

Allan MacRae: Isaiah 1-6: Lecture 15

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Last week, we began to look at the long prayer that runs from Isaiah 63:7 to 64:12, and we noticed eight verses of introduction verses, 7 thru 14, in which God's blessings were recalled. Of course, someone could take these verses as a separate thing, separate from the prayer if they want, but it seems altogether reasonable to me to consider that it is a part of the prayer. The prayer is calling on God, beseeching Him that He treat them as He has in the past, and that He continue the previous blessing. Then we looked at part B of the outline, "The object of the prayer." We noticed the situation, that it assumes that Jerusalem is in ruin, assumes that the temple has been destroyed, and it calls on God to re-establish them. Isaiah may be speaking to the people in his day who know he is a prophet of God and that he speaks truly. And yet, perhaps to some of them, who while they believe what he said, yet they desire to follow in their own ways and works, rather than to follow God. Others, more faithful, can easily imagine the future situation Isaiah describes as having occurred, but they are remembering God's past blessings and are encouraged. However, even though Isaiah is writing during the Assyrian period, certainly the Lord had particularly in mind people toward the end of the Babylonian exile, when they had come back and were finding difficulty getting reestablished, and they are calling on God for his blessing. And I think that's the situation.

We also recalled the specific request. We looked at 63:15-64:12 last time. Then we come on capital letter C: "The reason advanced," and we noticed that the principal stress for asking for mercy is on the past blessing. And another point with that is a claimed covenantal relationship between God and Israel. They maintain that God is their father. They belong to Him; therefore, he should bless

them. And this comes to clear expression as we noticed in verses 16, 17 and 18 of chapter 63, where they said, “Oh Lord, you are our father, our redeemer; your name is from everlasting. Oh Lord, why have you made us to err from your ways? And harden our heart from your fear? Return for thy servants’ sake, the tribe of your inheritance. The people of thy holiness has possessed it for a little, while our adversaries have trodded down your sanctuary. We are yours; you never bore rule over them. They were not called by your name.” And in chapter 64 verses 8 to 9; “But now, Oh Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.” So “the claimed relationship” is the basis for blessing; God has promised and God has blessed in the past, so it's up to him to continue. Notice the contrast with the non-Israelites in chapter 63 verse 19. “We are yours: you never bore rule over them; they were not called by your name.” It’s interesting to notice how this verse has been translated in the two most recent evangelical translations. The King James says, “We are thine: thou never bore rule over them.” The New American Standard Bible says, “We have become like those over whom You have never ruled.” And the NIV says, “We are yours from of old; you have not ruled over them.” At first sight, there seems to be quite a difference between these, particularly between the NASB and the others. I’ve underlined the word “thine” in the KJV because it is not in the Hebrew. It is an insertion that seemed to the writers of the King James to belong there. Verse 19 without the word “thou” reads, “We are, thou never bore rule over them” and we see that the “we are” means that “we are yours.” But the KJV put “thou” in italics to show that it is an insertion to bring out the sense. Similarly, in the NASB they put the word “like” in italics. Actually, it still has the contrast, so it doesn’t make a great deal of difference. The NIV gets around it by taking the word that the KJV translates “never” in the phrase, “Thou never bore rule over them” and putting it with the first “we are,” and making it “We are yours from of old. You have not ruled over them.” It’s an interesting little illustration of the various possibilities of translation. But whichever you take, it seems to me that there is still the contrast

between Israel and other nations. The argument is: Israel belonged to God, and it is not right that they should now become like those over whom He has not ruled before.

I just put down English renderings of the Hebrew to make this a little clearer. The reason for the NASB making that change, I think, is the fact that the Hebrew word which is translated “We are” in the King James Version usually does not occur in Hebrew in this sense, at least not until very late Hebrew. Usually, if you say one thing is also something else in Hebrew, for example, “Israel is a nation,” you just put the two nouns or the noun and adjective, next to each other and do not use a verb. This unstated verb is some form of the verb “to be,” but can also really be “to become,” or might perhaps be used as something “has been” in the past. And consequently, if the Hebrew is “We have become,” the NASB felt that to put in a “like” would give a reason for that. So I don’t say we can say that the NASB is necessarily wrong here. There is a good argument that can be made for it. Also, however, the fact that the “like” is not there might be a reason for preferring the King James.

