

# God Delays Divine Wrath To Allow for Repentance

By Pastor Harry Richardson

Delays by God do not result from any failure on his part, but reflect unrealistic human expectations concerning his actions. God delays his vengeance in order to give time for human repentance.

## God delays to allow for repentance

### To give time for repentance

[Lk 13:6–9](#); [Ro 2:4](#); [2 Pe 3:8–9](#)

**Luke 13:6–9 (NASB95)** — **6** And He began telling this parable: “A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. **7** “And he said to the vineyard-keeper, ‘Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?’ **8** “And he answered and said to him, ‘Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; **9** and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.’ ”

**Romans 2:4 (NASB95)** — **4** Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

**2 Peter 3:8–9 (NASB95)** — **8** But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. **9** The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

See also [Mt 3:7–11](#); [1 Ti 2:4](#); [Jas 5:7](#); [Re 2:21](#)

**Matthew 3:7–11 (NASB95)** — **7** But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **8** “Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; **9** and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. **10** “The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **11** “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

**1 Timothy 2:4 (NASB95) — 4** who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

**James 5:7 (NASB95) — 7** Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

**Revelation 2:21 (NASB95) — 21** 'I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality.

### **In response to repentance**

[1 Ki 21:29](#)

**1 Kings 21:29 (NASB95) — 29** "Do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but I will bring the evil upon his house in his son's days."

See also [1 Ki 21:21–28](#)

**1 Kings 21:21–28 (NASB95) — 21** "Behold, I will bring evil upon you, and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, both bond and free in Israel; **22** and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and because you have made Israel sin. **23** "Of Jezebel also has the LORD spoken, saying, 'The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.' **24** "The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven will eat." **25** Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife incited him. **26** He acted very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the LORD cast out before the sons of Israel. **27** It came about when Ahab heard these words, that he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted, and he lay in sackcloth and went about despondently. **28** Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

### **Where there is no repentance, God does not delay**

[Eze 12:25](#)

**Ezekiel 12:25 (NASB95) — 25** "For I the LORD will speak, and whatever word I speak will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, for in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it," declares the Lord GOD.' "

See also [Eze 21:24–26](#); [Re 2:16](#)

**Ezekiel 21:24–26 (NASB95) — 24** “Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Because you have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your deeds your sins appear—because you have come to remembrance, you will be seized with the hand. **25** ‘And you, O slain, wicked one, the prince of Israel, whose day has come, in the time of the punishment of the end,’ **26** thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Remove the turban and take off the crown; this will no longer be the same. Exalt that which is low and abase that which is high.

**Revelation 2:16 (NASB95) — 16** ‘Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

### **God delays judgment for the sake of his name**

[Is 48:9](#)

**Isaiah 48:9 (NASB95) — 9** “For the sake of My name I delay My wrath, And for My praise I restrain it for you, In order not to cut you off.

See also [Ne 9:30–31](#)

**Nehemiah 9:30–31 (NASB95) — 30** “However, You bore with them for many years, And admonished them by Your Spirit through Your prophets, Yet they would not give ear. Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. **31** “Nevertheless, in Your great compassion You did not make an end of them or forsake them, For You are a gracious and compassionate God.

### **Jesus Christ delayed visiting Lazarus for God’s glory**

[Jn 11:1–6](#)

**John 11:1–6 (NASB95) — 1** Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** It was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. **3** So the sisters sent word to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.” **4** But when Jesus heard this, He said, “This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.” **5** Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **6** So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was.

See also [Jn 11:11–23](#); [Jn 11:38–44](#)

**John 11:11–23 (NASB95) — 11** This He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep.” **12** The disciples then said to Him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” **13** Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. **14** So

Jesus then said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, **15** and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him." **16** Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him." **17** So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. **18** Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off; **19** and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother. **20** Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house. **21** Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." **23** Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

**John 11:38–44 (NASB95)** — **38** So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. **39** Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days." **40** Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" **41** So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. **42** "I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me." **43** When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." **44** The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

### **The giving of the Holy Spirit was delayed until Pentecost**

[Lk 24:49](#)

**Luke 24:49 (NASB95)** — **49** "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

See also [Ac 1:4](#); [Ac 2:1–4](#)

**Acts 1:4 (NASB95)** — **4** Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me;

**Acts 2:1–4 (NASB95)** — **1** When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. **3** And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

### **God acts when he wants and nothing can delay him**

[Heb 10:37](#) Referring to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

**Hebrews 10:37 (NASB95) — 37** FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

See also [Hab 2:3](#) Referring to the Lord's delay in sending the Babylonians to conquer Judah and take her inhabitants into exile; [Re 22:20](#)

**Habakkuk 2:3 (NASB95) — 3** "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay.

**Revelation 22:20 (NASB95) — 20** He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

#### Other examples of delay

[Ex 32:1](#)

**Exodus 32:1 (NASB95) — 1** Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."