

PAUL'S USE OF ISAIAH 65:1

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When the Apostle Paul saw that far more Gentiles than Jews were accepting Jesus as the Christ he faced a problem for which a Scriptural answer must be found. In Romans 9-11 he deals extensively with this problem. One of his major assertions is that this turning to the Gentiles was predicted in the Old Testament. Among other passages he cites Isaiah 65:1-2 in Romans 10:20-21. Both the Revised Standard Version and the New English Bible clearly present Paul's argument on this point, and they quote the Old Testament passage in a form very similar to that of the King James Version, which reads: "But Isaiah is very bold, and saith, I was found by them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

The RSV has a footnote pointing back to Is. 65:1 as the Old Testament passage quoted in Rom. 10:20 and to Is. 65:2 as quoted in Rom. 10:21. But when one turns to the Old Testament portion of the RSV or of the NEB, he finds that Is. 65:1 is there rendered in a way that gives an entirely different impression. In the RSV Is. 65:1 reads: "I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' to a nation that did not call on my name." The same passage reads in the NEB: "I was there to be sought by a people who did not ask, to be found by men who did not seek me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I', to a nation that did not invoke me by name."

According to the RSV and NEB readings Is. 65:1 refers entirely to God's attitude in ancient times toward the nation of Israel and is merely a description of His state of mind during the period before the time when this Old Testament material was