The Patience of God

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**Foundational Scripture:** 2 Pet. 3:9

**Intro**:

* Of the many attributes which God possesses, we may not be more thankful for such a one as His patience. If it were not for His long suffering with us, we would not even exist. That is not to suggest that we deserve His longsuffering, because we don’t. What separates God from man besides His power, sovereignty, and perfection is His ability to bear with circumstances and situations that no one else can or would. **The Patience of God** is very much a prominent biblical theme. What does the bible tell us about God’s patience?

1. **The Patience of God: Man’s Greatest Blessing**
   1. God’s patience is seen on every single page of our bibles. Consider the Israelites whom God delivered singlehandedly from the slavery and hardships in Egypt. He saw their suffering and sent 10 devastating plagues against the Egyptians that would set the Israelites free (Ex. 7-12).
   2. When a great body of water prevented them from getting to safety, God parted the great waters, so they could live (Ex. 14:13-31). God fed them with bread from Heaven, water from rocks and He gave them His words to live by (Ex. 15:22-16:12).
   3. But they were not satisfied. Instead, they complained and grumbled daily. They chased after false gods and idols. They committed blatant evil and wickedness in God’s eyes in spite of all He did for them and they refused to turn back to Him (Ex. 15:24; 16:2; 32:1-6; Neh. 9:7-16; Hos. 11:1-4, 7).
   4. Despite it all and through it all, God’s response was to forgive and bear with the people (Ex. 32:14; 34:6-9; Num. 14:18-20; Neh. 9:17-31; Psa. 78:38; 86:5, 15; 103:8, 10-13; 106:43-45; Isa. 1:18; Jer. 31:34; Ezek. 20:5-22; Hos. 11:9; Jon. 4:2; Mic. 7:18). Where else can we find such an attitude today? Even among brethren, would we be able to put up with so much?
   5. Hosea 11:8-9 speaks of the pardon and mercy God will have on spiritual Israel. He is looking ahead into the future. His reason for being patient is that He is God and not man (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Isa. 55:8-9; Mal. 3:6).
   6. God is not quick to wrath and anger as we are in selfishness and spontaneity. He is patient and slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness (Neh. 9:17). When He decides that destruction should take place, it will be because He has done everything He can to save and He will have given us every opportunity to be saved (Rom. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:20).
   7. There is no greater illustration of God’s patience than the story of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. God’s patience is perfected in the sacrifice of Christ, because He chose to forgive and forget while we were still sinners (Matt. 26:53-54; Lk. 23:34; Rom. 5:6-8).

**Conclusion:** We all have so much to be thankful for and perhaps none more so than our Lord’s patience. We all want God to be patient with us and at times we want His wrath revealed unto others. Peter tells us that we are to regard God’s patience as salvation ( 2 Pet. 3:15). All of us at some point were on the wrong side of eternity. Aren’t you thankful that God was patient with you and slow to anger? Aren’t you thankful that He gave you time to repent and turn away from evil and do good? Let us all rejoice in God’s patience, but may we never take it for granted. Let us not use that attribute as an excuse to sin and do evil. Rather let us spread the good news to those who are still on the wrong side of eternity and may we encourage them that God’s patience is for them too. This world is so full of evil and darkness. While all won’t be saved, God is still holding out hope for many souls. Thank God for His patience!