

# GOD IS LONGSUFFERING

Since Adam and Eve God has been putting up with a lot. He has been suffering long with man's choices and actions. *"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"* (2 Peter 3:9).

The word longsuffering is not exactly the same thing as patient, although these two words are used interchangeably in English. In New Testament Greek, the word *makrothumia* literally meant long-tempered. Thus it has to do with being slow to anger, a "self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish" [Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary, p. 377]. God has and still is exercising merciful restraint in His judgments.

God was longsuffering with men during the time that Noah was building the ark - *"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"* (1 Peter 3:20). He is still bearing grief caused by sinful men today - men who exalt themselves, serve the creature rather than the Creator and choose degrading passions (cf. Romans 1:21-32).

Thus, the Spirit admonishes, *"...consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation"* (2 Peter 3:15). Merciful longsuffering grants men opportunities to repent. God desires all to come to repentance. He commands all men everywhere to repent.

Heavenly longsuffering is never a condoning of sin, wickedness and evil. Judgment against sinners will be administered, and the unbelieving and disobedient will suffer the consequences of their sins. Time will run out. *"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which **He will judge the world in righteousness** by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead"* (Acts 17:30-31).