

*One day is with the Lord as a thousand years,  
and a thousand years as one day.*

II Peter 3:8

UNLESS, WITH MUCH WISDOM, a man compares in his mind the greatness of the life to come with the brevity of the sorrow of this short life, he will not be able to take such courage as to dare to endure afflictions, so that he might set out on his journey on the path to the new world. I entreat you, reckon up in your mind the number of the years of this place wherein we dwell, then elevate yourself as much as possible, and compare this number with the days of the world to come, and see whether the number of what you give will amount to the number of what you will receive in return. And consider whether you will make an equal exchange in what you will give up with what you will receive in return. Therefore the wise man, being astonished at the greatness of that world and the infinite life there, as compared with the brevity of this life here, will say, 'The number of a man's days, if he lives long, are a hundred years, and this is like filling a bucket from the sea or taking up a grain of sand. But a thousand years in this world are not even like unto one day in the world of the righteous.'

*The Ascetical Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian, Homily 37, pp. 293-4*  
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*Who can number the sand of the sea,  
and the drops of rain, and the days of eternity?*

*The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, 1:2*

THE WHOLE LIFE OF MAN is very short, measured by the ages to come, wherefore all our time is nothing compared with eternal life. And in the world everything is sold at its price, and a man exchanges one equivalent for another; but the promise of eternal life is bought for a trifle.

For it is written, *The days of our life in them are threescore years and ten, but if they are in strength, fourscore years, and what is more than these is labor and sorrow.* Whenever, therefore, we live full fourscore years, or even a hundred in the ascetical discipline, not for a hundred years only shall we reign, but instead of a hundred we shall reign for ever and ever.

And though we fought on earth, we shall not receive our inheritance on earth, but we have the promises in heaven; and having put off the body which is corrupt, we shall receive it incorrupt.

St Anthony the Great, *Life*, §16, by St Athanasius the Great,  
NPNE, Second Series, Vol. IV, p. 200

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