

## LONG-SUFFERING

We'll begin at the 1st use of the word in the Bible. Even when God gave the 2nd set of the 10 commandments to Moses (after he smashed the 1st tables of stone, when he came down from the mount and found 3,000 Israelites naked, singing, and dancing before the golden calf they called their god) .... the Lord declared Himself to be **longsuffering**:

**Exo 34:4-7** 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.

5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed,  
The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious,  
**longsuffering**,  
and abundant in goodness and truth,  
7 Keeping mercy for thousands,  
forgiving **iniquity** (perversity, depravity, evil, fault, mischief, injustice, unrighteousness, deviation from rightness of principle or practice) and **transgression** (rebellion, revolt, passing over or beyond any rule or moral duty, violation of a law, breach of command) and **sin**, (an offence, voluntary departure of a moral agent from a known rule of right, duty, or divine law prescribed by God, a wicked act) 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.

In a prayer attributed to David, he wrote of God's **longsuffering**:

**Psa 86:15** But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, **longsuffering**, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

God will eventually punish His opponents, but He is waiting a long time:

**Nah 1:2-3** God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; **the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.**

3 The LORD is **slow to anger**, and great in power, and **will not at all acquit the wicked**: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

it waits and allows plenty of time for repentance, so no one has an excuse:

**Rom 2:3-11** And thinkest thou this,

O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same,  
that thou shalt escape **the judgment of God?**

4 Or despisest thou the riches

of his **goodness** (moral excellence and integrity in character or demeanor)  
and **forbearance** (self-restraint, tolerance)

and **longsuffering**; (slowness in avenging wrongs)

not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

(God's judgment is **stored up** .... waiting to be executed):

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart

**treasurest up** unto thyself **wrath** against **the day of wrath**  
**and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;**

(Notice **every man** will be judged **at that 'same' time**):

6 Who will render **to every man** according to his deeds:

(God will judge **both** evil and good .... in that 'same' day - not 24 hours):

7 • To them who by patient continuance in well doing  
seek for glory and honour and immortality,  
**eternal life:**

8 • But unto them that are contentious, and do **not obey** the truth,  
but obey unrighteousness,  
**indignation and wrath,**

(The 2 types of classification are repeated):

9 • Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil,  
**of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;**

10 • But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good,  
**to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:**

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

God gave Israel the 1st opportunity .... then it extended to the Gentiles:

**Rom 1:16** For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**: for it is **the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;**  
**to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**

The law was given to Israel ... but its truth flowed through them to all men:

**Rom 3:19** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith  
**to them who are under the law:** (that was Israel) that **every mouth**  
may be stopped, and **all the world** may become guilty before God.

In the context of Abraham and Sarah,  
Isaac and Rebecca,  
and Jacob and Esau ....

and **in defense of God's sovereignty**, Paul reminded the saints at Rome,  
that God expressed His **mercy** and **compassion** to **Moses**,  
but He showed His **power** and **hardening** unto **Pharoah**:

**Rom 9:15-18** For he saith to **Moses**, I will have **mercy** on whom I will have **mercy**, and I will have **compassion** on whom I will have **compassion**.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth **mercy**.

17 For the scripture saith unto **Pharaoh**, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might **shew my power** in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he **mercy** on whom he will have **mercy**,  
and whom he will he **hardeneth**.

The contrast between them was illustrated .... **then applied to everyone**.

Eventually, the eternal ends will be .... either destruction .... or glory:

**Rom 9:22-24** What if God, willing to shew his **wrath**,  
and to make his **power** known,  
endured with much **longsuffering** the vessels of wrath  
fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory  
on the **vessels of mercy**,  
which he had afore prepared unto glory,

24 Even us, whom he hath called, **not of the Jews only**,  
but also of the Gentiles? (Paul **included us** here in this 'justice program.')

Paul used Pharoah as an example of God's **longsuffering**.

