



[Jonah 4:2](#)

(2) So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.

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God's [patience](#) delays His wrath, allowing time for good to occur. We should also note the other qualities patience is combined with here and in [Exodus 34:6](#). In combination with patience, the qualities of [grace](#), [mercy](#), lovingkindness, [goodness](#), and [truth](#) allow [God](#) to work with people so they can remain alive and eventually transform into His image. If God struck out at people just as short-fused humans frequently do, no one would be alive today. Jonah, in a typically human reaction, wanted God to wipe the sinners of Nineveh, Israel's enemy, off the face of the earth!

Nineveh was undoubtedly just as full of sinners as Israel. But God, bearing patiently with them in their ignorance, sent Jonah to proclaim His warning message to them: Destruction would fall on them in forty days. They, however, believed the message, proclaimed a fast, prayed mightily to God, repented, and turned from their evil ways. Their [repentance](#) may not have been Davidic, but under the circumstances God was pleased.

[II Peter 3:9](#) affirms that God still operates in the same manner:

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.

[Romans 2:3-6](#) discusses the same theme on a more personal basis, warning us that we should not abuse God's patience by viewing it as inattention, indulgence or mere

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tolerance. Solomon warns of the same perversity of nature that reveals itself in those lacking [faith](#) ([Ecclesiastes 8:11-13](#)). Clearly, God's patience is exercised so He can work on the situation and produce repentance. All too frequently, though, His goodness and patience are abused through stubbornness or neglect. Be assured, God is aware, and there comes a time when His patience is exhausted and His judgment falls if the change God expected does not occur.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Fruit of the Spirit: Patience](#)

Related Topics:

[God's Compassion](#)

[God's Mercy](#)

[Grace](#)

[Longsuffering](#)

[Mercy](#)

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[Repentance](#)

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