But in either case, it stresses the contrast between peoples, and that’s the point. Why should these people be able to burn our temple when they’re not people that were called by God’s name? They’re not His people. We are his people. Therefore, He should bless us. You notice I didn’t put up there “from of old,” I put “from ‘Olam.” where I transliterated the Hebrew word “‘olam.” And some of you may not be aware that that little mark that I put just before the “O” of “‘olam” there, which is like the beginning of a printed single quotation mark. That mark is regularly used in transliteration to indicate the Hebrew letter “ayin.” So this indicates the Hebrew letter “ayin,” in “‘Olam.” Now that word “‘Olam” is many, many times translated “ever” in the Bible. We say “This will endure for ‘Olam”. We translate it “Forever.” But when you look at the flip side, in this case with the negative used with “‘olam,” it is easy to say “Never.” They were not since

all eternity. But when they say “These are the men of ‘olam,” you know that means the men who were way back. So from this single word you cannot get the idea of “endlessness,” but you get the idea of a long, long stretch, as far as the eye can see.

They make the contrast here that Israel, unlike other nations has been the Lord's "from ‘olam." In addition to that, in this same verse, we have the last phrase, “They were not called by thy name.” And that ties right up with the next chapter, chapter 65, the first verse, which has as its end the words “I said, 'behold me, behold me' unto a nation that was not called by my name.” I think the connection is rather important. The very phrase "called by my name" is used here where there is no question about its usage in the translation. That very phrase is used in the very first sentence of the answer that is given to them, so I believe the KJV version of Isaiah 63:19 is correct.

Maybe right at this point would be a good time to interrupt this for reading a question that I intended to read right at the very beginning of the hour but it slipped my mind. I was given this at the end of the last hour. Here's the question: “In speaking about the millennium do you purposely use the words “freedom from external danger”? ---External is underlined. Why do you use external danger? Does that imply that there will be other kinds of danger?” That is a very good question. I’m very glad it was raised. I have frequently used this statement that this is a picture of external danger. I’m not using that to say at the time when these events are fulfilled there will be other types of danger. I am using it to say you cannot interpret this passage as simply referring to something else than external danger. There are those who take pictures of the time when, as it says in Isaiah 2 and 11, and in Micah 4, everyone can sit under his vine and his fig tree and none will make them afraid because the fear of the Lord will cover the land as the waters cover the sea. They take it as a picture of a person whose mind is so stayed on God that he has no fear of anything. And so his heart is at peace. But that is not

what this pictures. This picture is of a time when one need not fear, when there is no external danger. So I appreciate the question. I have stressed that word “external” because these particular passages look forward to a time when there is no external danger; they do not merely look forward to a time when there is an inner change. It doesn’t mean to say that there wouldn’t be any other kind of danger in the future. That doesn’t enter into these particular passages.

Then continuing there, capital D of the outline. “Is there evidence of true repentance?” And here we must say that if evidence of true repentance is lacking, then we know that God will not hear prayer. This is brought out right in the book of Isaiah, and in many other places. In Isaiah, the first chapter, verse 15 he says, “When you spread forth you hands I will hide my eyes from you. Yes, when you make many prayers I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.” Now there are many such statements in the Scripture, that there are times when people pray and God will not hear. Now of course, He does hear; God knows everything that happens. But what it means is, He will not pay attention; He will not answer your prayer. And so, if true repentance is lacking, we cannot expect a favorable answer to the prayer. But right here we should note God’s relation to Israel. And I like here to call your attention to the fact that it is very clearly brought out in the Scripture that rebellion on the part of Israel is to be terribly punished. Perhaps even more terribly than of most other nations because they have greater blessings and greater opportunities to know the Lord. In Leviticus 26, verses 14-39, we have a most terrible statement of the awful misery that will come upon the people if they turn away from the Lord. In Deuteronomy 28:15-68, we have an even longer passage of similar nature. This is greatly stressed in the Old Testament. Rebellion has to be terribly punished.

