

written. This is in sharp contrast with Paul's idea. He took the passage as a prophetic perfect, describing what God would do long after the prophet wrote, and telling how he would accept nations that had not previously known Him. Both the RSV and the NEB, in their translation of Romans, show very clearly what Paul thought the passage in Isaiah meant. In view of this fact the reader, if he compares their rendering of Is. 65:1 in the Old Testament, cannot avoid reaching the conclusion that Paul completely misunderstood and misquoted the Old Testament, and was utterly mistaken about its meaning. Careful examination of the passage is therefore of great importance to the Christian idea of the unity of the two Testaments, and of the authority of Paul as an inspired interpreter.

The idea of the rendering in the RSV and NEB did not originate with these versions. Moffatt's translation reads, "Ready was I to answer men who never asked me, ready to be found by men who never sought me. I cried out, 'Here am I,' to folk who never called to me."¹

Evidence for this interpretation of Is. 65:1 is presented in The Interpreter's Bible as follows: "65:1. I was ready to be sought . . . to be found: The verbs are in the tolerative Niphal and express emotions which react upon the mind (Kautzsch, Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, sec. 51c): "I let [or "permitted"] myself to be sought [or "consulted"]." Cf. Ezek. 14:3; 20:3,31; 36:37."²

The passage referred to in Gesenius-Kautzsch (hereafter designated as GK) reads as follows: "Equally characteristic of Niph'al is its frequent use to express emotions which react upon the mind;...as well as to express actions which the subject allows to happen to himself, or to have an effect upon himself (Niph'al tolerativum), e.g., וַיִּתְּרֵם to search, to inquire, Niph. to allow oneself to be inquired of, Is. 65:1, Ezek. 14:3, etc; so the Niph of וַיִּשְׁאֵל to find, וַיִּנְדָּב to warn, to correct, Jer. 6:8, 31:18, etc."