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**2 PETER 3:8 -
DOES IT CANCEL
THE NEW
TESTAMENT TIME
STATEMENTS?**



By Dan Maines

**2 PETER 3:8 - DOES IT CANCEL THE NEW TESTAMENT
TIME STATEMENTS?**

2 Peter 3:8 (NASB) "But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day."

Why do so many use this verse to override every clear time statement in the New Testament? Do you really believe God would keep us guessing about His timing? If God says something will happen "soon" or is "at hand," are we supposed

to reinterpret that to mean "thousands of years later"?

Understanding the Context of 2 Peter 3:8 Peter was not giving us a secret formula to convert God's time into human time. The context is scoffers in the first century saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Peter 3:4). About 30 years had passed since Jesus promised to return in that generation, and judgment had not yet arrived. Peter reminds them that God sees the full picture, and His patience is for their salvation. He follows up by saying, "The Lord is not slow about His promise" (2 Peter 3:9), and urges them to "look for and hasten the coming of the day of God" (2 Peter 3:12).

Peter is quoting **Psalm 90:4**: "For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night." The point is not that time statements are meaningless, but that God is outside our human limitations and is patient in carrying out His purposes.

Important to Notice Peter did not say "one day IS a thousand years" or "a thousand years IS one day." He said it is "LIKE" a thousand years, and "LIKE" a day. This is a figure of speech, a poetic comparison, not a literal conversion chart for God's time. The moment we treat it as an exact measurement, we are twisting his meaning.

God Always Spoke in Measured, Understandable Time

From creation onward, time was established for man (Genesis 1:14-18). God used the sun, moon, and seasons as signs for days and years so His people could measure events. When God sent prophets or apostles to speak of His coming, He used terms that meant something to the original audience: soon, quickly, near, at hand. These words never meant thousands of years later.

In the Old Testament, when God pronounced judgment on a nation, He did not mean 2,000 years later. Every recorded

example of "at hand" judgment was fulfilled quickly. This includes His coming in judgment in AD 70. God can tell time. "Soon" means soon.

Why 2 Peter 3:8 Is Not a License to Reinterpret Scripture

If God were telling first-century Christians that His coming was "near" when it was actually millennia away, His words would lose all meaning. In Revelation 21:17, the angel measures the New Jerusalem using "man's measurement" so they could understand. Why would God use man's measurement for distance but His own measurement for time?

If the church in Philadelphia (Revelation 3:10-11) was promised protection from events thousands of years later, that promise would be meaningless, they would be long dead, and the church itself gone.

The Real Reason Peter Used This Poetic Language Peter was telling them that God's delay was not slowness, but mercy, allowing time for repentance before judgment fell. Within a few years, the temple would be destroyed, and the Old Covenant system would end. His language is poetic: "one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day." The equation itself shows it is not a literal measurement, but a way of saying God is not bound by human impatience.

Consistent First-Century Expectation The apostles repeatedly stated Christ's coming was near in their own lifetime:

Jesus: "You will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes." (Matthew 10:23)

Jesus: "Some of those who are standing here will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." (Matthew 16:27-28)

Jesus: "This generation will not pass away until all these things take place." (Matthew 24:34)

Paul: "The night is almost gone, and the day is near." (Romans 13:12)

Paul: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." (Romans 16:20)

James: "The coming of the Lord is at hand... the Judge is standing right at the door." (James 5:8-9)

Peter: "The end of all things is near." (1 Peter 4:7)

John: "It is the last hour." (1 John 2:18)

Revelation: "These things must soon take place... the time is near." (Revelation 1:1, 3)

The Fulfilled Reality God did not change the meaning of time statements when it came to His promises. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was the "day of the Lord" the apostles expected, and it came exactly when Jesus said it would, in their generation.

The misuse of 2 Peter 3:8 to stretch "near" into thousands of years is twisting scripture out of context. God's promises are faithful, and His timing is exact.

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