Peter used the people in Noah's day .... to display God's **longsuffering**:

**1 Pet 3:18-20** For Christ also hath once **suffered** for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

(1 Pet 3):19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;  
 20 Which sometime were **disobedient**,  
 when once the **longsuffering** of God **waited** in the days of Noah, while  
 the ark was a preparing, (approximately 100 years, Gen 5:32, 7:11-13)  
 wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

In both Pharoah and Noah's models .... God delayed His judgment on  
 the disobedient --- which was 1st physical death .... but will also include  
 the 2nd death **eternally** in the lake of fire. Again, Paul wrote about the 2  
 ends .... in the same sentence .... **in that day .... when the Lord comes:**

**2 Thess 1:7-10** And to you who are troubled rest with us, **when the  
 Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven** with his mighty angels,  
 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that  
**obey not** the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:  
 9 **Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction** from the pres-  
 ence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;  
 10 **When he shall come to be glorified in his saints,**  
 and to be admired in **all them that believe** (because our testimony  
 among you was believed) **in that day.**

Recently I heard a 'mid-Acts' preacher use **2 Pet 3:3-18**, to teach that  
 Peter answered the question from scoffers of 'why' the Lord has delayed His  
 coming for so long (2,000 years plus) by telling folks to '*Go to Paul because  
 he'll tell you, it's God's **longsuffering** in the dispensation of grace that is  
 what is holding back **the wrath of God,**' (which he says is the 70th week).*

That is not at all what this passage says. Let's examine it to see:

**2 Pet 3:3-18** Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days  
 scoffers, walking after their own lusts,  
 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell  
 asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.  
 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heav-  
 ens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

In Peter's 1st epistle, we already read about God's **longsuffering** in relation to the flood in Noah's time. Here it is again:

(2 Pet 3):6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, **perished: <apollumi>** used 92 times in the KJV, translated 'perish' 33x, 'destroy' 26x, 'lose' 22x .... meaning to destroy, put out of the way entirely, abolish, render useless, to kill, to be ruined, to perish, to be lost)

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are **kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.** (**Paul also wrote** about that same day in **Rom 2:5** where he said they were **treasuring up wrath** against the day of wrath and righteous judgment of God.)

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

(**Paul also wrote** about the **longsuffering** of God the same way in **Rom 2:4-6** .... that God is giving men time to repent before He comes to judge them):

9 The Lord is **not slack** (delaying, tarrying) concerning **his promise** (What promise? the promise of His coming - from **2 Pet 3:4**), as some men count **slackness** (tardiness); but is **longsuffering** to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, <apollumi>** but that all should come to repentance.

(**Paul also wrote** in **1 Tim 2:4** that God would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.)

10 But **the day of the Lord** will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (**Paul also wrote** about the day of the Lord coming as a thief in the night in **1 Thes 5:1-5**)

11 Seeing then that **all these things** shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation (**Paul also wrote** in **1 Tim 4:12** to be an example of the believers in 'conversation,' meaning 'conduct, manner of life, behaviour')

and godliness, (**Paul also wrote** in **1 Tim 2:2** for believers to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness)

(2 Pet 3): 12 **Looking for** and hasting (speeding, urging diligently, waiting eagerly) **unto the coming of the day of God**, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to **his promise** (What promise? the promise **of His coming**, when the heavens pass away and the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth is burned up), **look for** new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that **ye look for such things**, (What things are they looking for? Things in this entire passage!) **(Paul also wrote** to look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, in **Tit 2:13** .... His appearing is the **same** as His coming)  
 be diligent that ye may be found of him  
 in **<en>** peace, **(Paul also wrote** that God hath called us 'to' **<en>** peace in **1 Cor 7:15** with the same Greek word **<en>** translated 'in' here in Peter)  
 without spot, **(Paul also wrote** of the church not having spot in **Eph 5:27** and to keep the commandment without spot until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, in **1 Tim 6:14**)  
 and blameless. **(Paul also wrote** that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, in **1 Cor 1:8** .... and that ye may be blameless in the day of Christ, in **Phil 2:15-16** .... and that you be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, in **1 Thes 5:23**)