But be it so, it is also stressed (maybe not as much stressed but just as clearly given) that God promises to bless all who turn to him with their whole heart. So right after this long passage in Leviticus 26, verses 40-41, we read, “If

they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they have trespassed against me and that also they have walked contrary onto me,” and at the end of verse 41, “if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled and they then accept the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant with Jacob and also my covenant with Isaac and also my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land”.

And in Deuteronomy: Deuteronomy 28 has this long passage telling what the results of rebellion are to be. Deuteronomy 30 verses 1-2 say, “and it shall come to pass when all these things have come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shall call unto mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God has driven thee and shall return unto the Lord thy God and shall obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity.” So if they turn to him with their full heart, He promises that then He will bless them again. And in 2 Chronicles 6:37-39, in Solomon’s dedication to prayer, he reiterates this same idea.

Then as we pointed out in point C of the outline, and as seen in Leviticus 26, “God has made an everlasting covenant with Israel.” This enters into the great problem of understanding God’s work, a problem that no human being can really grasp. God has his plans and those plans will be fulfilled. What man does is tremendously important, if man sins and turns away from God, God will punish him. If man turns to God with a full heart, God will bless him. But God has promised that certain blessings will be given to Israel: these people will be given these blessings and this is given as an unconditional promise. He has made an everlasting covenant with Israel; this is brought out in Leviticus 26:44-45 where he says that he will remember his promises to their ancestors.

And in Isaiah 66:22, at the very end of our present book, this promise is reiterated. He says in verse 22, “for as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me,’ says the Lord, 'so shall your seed and your

name remain". God promises everlasting blessings to Israel, and yet he says that each individual, if they are to receive His blessings, must turn to him with their whole hearts.

Student asks a question: "Hasn't the church supplanted Israel?"

Certainly the New Testament teaches that we are the Israel of God; that is truly stated in Galatians 6:15. We are the Israel of God; it is God's purpose through all ages that all who believe in Christ should form the Israel of God. And yet it is also true that God has a very special place for this particular nation that he called out. That is very true and when Isaiah 66 says, verse 22, "for the new heavens and the new earth which I shall make shall remain before me," says the Lord, 'so shall your seed and your name remain,'" then to my opinion anyone who says that God was through with Israel at Pentecost is simply talking out of the air. I know of no Scriptural reference for it, and I don't think its fair to say "covenant theology" in general holds that because I believe there are very few people that hold that. Do I believe there are a great many people who believe in God's continued covenant with Israel? There are a considerable number, yes.

Well now, we believe that God has made this everlasting covenant, and I don't think we can be disproved that is the clear teaching of scripture. But now our present problem is this prayer that we are looking at from Isaiah 63:15-64:12. Does it contain evidence of true repentance? And we note here that Daniel, in Daniel nine, he tells us in the second verse that he read in the books "the word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem" (Jer. 29:10). Now, Daniel had gone to Babylon probably in 604 BC. It's now about sixty-five years after Daniel went. When Daniel was taken, much of the land was laid desolate. At that time God said it would be desolate about seventy years. Now the seventy years is nearly over and Daniel prays, in effect, "Oh God, remember your promise and restore it. We are your people." Well, that's all true. God is one who remembers his promise and

