

The use of the prophetic perfect is very common in the writings of the prophets, e.g., Is. 9:1 ff.⁴ As rendered in the KJV Is. 65:1 gives the impression of being such a statement. The other translations quoted above present it not as a statement of something that God will do, nor even as a statement of something that God has done, but simply as a statement of a permissive attitude on the part of God which might possibly have led to the occurrence of such an event.

Three important considerations may be presented in this connection:

1. As pointed out by Kidner, the rendering in these three translations "goes beyond the known use of the 'tolerative Niphal'; nowhere else does this construction imply a non-event."⁵

When Kidner speaks of "a non-event," he means that the positive statement does not merely denote an emotional attitude but actually shows that the event took place. If it did not occur, a negative statement or a rhetorical question would be used. This becomes evident on examination of the four verses from Ezekiel to which The Interpreter's Bible refers in this connection. The first of these, Ezek. 14:3, as rendered by Moffatt, ends with the words: "Am I to answer their inquiries?" RSV READS, "Should I let myself be inquired of at all by them?" NEB reads, "Am I to let such men consult me?"

In the second, Ezek. 20:3, Moffatt reads, "I will not be consulted by you." RSV reads, "I will not be inquired of by you." NEB reads, "I will not be consulted by you."

In the third, Ezek. 20:31, Moffatt reads, "And I am to be consulted by you, O Israel? By my life! says the Lord the Eternal, no!" RSV reads, "And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, says the Lord GOD, I will not be inquired of by you." NEB reads, "How can I let you consult me, men of Israel? As I live, says the Lord GOD, I will not be consulted by you."