfolds of the age prior to the “**morning**” when God overturns death.

Total Time Conversions

• “thousand of year”	1000-fold
• “sevens [70] years” + “eights [80] year”	150-fold
• “day of formerly” (1x at 1-fold value)	1-fold
• “days” (5x at 3-fold value)	15-fold
• “years” (3x at 3-fold value)	9-fold
• “morning” (3x at 0.5-fold value)	1.5-fold
• “evening” (1x at 0.5-fold value)	0.5-fold
• <u>Subtotal, time values of measure:</u>	<u>1150-fold</u>
• <u>Subtotal, general time conversions:</u>	<u>27-fold</u>
• Total:	1177-fold

Total Literary Count

- (30) Heaven
- (35x) Earth
- (65x) subtotal
- (70x) “sevens [seventy] years”
- (80x) “eights [eighty] years”
- (215x) Total

Moses’ use of a 215-fold total literary count, in a prominent context of “turning back,” may indicate a folding of the literary count of the psalm: 215 + 215 = 430-fold. 430 is an established measure for adversity for God’s people (Gen. 3:24, Ex. 12:40-41). If folding the value of the total...

...literary count, the time conversion values may also be folded. From the table on the right:

1000 years → 2000 years
177-fold → 354-fold

The 354-fold is the stature of the lunar year. See the same stature and folding device at Psalm 119, Eccl. 7:29.

The 2000-fold indicates the folded nature of the thousandfolds of the age. In effect, God is bringing back the course of time to its beginning point. If so, Psalm 90 deftly scales from days to years to the thousandfolds of the measure of the age... and back again!

This is a translation and a study of Psalm 90. This work presents the possible presence of a literary numbering system in Psalm 90. Following the PebbleCounting hypothesis, this numbering system appears to be inherent in the Ancient Hebrew and consistently used throughout Psalm 90, as it is in other books of Scripture.

This study is freely available at www.pebblecounting.com, along with studies/translations of other books of Scripture. If you haven’t had a chance to watch it, the "Intro to PebbleCounting" video is a good place to begin.

English translation, font coloring, arrangement of subject columns and literary sets, literary element counts, notes and tables for Psalm 90: © Steve, 2024-2026. The PebbleCounting hypothesis: © Steve, 2024-2026. Update: January 7, 2026. *This significant update incorporates a variety of edits from the ongoing learning process, relative to the Sep. 2, 2024, version of Psalm 90. The overall literary count of the psalm, and some of the primary observations, remain the same.*