they are his people. But as you read this prayer, to which the greater part of Daniel is made up, you find Daniel over and over beseeching the Lord, and according to all the Lord's righteousness, to turn away his anger and fury. Because of their sins and the iniquities of the people, they have become a reproach to all that are about them. "Incline your ear, we present our supplications," he prays whole heartedly, confessing their sin, and praying that God will fulfill the promise he has given and bring them back. And God does fulfill that promise and permit them to come back. But his answer to Daniel's prayer recognizes that the prayer represents the heart of Daniel, not necessarily the whole people. And I'm sure Daniel must have felt very disturbed when he got the answer to that prayer, because the answer is, "Yes, God is going to bless you; now you are going to get everything back you had before: your nation. The seventy years are over, yes, but the seventy weeks are determined on your people, and there is a lot of misery ahead." So Daniel makes a real prayer of repentance on behalf of the people. But the question is, how many of them does he represent truly by his prayer? But Daniel's prayer has quite a different tone from this prayer here in Isaiah.

Further, remember David's prayer? In Psalms 51, David had sinned, David says "I acknowledge my transgressions; my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and have done this evil in thy sight." Verse seven, "purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." Verse nine, "Hide thy face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." There is an altogether different tone in David's prayer of repentance than you find in this prayer in Isaiah. Now this prayer does, it is true, recognize the fact of sin. That is recognized in verses 10, and in verse 17. In verse 10, chapter 63, we have the statement, "they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit, therefore he was turned to be their enemy." You don't find any evidence of repentance in this, simply a statement of a fact. In verse 17, "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and

hardened our heart from thy fear?" Sounds as if they are blaming God for their difficulty. It doesn't say, "Oh God, we have sinned, we are very sorry; do change us; do help us to follow, we promise to do our best." Nothing like that is in there. Rather, verse 17 continues, "Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance." Chapter 64, verses five to seven, recognize the fact of sin; "Behold, you were angry, we have sinned ... But we are all as an unclean thing and all of our righteousness are like filthy rags, and we fade as a leaf." You'd expect them to say, "Oh, do remedy our iniquity; cleanse us from it; purge us." No, they say, "our iniquities have taken us away, and there's none that calls on your name. You've hid your face from us and consumed us." Real repentance would follow with, "Now Lord, we turn to you with our whole heart, restore us." But we do not find this. Rather, we read, "But now Lord you're our father we're the clay, and you're our potter. We're all the work of your hands. We can't help ourselves. This is what you put us into and here we are. We have sinned, yes, but you have promised us we're your people and you're going to bless us." The passage recognizes the fact of sin, but it seems to lay on God the blame for sin; as we just noticed in 63:17 and 64:8-9.

Finally, This prayer contains no plea for a chastening heart and no promise to seek or to obey God in the future. Now, those are facts about this prayer. I'm sorry its so negative.

Now capital E of the outline: "Whose prayer is this?" And as I read the prayer, I am reminded of the attitude of the Pharisees described in the New Testament and referred to in Isaiah 65, verse 5, where it says: "For those who say, 'stand by thyself, come not near me, for I am holier than thou.' These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burns all the day." We compare Matthew 3:8-9 where the Pharisees thought, "We are Abraham's children; it is up to God to bless us." John the Baptist said, "bring forth the fruits, appropriate for repentance and think not to say within yourselves: 'We have Abraham as our father, for I say unto you that

God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” And we notice what Christ said in John 9, verse 33 and 39. In John, I seem to have copied the reference wrong. It is where he said “If you are Abraham’s seed you would...”, I guess it was chapter 8, yes, it was John 8:33, which reads, “ they answered him, ‘We are Abraham’s seed and we have never been in bondage to any man. How do you say, ‘ye shall be made free.’” And verse 39, “they answered to him, ‘Abraham is our father.’ Jesus said, ‘if you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham.” They simply were expecting blessing because of connection, or past blessing, or relationship, but this is condemned.

Whose prayer is this? It seems to me that it is a reasonable suggestion that this prayer represents the attitude of a part of the people who believed in God’s power, believed in God’s control, believed that God sent them in exile for their sin, but who are claiming their blessing simply on the basis, as the Pharisees did, of carrying out particular external observances, or of having a particular connection, a particular family, a particular relationship. Now that seems to me to be the answer to this question: "Whose prayer is this?"

