

**Subject: *Our Patient God***  
**Scripture: *Psalms 145:1-10***

We have been looking into the attributes (character qualities) of God. The Bible uses the words “patient, long-suffering, forbearing, and slow to anger,” to describe God. God’s patience is related to His mercy. It is one way that God shows mercy. You could say that God’s patience is an extension of His mercy over time. The word “long-suffering” means to suffer long, that is, God is willing to suffer from the rebellion, disobedience, and unthankful spirit of people for a long time. The word “forbearance” simply means to put up with others. God puts up with a lot in this world. Six times in the Bible God is described as being “slow to anger.” One way to think of His patience is that God has self-control over His anger.” He has a long temper or we would say a long fuse instead of a short fuse.

Everything in the world exists to bring God glory. Sometimes people ask why God allowed sin in the world. If the world had never known sin, we would never know God’s grace, mercy, love, forgiveness, and patience.

### **1. God was patient with sinners before the flood**

**1 Peter 3:20** *Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*

**Genesis 6:3** *And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.*

God waited 120 years before He sent the flood and all the while Noah preached. The Bible says that he was a preacher of righteousness, which means he told the people what God expected and how they must repent of their sins.

### **2. God was patient with Israel in Old Testament times**

Over and over God demonstrated great patience with His rebellious people. Shortly after the golden calf story in Exodus 32, God reminded Moses of His patience.

**Exodus 34:4-7** <sup>4</sup> *And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.* <sup>5</sup> *And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.* <sup>6</sup> *And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,* <sup>7</sup> *Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.*

Once again when the people rebelled and would not believe God and enter the Promised Land because they were afraid, the Lord was very patient. **Numbers 14:17-20** <sup>17</sup> *And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying,* <sup>18</sup> *The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.* <sup>19</sup> *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.* <sup>20</sup> *And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word.*

We see God’s patience over many, many years and generations. **Psalms 78:10-38**

God was very patient with Israel's rebellion and unbelief, but also with their self-righteousness. Just think of Jonah, one of God's prophets. God had more trouble with Jonah than with Nineveh. The whole city repented and turned to God, but Jonah pouted and was angry with God. See **Jonah 4:1-4** <sup>1</sup> *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.* <sup>2</sup> *And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.* <sup>3</sup> *Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.* <sup>4</sup> *Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?* That's strange. Jonah knew the Lord was patient, but He didn't seem to understand that he was the one who really tried God's patience.

### **3. God continues to be patient with our sinful world**

When Jesus came to this world, He was mostly misunderstood and rejected. **John 1:10-11** <sup>10</sup> *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.* <sup>11</sup> *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* Jesus told a parable about the fruitless fig tree, a symbol of the rejection He suffered by His own people the Jews.

**Luke 13:6-9** <sup>6</sup> *He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.* <sup>7</sup> *Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?* <sup>8</sup> *And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:* <sup>9</sup> *And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

The Apostle Paul said his salvation was an example of God's great patience. **1 Timothy 1:16** *Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*

### **4. God is patient so that more people may be saved**

**Romans 2:4** *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* God reveals the riches (fullness, completeness) of his goodness and patience in leading us to repentance (salvation).

**Romans 3:23-26** <sup>23</sup> *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* <sup>24</sup> *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:* <sup>25</sup> *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;* <sup>26</sup> *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* God's patient is revealed in all forgiveness of sins.

**2 Peter 3:15** *And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you.*

### **5. God's patience is often misunderstood and abused**

Instead of being grateful for God's patience and taking advantage of it, unbelievers make light of it and use His patience as an excuse to continue in their sinful ways.

**2 Peter 3:9** *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.* Peter says that scoffers will say that God is slack (negligent) concerning His promise of Christ's return. Others misinterpret God's patience, thinking He is forgetful or ignorant or unable to judge. Maybe He has changed His mind or He has become more tolerant or softer. **Ecclesiastes 8:11** *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* Some people assume that just because God hasn't punished them already, He won't punish them at all. God is patient, but His patience eventually runs out.

## **6. God is very patient with us before and after we are saved**

Just think of how we test God's patience before we are saved. We sin against God. We violate our conscience. We disobey God's commands. We put off God's call to salvation. We are sometimes like Paul in Acts 9 when the Lord said, "It is hard for you to kick against the pricks (goads)." Most of us heard the Gospel many times before we were saved. We were stubborn, resistant, proud, careless, indifferent, and looking for excuses not to be saved. But God is patient. If you're not saved, don't try His patience any longer.

And after we are saved we try God's patience. Listen to the words of a children's song: "It took Him six days to make the moon and stars, the sun and earth and Jupiter and Mars. How loving and how patient He must be, 'cause He's still working on me." God wants and expects us to learn and grow and serve Him and yet we rebel, disobey, balk, and make excuses. We may be like Jonah and God gives us a second chance because He is patient. In our last message on God's righteousness we saw that unsaved sinners often try to justify themselves by their good morals or religious works. What is really sad is when God's own children try to justify their disobedience and laziness by saying they're too busy or they're not qualified. Don't try His patience any longer.

Never use God's patience as an excuse to keep doing what's wrong. See His patience as a motive to do what you ought to do.