

Isaiah 65:1 seems to be a direct answer to this statement. God declares that those who previously did not know Him are to find Him. He declares, using the prophetic perfect, "I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name."

Since our attention has thus far been primarily directed to the alleged two instances of niphal tolerativum in Is. 65:1, it has not previously been pointed out that the last phrase of the verse, which in the KJV reads, "was not called by my name" is changed to, "who did not call upon my name" in the modern versions. This represents a fairly simple change of text, since the vowels were preserved only by tradition until a period considerably later than the time of Paul. When the Jews wrote down the vowels that represented the traditional understanding of the text they pointed this verb as passive rather than active, and this tradition fits exactly with Paul's interpretation.

In defense of the critical view The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary says: "Vs. 1d actually reads 'a nation not called by my name...' but the context seems to call for the RSV emendation."⁸

It would seem that the Jews in Alexandria, two centuries before the time of Paul, found the verse as difficult to interpret as some modern scholars do. Not yet having heard of the idea of niphal tolerativum, they translated the first part of the verse into Greek with two passives, but at the end of the verse they made the participle active, as the modern interpreters do. The fact that the vocalization that fits with Paul's interpretation was preserved by those Jews who had rejected Paul's ideas, and who maintained the Jewish tradition through the Middle Ages, is evidence of their honesty in preserving what they found, and is also strong evidence that what they found was actually in line with what Paul taught.