But, capital F of the outline: “Since the speaker is not named one must avoid all dogmatism.” As I studied the passage, I have reached the conclusion that I have just given you. But I do not wish to be dogmatic about it. I do not know if anyone else has reached the same conclusion, I rather doubt that they have. But it impresses me to be the conclusion that the evidence calls for. Frank Delitzsch was one of the great German commentators of the last century. He wrote four editions to his commentary on Isaiah. Every one of them contains some material that is not in any of the others. The second of these four editions is contained in the set called "Keil and Delitzsch," which is a very excellent set on the interpretation of the Old Testament for those who know Hebrew. In the fourth edition of Delitzsch, he found himself unable to answer the critical arguments, and he made confession to that, which for us makes his fourth edition much less valuable to us than his earlier

editions.

But he simply takes this prayer as penitential, as I think anyone would when they first approach it, if they don't study it. And so when Delitzsch begins the next chapter, chapter 65:1, he makes what seems to me to be a very peculiar statement, but one that is necessary if you accept the view that this is a true prayer of those who truly are serving the Lord. Delitzsch says here on page 474, "After the people have poured out their heart before Jehovah, He announces what they may expect from him. But instead of commencing with a promise, as we might anticipate after the foregoing prayer, He begins with a reproach and threatening." It seems to me that it is a pretty good clue that this is not a penitential prayer. Instead of saying "Oh this is wonderful; you've come back to me, I'm going to bless you," The Lord starts in with reproach and threatening in 65:1. And He uses the very phrase they used about being "called by His name." He says those people were not called by His name here. He says in verse 1 of chapter 65 "Behold me, behold me,' to a nation that was not called by my name." The very same word is used both here and in 63:19; the very same phrase, the very same expression, and of course that is the way that Paul, the apostle Paul, took it. He quotes it in Romans 10, which we shall look at in a few minutes, and quotes it as showing that God had predicted already, through Isaiah, the attitude that Paul found among so many of his contemporaries, specifically, that more gentiles had come into the family of God than were coming in from the Jewish community. Although there have been Jews who have believed through every generation from Paul's time to ours, and that has happened in every generation. Not only have Jews converted, but in nearly every generation there have been Jews that have become great Christian leaders. But the fact remains that the great mass of the nation has followed the attitude described in this prayer.

Now, before looking at Isaiah 65:1, at this point I want to raise the question of inerrancy. That is to say, that if we believe that the Bible is free from error,

what right do we have to take a long prayer like this and say that it represents a wrong attitude? That is an approach that is taken by some at various points in the New Testament. For instance, I've seen a good commentary, a statement that when Paul spoke to the Athenians (Acts 17), he tries to give them an argument about the altar from the unknown God and so on, but that when he got to Corinth he saw the error of what he had done in Athens, and he said that "I resolve among you to know only Jesus Christ and his crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). I believe that that is an erroneous approach. I believe that Paul was the apostle of the Lord; that Paul was led of the Lord in what he did. I think that Paul made mistakes and that Peter made mistakes. I think they all made mistakes, but I think if the great leaders that God wants us to follow made mistakes, that he will either not tell us about their mistakes, or he will label them as mistakes. He will make it clear and unmistakable the fact that there were mistakes. So when the New Testament gives preaching of the apostles, I feel that we can take their preachings as an example of the preaching we should do rather than at any point as something we should avoid. I've heard it said that Paul made a terrible mistake of taking in a vow and entering the temple in Jerusalem as he did. But I think if that was a mistake, it would be labeled as such in the New Testament; it would tell us. I do think that we can take what is told to us of the apostles as being true to the Lord and truly following the Lord.

But here we have a passage, a long passage, which is not labeled, which is clearly a prayer, but which is met at the end not with a statement of "how wonderful, this is your prayer of repentance, how happy I am you are turning back! I am going to give you all the blessings you asked," but with terrible condemnations going through these next 10 or so verses in chapter 65.