15 And account that the **longsuffering** of our Lord is salvation; (the **same longsuffering** as in verse 9 --- unto repentance for **salvation at the coming of the Lord, at the day of the Lord, at the day of God**, when heaven and earth pass away, and a new heaven and earth come with **God's kingdom**) **(Paul also wrote** about **longsuffering** which we will read after we finish this passage) even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; The 'mid-Acts' preacher I heard teaching this passage .... said the only 'thing' (singular, not plural) that Peter said that Paul wrote about .... was **God's longsuffering in the dispensation of grace that was holding back God's wrath.**

(2 Pet 3): 16 **As also in all his epistles,**  
**speaking in them of these things;** (What things did Paul write about .... in **ALL his epistles** .... that Peter wrote about here?)

**NOT just God's longsuffering** (although it is certainly **included** among 'these things') .... but **ALL** the things -- plural -- not singular -- that we have been reading about in this entire passage .... that Peter wrote ....

**that Paul also wrote** that we have referenced as we went along.)

in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own **destruction**. **<apoleia>** a similar Greek word as **<apollumi>** in verse 6 .... used 19 times in the KJV, and translated destruction 5x, perdition 8x, damnable 1x, perish 1x, to die 1x, pernicious 1x, waste 2x .... that means basically the same thing)

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing **ye know these things** before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. **(Paul also wrote about falling from grace, in Gal 5:4)**

18 But **grow in grace**, (What?! "Grow in grace," coming from Peter and not from Paul?) and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Now let's go to Paul (**1 Tim 1:12-17**) to read about the **longsuffering**.

Be aware that many, if not all, 'mid-Acts gracers' use **1 Tim 1:16** to say that the church, the body of Christ, started with Paul.

Notice carefully as we read it .... that it says **nothing** of the sort!

**1 Tim 1:12-17** And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

13 Who was **before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.**

(1 Tim 1): 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **sinners; of whom I am chief.** <protos>

This Greek word used 104 times in the KJV, was translated 'first' 84x and 'chief' 9x. It means first in time or place, in any succession of things or persons. However, it is evident that Paul was not the very 1st sinner ever, as in numerical order. <protos> also means first in rank or influence, as the chief or principal, like the main one .... which is obviously the correct interpretation here. Thus, we understand the context in this verse (15) and the next verse (16), that as .... Paul was the **principal** sinner .... he was also the **principal** recipient of God's **longsuffering** in mercy and grace.

Remember that 'mid-Acts gracers' incorrectly say this verse teaches that Paul was the very 1st member of the church, the body of Christ:

16 Howbeit for this cause **I obtained mercy, that in me first**<protos>  
**Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering,**  
**for a pattern (like an outline, a sketch, an example, a form)**  
**to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.**

Paul was the chief of sinners, but God had mercy on him, and displayed His patience in judgment, as an example for other **ignorant, unbelieving blasphemers, persecutors, injurious mockers** who would believe on Christ .... after Paul. **2 Pet 3:9** refers to **scoffers** who fit that description.

(Wonder why 'mid-Acts gracers' don't refer to Jesus as the King? Paul did):

17 Now unto **the King** eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Longsuffering** is forbearance to punish .... patience when provoked.

**Longsuffering** delays before **judging**.

**Love is longsuffering:**

**1 Cor 13:4-8-a Charity <agape>** used 116 times in the KJV,  
and translated 'love' 86x, 'charity' 27x)

**suffereth long**, (used 10 times in the KJV, and translated **be longsuffering** 1x, be patient 3x, bear long 1x, have long patience 1x, have paitence 2x, patiently endure 1x, and suffer long 1 time)

and is kind;

**charity** envieth not;

**charity** vaunteth not itself,

is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly,

seeketh not her own,

is not easily provoked, (like **longsuffering**)

thinketh no evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity,

but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things,

believeth all things,

hopeth all things,

endureth all things.

8-a **Charity** never faileth:

In closing, Paul encouraged believers to have **longsuffering** ....

and to **love**:

**Eph 4:1-3** I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with **longsuffering**, forbearing one another in **love**;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

*This is David Dowell, saying, "Think about it!"*