

The Mercy Factor (vv. 30-32)

VERSE 30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience (ὥσπερ γὰρ ὑμεῖς ποτε ἠπειθήσατε τῷ θεῷ, νῦν δὲ ἠλεήθητε τῇ τούτων ἀπειθείᾳ [*conj. hosper just as + conj. gar for + pro.nom.p. su + adv. pote once + aor.act.ind.2p. apeitheo disobey + d.a.w/noun dat.m.s. theos + adv. nun now + conj. de but + aor.pass.ind.2p. eleao show mercy + d.a.w/noun instr.f.s. apeitheia disobedience + pro.abl.m.p. houtos “their”*]),

VERSE 31 even so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy [οὕτως καὶ οὗτοι νῦν ἠπείθησαν τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ [νῦν] ἐλεηθῶσιν [*adv. houto in the same way; “even so” + conj. kai also + pro.nom.m.p. houtos “these” + adv. nun now + aor.act.ind.3p. apeitheo disobey + d.a.w/noun dat.nt.s. eleos mercy + adj.dat.nt.s. humeteros “to you” + conj. hina in order that + conj. kai also + pro.nom.m.p. autos they + adv. nun now + aor.pass.subj.3p. eleao show mercy*]).

VERSE 32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all (συνέκλεισεν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς ἀπείθειαν, ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλεήσῃ [*aor.act.ind.3s. sugkleio make someone a prisoner; “shut up” + conj. gar for + d.a.w/noun nom.m.s. theos + d.a.acc.m.p. + adj.acc.m.p. pas all + prep eis into + noun acc.f.s. apeitheia disobedience + conj. hina so that + d.a.acc.m.p. + adj.acc.m.p. pas all + aor.act.subj.3s. eleao show mercy*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 30-32

1. Paul continues to address the Gentiles which are illustrative of the church in Rome.
2. Verse 30 repeats the concept of Gentile elevation as noted in verses 11, 12, 15 & 17.
3. The term mercy is featured in these three verses.
4. Mercy is grace in action.
5. God’s mercy has been exhibited against a background of disobedience (e.g. negative volition).
6. Gentile “disobedience” is cited in v.30a and is used in reference to the long history of almost universal Gentile negative volition from the Flood to the 1st Advent.

7. But coinciding with corporate Israel's disobedience (negative volition to their Messiah) there was a dramatic upsurge of Gentile positive volition.
8. With this pendulum swing in favor of the Gentile world, Israel winds up being in the same situation as the Gentiles "once" were.
9. The terms "once" and "now" stand in apposition to one another.
10. "Now" refers to the on-going CA to the end of this dispensation.
11. The Roman Christians are a prime example of this shift from the "once" to the "now."
12. The mercy shown to the Gentiles has as its background Israel's "disobedience."
13. This mercy is seen in the fact that the Gentile Church assumes the role the Israel's forfeited but even to a higher status.
14. For OT prophecy this shift was anticipated from Moses (Deut. 32:21) to Isaiah (Isa. 65:1-2).
15. "Shown mercy" refers to all that God has done for the church age saints.
16. "Because of their disobedience" was the factor that led to Gentile preeminence, even surpassing that of the age of Israel.
17. In v. 31 Paul advances the historical progression moving from the "now" of Israel's disobedience to the conclusion of the CA and onward to the day of the Lord when Israel will be arrive at the "now" factor of divine mercy.
18. In other words, the pattern will come full circle when God removes ungodliness from Jacob (cf. v. 26).
19. If God can show mercy to the Gentile world in spite of their long history of unbelief, He can do the same for Israel when the conditions are right.
20. And when this takes place both Israel and the Gentile world will achieve fullness (cf. v. 25).
21. Only within the context of disobedience does mercy has any relevance and that is the subject of v. 32.
22. Mercy is operative only where there is disobedience.
23. All mankind is "shut up" or imprisoned is under the spiritual death.
24. This state was brought upon humanity as a result of Adam's original sin (Rom. 5:19 "For as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One many will be made righteous.").
25. Both Gentile and Jew are indicted as charged (Romans chapters 1 & 2).
26. But God in His attribute of love has "found" a way to make it possible for the release of His prisoners.
27. This is what is asserted in Gal. 3:22 & 23 where the verb translated "shut up" is used.
28. All have the same opportunity to escape "death row"!
29. Since Jesus Christ died for the collective sins of the entire human race.
30. God does not discriminate as all are locked up and all have the same mercy extended to them to be set free once for all.
31. The verb translated "may show mercy to all" is a subjunctive of potentiality.
32. The vast majority of mankind will not accept the terms of release which is to believe in Jesus Christ the Savior.