And under those circumstances it seems to me we are justified in the hypothesis, which I believe is the correct one, that it is simply presenting to us a wrong attitude in order to go on to show what God's relationship is to that attitude.

But now the question of inerrancy comes up, and there are three considerations we should note. The first of these is that every statement in the prayer is true. They talk about what God did for them in the past, and everything that they say is entirely true. God did do all the things that they say He had. They say why they were sent into captivity. It was for their sin, and that is entirely true. There is no statement in the prayer that is not itself a fact. God has a covenant promise with Abraham and his seed forever. They point to these promises. Every statement in the prayer is true.

Second, the claims they make in the prayer are true, though lacking a vital element. God has promised eternal blessing to Israel and he will fulfill the promises he has made. And they call attention to these promises. There is nothing false in the prayer as far as facts are concerned. The vital element of repentance of sin however, and an expression of a heart felt desire to follow the Lord with their whole heart is lacking from their prayer. The claims are true though lacking this vital element of repentance.

So number 3: "only the attitude is wrong." The statements are true; they are inerrant, they are factual, but the attitude is wrong. And I say, "what could be more important than the attitude." From the viewpoint of inerrancy all statements are entirely true. But the attitude is wrong, and that is clearly brought out in the next chapter.

So we go on to Roman numeral 14: "The divine rebuke and promise in Isaiah 65:1-6." And there we have in capital A in our outline. "The contrast in verses 1 and 2." And here we have the book of Romans where Paul discusses this matter, and he very clearly says in Romans 10:20, "But Isaiah is very bold and says, 'I was found of them that sought me not, I was made manifest unto them who asked not after me'." That's verse one here in Isaiah 65. Then Paul says in verse 21. "But to Israel He says," and Paul quotes chapter 65 verse 2, "All day

long have I stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people.” So we have the apostle Paul saying that this is a prediction of what happened in his day.

Now, I’d like to read to you how the Revised Standard Version renders this. The Revised Standard Version, a version made by some highly trained scholars, though most of them holding a very different viewpoint than what we do, they translate this first verse of 65: “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.”

So, as you see, they have completely changed it so that it makes Paul completely wrong in his interpretation. And I was rather shocked to find that a man who truly desires to follow the Lord, I believe, and who in his commentaries takes an attitude of believing in the great Scriptural doctrines, that he follows this translation. The commentator translates this verse as, “I made myself available to 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 was not called by my name.” You notice that he follows that same RSV translation, except at the end of it He keeps the Hebrew "was called by my name" instead of changing it to "they did not call on my name." It is obvious, according to our translation and interpretation, that we regard verse 1 as describing Israel’s attitude towards God, and that verse 2 clearly refers to Israel, as well. Isaiah is making it clear why even Israel’s prayers had to be rejected. Strangely, however, Paul in Romans 10 quotes these two verses applying verse 1 to the gentiles and verse 2 to Israel. According to the text and context of Romans 10, Paul does not abide by the letter of the text. In fact, it would appear that according to the Greek translation the words lent themselves to a fresh application of Paul's word-view. Paul is not employing strict scientific exegesis but with great freedom he is re-adapting the original as an effective statement of his case. I don’t think that we can say that Paul would simply take the

