

## **A WONDERFUL WORD**

*“The longsuffering of Our Lord”* II Peter 3:15

### **SO MANY EXAMPLES**

The King James Bible is chock full of delightful words that aren't used as much now as they once were. My favorite example, however, is longsuffering. For the most part we now say patience.

### **GOD USED IT FIRST**

As God led the children of Israel through the wilderness, at one point he had them stop while He communed with Moses on the mountain. While Moses was on the mountain the people requested Aaron fashion gods for them to worship. He made the golden calf which they then worshipped. When Moses saw this, he, in anger, threw down the stone tablets God had given Him on which the Almighty had written His commandments. They broke. Later, during the difficult time after these acts, God told Moses to make a new set of tablets, and bring them to Him on the mountain. When he did, the Lord passed before him and among other things said of Himself, *“The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.”* (Exodus 34:6). He made it clear that one reason He did not forsake the Israeli's over their rebellion was His longsuffering. As Psalm 86:15 makes clear, longsuffering toward His people when they fail His commands, is an integral part of God's character.

### **IT APPEARS MORE FREQUENTLY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Before researching, I assumed that the word longsuffering would be mentioned most often in the Old Testament. This seemed reasonable as I think of it as the era when God's frustration with, and disappointment in His people's sins is front and center. But that is not the reality. It appears more frequently in the New Testament. And God used its appearances to make a few points.

- His longsuffering is an integral part of His goodness which leads us to salvation – Rom. 2:4.
- His longsuffering is a witness to all who believe unto everlasting life – I Tim. 1:16.
- His longsuffering toward us comes from His unwillingness that any should perish – II Peter 3:9.

### **LONGSUFFERING FOR OTHERS**

God wants us to be conduits of His love by showing longsuffering to others (II Corinthians 6:6, Ephesians 4:2). We are, the Bible teaches, to put on longsuffering as we forbear and forgive one another (Colossians 3:12-13). Our own strength is not integral to this command. We are empowered to do this through His Spirit which dwells in us as a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Remember it is not your goodness that has brought you to faith. II Peter 3:15 reminds us, *“That the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation.”* Longsuffering truly is a wonderful word.