



# THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD

## INTRODUCTION

God's longsuffering is that wonderful characteristic by which He patiently waits and tolerates man and his sinful nature,<sup>1</sup> giving him ample time and opportunity to change his ways. Everyone is in need of God's longsuffering, for the Bible declares in Roman 3:23 . . . *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*. The Scriptures in the Old and New Testaments bear witness to God's longsuffering. In II Peter 3:9 we read, *The Lord . . . is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*. Just as God is longsuffering with us, we must learn to submit to the Holy Spirit<sup>2</sup> as He works in us to develop His attribute in our own character. Exercising divine patience with the sinfulness of others will consequently save more souls.

## THEME SCRIPTURE

*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 (II Peter 3:9).*

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<sup>1</sup> sinful nature: man's self-willed, self-governed nature not seeking to be instructed by the Creator (Proverbs 14:12).

<sup>2</sup> Holy Spirit: third Person of the Godhead; the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

## SECTION I

1. WRITE your own definition of *longsuffering*. \_\_\_\_\_  
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### Dictionary Definition

Webster's definition for *longsuffering* is patiently enduring, lasting offense or hardship.

### Biblical Definition

The Hebrew word for *longsuffering* is *arek* long: long [suffering, winged] patient, slow [to anger].

The New Testament Greek word for God's *longsuffering* is the noun *makrothumia* long-spirited: forbearance, fortitude, patience and to be slow to anger; to be patient and to bear long with.

### Scripture Descriptions

2. READ the following Scriptures concerning God's longsuffering. UNDERLINE the word and/or phrase that speaks of God's longsuffering.

Exodus 34:6	<i>And the LORD passed before him [Moses] and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful<sup>3</sup> and gracious,<sup>4</sup> longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.'</i>
Numbers 14:18a	<i>The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression . . .</i>
Isaiah 48:9	<i>For My name's sake I will defer My anger, and for My praise I will restrain it from you, so that I do not cut you off.</i>
Romans 2:4	<i>Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?</i>
I Peter 3:20	<i>Who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.</i>
II Peter 3:15a	<i>And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation . . .</i>

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<sup>3</sup> *merciful*: compassionate, love, have pity.

<sup>4</sup> *gracious*: from the Hebrew word that means to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior; favor, bestow, implore.

3. What did you learn about God's longsuffering from these Scriptures? \_\_\_\_\_
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## PERSONAL

How has what you have learned impacted your life? \_\_\_\_\_

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## SECTION II – God's Longsuffering Toward the Wickedness of Mankind

God is holy; and therefore, He cannot allow wickedness to go unpunished. Divine longsuffering is that power of control which God exercises. This causes Him to bear with the wicked and withhold their punishment in the hope that they may come to repentance. GOD IS LONGSUFFERING!

### Wickedness in Noah's Days

READ Genesis 6:1-22.

1. What happened when men began to multiply on the face of the earth (vv. 1, 2)? \_\_\_\_\_
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- 5
2. What was the Lord's warning (v. 3)? \_\_\_\_\_
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3. DESCRIBE what was happening in those days (v. 4). \_\_\_\_\_
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<sup>5</sup> sons of God: This phrase always refers to angelic beings in the Old Testament (see Job 1:6; 2:1 and Jude 6, 7). Many scholars believe that this account of Noah refers to fallen angels cohabitating with human women because of what is stated in the verses that follow God's determination to destroy mankind from the face of the earth.

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4. How did God see what was going on in the earth with mankind (v. 5)? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How did the wickedness of man affect God (v. 6)? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What did His grief move Him to do (v. 7)? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How was God longsuffering with Noah (v. 8)? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What did God know about Noah (vv. 9, 10)? \_\_\_\_\_

9. How did God look upon the earth (vv. 11, 12)? \_\_\_\_\_

10. SUMMARIZE how God demonstrated His longsuffering toward Noah, his family and the whole human race (vv. 13-21).

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<sup>6</sup> sorry – Hebrew *naham* to sigh: breathe strongly, lament, feel pain.

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11. Noah responded in absolute obedience. What did he do (v. 22)? \_\_\_\_\_

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**PERSONAL**

How has the LORD been longsuffering to you and your loved ones?

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12. What does the New Testament reveal about God’s Divine longsuffering with Noah in the following Scriptures?

I Peter 3:20 \_\_\_\_\_

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II Peter 2:5 \_\_\_\_\_

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How is Noah referred to? \_\_\_\_\_

What warning did Jesus give to man (Luke 17:26, 27, 30)? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Wickedness in Sodom, Gomorrah and the Cities of the Plains

READ Genesis 13:1-8 and Genesis 18:1-8, 16-33.

Abram, a wealthy man and his wife were commanded by God to get out of his country and go to a land that He would show him. Lot, who had many flocks and herds, went with Abram, but they were not able to dwell together because the land could not support them both.

1. Where did Lot choose to dwell? Why (Genesis 13:10, 11)? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Where did Abram dwell (v. 12)? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What was the condition of the men of Sodom (v. 13)? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. God's patience was coming to an end because of the wickedness in the cities of the plains. In His longsuffering who did He send (Genesis 18:1-8)?

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How did Abraham<sup>7</sup> respond to the heavenly messengers? \_\_\_\_\_

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Abraham accompanied two angelic beings toward Sodom. Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah was great and their sin was grave, the LORD made known to Abraham that He would destroy the cities (Genesis 18:16-21).

In God's longsuffering He allowed Abraham to intercede for the righteous that might remain in the wicked cities of the plains (Genesis 18:22-33).

5. SUMMARIZE the progression of the intercession between Abraham and the LORD (vv. 16-31).

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<sup>7</sup> Abraham: in Genesis 17:5. God changed Abram's name, Exalted Father, to Abraham, which means Father of a Multitude.

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6. What was Abraham's last request as he interceded for the people in the cities of the plains (vv. 32, 33)?

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What was God's final answer? \_\_\_\_\_

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READ Genesis 19:1-29.

7. Who did God send to warn Lot of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 1-3)? \_\_\_\_\_

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What did Lot warn them? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What did the men of the city, both small and great and all the people of every quarter do (vv. 4-11)?

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How did Lot attempt to protect God's messengers? \_\_\_\_\_

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Despite Lot's plea what did the people continue to do? \_\_\_\_\_

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What intense action did the angels take against the men, both small and great? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. DESCRIBE what took place leading up to and during the destruction of Sodom, Gomorrah and the cities of the plains (vv. 12-26).

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How did God show His longsuffering to Lot? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **SECTION III – Scriptural References of God’s Longsuffering**

1. What do the following Scriptures say about God’s longsuffering?

Galatians 5:22 \_\_\_\_\_

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I Timothy 1:16 \_\_\_\_\_

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2. In light of God’s longsuffering, what are believers called to do?

II Corinthians 6:6 \_\_\_\_\_

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Ephesians 4:2 \_\_\_\_\_

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Colossians 1:10, 11 \_\_\_\_\_

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Colossians 3:12 \_\_\_\_\_

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II Timothy 3:10, 11 \_\_\_\_\_  
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### PERSONAL

What makes it difficult for you to be longsuffering? \_\_\_\_\_  
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What did you learn in this lesson that will help you extend God's longsuffering to others? \_\_\_\_\_  
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### THEME SCRIPTURE

WRITE the THEME SCRIPTURE.

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\_\_\_\_\_ (II Peter 3:9).

*Love suffers long and is kind . . .*

I Corinthians 13:4a

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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