Old Testament passage and re-adapt it to mean something entirely different than what it actually meant. Now, this phrase, "I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me" is a simple Niphal verb form in Hebrew. The King James translation was translated exactly as it stands, "I have been sought" or "I was sought" and serves as a "prophetic perfect" looking forward to the time when he will save Israel. But the RSV translates this as, "I was willing to be sought by those who did not ask for me". Certainly, if God wasn't willing, it couldn't happen. But the phrase, "I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me." Well, there is absolutely no warrant, no exegetical warrant, for that translation. However that idea was worked out by unbelieving scholars at least a century before. And as a result, they developed what they called the "Niphal Tolerativum." And with many people, if you give a good Latin name to something, it proves that it's true. Take a very common thing and apply a Latin name to it, and that establishes it. Well, you'll find this term in many commentaries that, of course, this is an "Niphal Tolerativum." Well, it is a Niphal, and the Niphal is used in hundreds of accounts of the Old Testaments, hundreds of accounts. As for this so-called "Niphal Tolerativum," most of your commentators will say "it's the Niphal Tolerativum as in" and then they'll refer you to a few other references. But there are very a few verses they ever refer to. They only deal with two words: this word "seek" and this word "find" found here in 65:1. I have found no reference to an alleged "Niphal Tolerativum" dealing with any other words accept these two words. And I have looked up every reference that they say is the "Niphal Tolerativum" and everyone of them has God as the subject. "I was found, I was sought." Well naturally, God can't be found unless he permits you to find him. But they claim the "Tolerativum" is the permissive act because God is the subject, not because it is Niphal. And if they learn to translate this as, "I have let myself be sought by those who did not ask me, I have let myself be found by those who did not seek me", it wouldn't change the thought at all. But when they put in the form of the RSV, they are adding another thought that goes even beyond

the alleged "Niphal Tolerativum," which, despite the beautiful Latin term, I don't think represents any actuality whatever in Hebrew grammar. You won't find it mentioned in most of the Hebrew grammars, and I want to say here that one of the important things in Bible study is that grammars and dictionaries with all types of words are purely a human production. The best dictionary for Hebrew is Brown, Driver and Briggs, by far. But the reason for that is not because those three modernists that made it knew what Hebrew words mean, its because they give you the evidence fully for the interpretation. They take the words and they analyze them. They look at the possible meanings of the parallels of everything they find, and they put down in lengthy, analytical form all the evidence so you find you have a great deal of confidence their opinion is probably correct. But when they give two or three references, you have the right, and perhaps the duty, if it is an important point, to look up those references and see if they really support what they say it does. And the same thing is true of grammars in any language. (You also need a course in the Hebrew we have in our Old Testament.) And so all the evidence we have about meanings of Hebrew words is there, and Brown, Driver and Briggs lay out the evidence for you to examine and see how much there is, and see whether there is only a little, and if it is valid or not. There's a more recent dictionary that is now published in the third edition, which apparently is called the "Third Edition." Two German scholars, Baumgartner and Kohler wrote....the First Edition. Then Kohler died and Baumgartner got in thereand called it the Second edition. Then he died, and now they have some other men who are getting out the Third Edition that is coming out a little bit at a time. And scholars all over America are looking forward impatiently to the arrival of Kohler and Baumgartner to see how they define these words. But Baumgartner only says the word is in the Song of Songs. It only gives references; it does not analyze it like Brown, Driver and Briggs. It does not give the evidence fully like BDB; it only gives their opinion. I would also say that the BDB are at a great disadvantage because they followed a theory that was universally held a century ago that to some extent is

given up now. That is, that every Hebrew word is derived from a three letter root, and therefore they arranged their words according to the roots. And it wouldn't be so bad if they just put their roots at the top of the page, but at the top of the page they put the words that occur on that page. So often you're not sure what root BDB will put the word under, and that means that sometimes there are three possibilities, and you're not sure which root they will guess and put the word under. So you can waste a lot of time looking for words. The Moody Press has just published an index to BDB that lists all the words in a verse strait through as you read it, and tells you on what pages of BDB has the discussion. With that index BDB should become many times more useful. So Baumgartner lists words so they are easier to find, but I hope that this advantage will not overcome the disadvantage of BDB so we won't replace BDB, which I think is a far better dictionary. Getting back to chapter 65, you notice that the clause, "those that did not call on my name" is used in some translations. There is no question of the tradition of what has been preserved: in both of these places the term is "called on". That is the tradition. I am sorry that somebody in the NASB committee had enough influence to get them to follow the same translation as the RSV. But you notice that new translations do not follow that wrong translation, and neither did the NIV.

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