



## Of Time, Character and Consequences 2 Peter 3:8-10

TO: LEGISLATORS', STAFF & 3<sup>RD</sup> HOUSE

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*Time is a very curious thing. Ask anyone on the street if they know what time is and they are sure to answer positively. But then ask them to explain it to you and they will probably be at a loss.*

**"WHAT, THEN, IS TIME? I KNOW WELL ENOUGH WHAT IT IS, PROVIDED THAT NOBODY ASKS ME; BUT IF I AM ASKED WHAT IT IS AND TRY TO EXPLAIN, I AM BAFFLED."**

Saint Augustine, in Confessions

*It has been said that we measure time on our planet earth to organize our society. That is hardly a complete description. Even so, many of the words that we use to describe time are inadequate. A look at the scientific and philosophical realms would cement the idea that time is difficult to explain. Understanding time from God's viewpoint is far different than understanding it from a human viewpoint, as we will see in today's study.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In our previous studies, Peter has dealt with the bogus arguments of mockers. He now offers needed instruction to his readers in view of the apparent delay of Christ's return. Christian's have been taught to live in the expectation of Christ's personal return, and the passing of years might well discourage the hearts of believers and dim the reality of the hope which they had accepted. Christ is coming again, and Peter now gives guidance regarding the delay in the expected return<sup>1</sup>.

## II. GOD'S MODE OF "LIVING" TRANSCENDS OURS. 2 PETER 3:8

<sup>NKJ</sup> **2 Peter 3:8** *But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

While many think that the long silence of the heavens indicates that God is not going to act, God views the time as though it were a moment. Even though

God delays, He does not forget<sup>2</sup>. The fact that God's time is not our time means that we cannot judge whether or not God is delaying. Realize that God gathers all of time, past and future, into an eternal present tense. He is the "I AM." He can thus experience a thousand years as though it were a single day. He can savor a day as though it were a thousand years. God is not locked into a time sequence as we are. He can summon all of time before Him—past, present, and future—a moment at a time or all of the moments at once<sup>3</sup>. God stands *above and outside* of time.

Peter challenges us to look at the idea of "time" and eternity from a different perspective—the divine perspective, rather than our very limited human perspective.

**Eternity is not just "extended time." Rather, it is existence *above and apart from time*<sup>4</sup>.**

**Query:** Compare verse 8 with verse 5. What are the two facts to be considered? What danger would there be in ignoring either fact?

## III. GOD'S MODE OF "LOVING" TRANSCENDS OURS. 2 PETER 3:9

<sup>NKJ</sup> **2 Peter 3:9** *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

The *love, grace and patience* of God is clearly reflected in this verse. It is not His desire or His wish that any would perish. He is a God of mercy, a God of kindness, a God of patience. But he is also a God of justice and righteousness. His desire is that you will be saved; that sinners would respond to His love, to His patience, to His compassion, and turn from their sin and cling to Him as their Savior God. That is His heart! But

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He will bring wrath upon those who will not receive His salvation<sup>5</sup>. He is not slow; He is not slack in remembering His promises!

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**The only hope of the salvation of any soul rests in the patience, long-suffering, and self-control of God. He was patient with all of us<sup>6</sup>!**

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**Slow (bradunō)**—delayed. We see here that God is **not** slow; **not** delayed; **not** slack. **He is remembering His promise! What unbelieving men call tardiness, God calls patience.**

### IV. CONSEQUENCES ARE CERTAIN. 2 PETER 3:10

*<sup>NKJ</sup> 2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

Peter reveals that the Lord will return in “power.” There is coming “**The Day of the Lord,**” “the day of Yahweh,” “the day of the wrath of Jehovah.” “That Day,” spoken of by the prophets, by Jesus and by the apostles, is the day of God’s decisive intervention into history for judgment and universal restoration. It will be a time of terror for the ungodly, but a time of joy for the godly. Peter is advising his readers that they need to watch for this day, to prepare for it and not be misled by the false teachers<sup>7</sup>.

We see this day arriving as a “thief,” meaning that it will be totally unexpected, without warning, and disastrous for the unprepared. Total, overwhelming judgment is on the way. It has been delayed throughout the age of grace in which we live. It will be delayed for an additional thousand years during the golden age of the Millennium. But it will come.

**Query:** List the verbs in verses 10-12 that describe what will happen to the heavens and the earth. How can modern man appreciate the significance of this prophecy better than those who lived in previous centuries?

Peter here emphasizes that God’s final judgment will be total and complete—nothing; or no one outside

of Christ, will escape. The point being made is that everything that God has created and everything that humankind has made will be laid bare before Almighty God. Then God will create a new heaven and a new earth. (3:13; Rev 21:1). At the moment mockers may ridicule and false teachers may scoff. But their attitudes, disparaging comments and outright insults are short lived in God’s timeframe and purposes.

### III. APPLICATION/CONCLUSION

In 1 Peter 4:7 we read: “But the end of all things is at hand...” In the following verses we see Peter exhorting believers in four areas:

- Be in sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. (vs. 7)
- Keep fervent in your love for one another. (vs. 8)
- Be hospitable to one another. (vs. 9)
- Use your gifts in serving one another. (vs. 10)

Put things in perspective. Isn’t this what we are to be doing? Isn’t this the normal Christian Life? These are the things we should be doing when Jesus comes again: praying, loving, being hospitable, using our spiritual gifts and witnessing. We should not be dressing in white while we wait for him, i.e., sitting around<sup>8</sup>. We should be active in serving and “making disciples.” We ought to be practicing these things with boldness and perseverance as we are:

*“...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,” <sup>NKJ</sup> Titus 2:13*

*“...looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ...” <sup>NKJ</sup> Hebrews 12:2*

<sup>1</sup> Hiebert, D. Edmond, *Second Peter and Jude, An Expositional Commentary*, (BJU Press, Greenville, ©1989 Unusual Publications) p152

<sup>2</sup> Barbieri, Lou, *First and Second Peter*, (Moody, Chicago, ©1975,1977,2003 by Moody Bible Institute) p136.

<sup>3</sup> Phillips, John, *Exploring the Epistles of Peter*, (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, ©2005 by John Phillips) p300-302

<sup>4</sup> Wiersbe, Warren, *Be Alert*, (Victor, an imprint of Cook Communications, Colorado Springs ©2005) p83

<sup>5</sup> Rugh, Gill, *The Lord Desires Repentance for All*. (<http://www.biblebb.com/files/GR962.htm> ©1978) p4

<sup>6</sup> Phillips, p302

<sup>7</sup> Ritchie, Ron R, *How Can We Deal With Our Own Doubts?*

(<http://www.pbc.org/files/messaes/8092/3894.html> ©1985 Discovery Pub) p4

<sup>8</sup> Ibid