

had expected. The first idea could be expressed by taking the verb as a simple perfect: "Who has believed what we have heard?" Both ideas can be expressed by translating it: " Who would have believed what we have heard?" This entirely proper way of rendering this form of the verb is required to fit the thoughts that precede and those that follow.

In the King James translation of this verse, the phrase "our report" introduces an ambiguity not found in the original, since "report" could mean either something heard or something said. The Hebrew word is the passive participle of the verb to hear and literally means "what we have heard." This verse is quoted twice in the New Testament (John 12:38; Rom 10:16), and in both cases a Greek word is used that is derived from the verb to hear. The verse is not primarily a complaint by a group of prophets lamenting that their proclamation is not being generally received, but rather an exclamation by new converts who are overwhelmed by the wonder of the salvation that has come to them.

While the primary thought here is not the fact that only a limited number will believe, that idea is definitely involved in the picture. The fact that this particular element is prominent in both New Testament quotations should not keep us from realizing that its primary meaning here is the realization that the means by which God would provide salvation is so different from what these kings of distant nations would have expected.

The verse continues with a recognition that their possession of this faith is due to the special mercy of God: " To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" Thus they confess that no wisdom or goodness of their own has led them to believe the message of salvation. They believe because God, in His wonderful mercy, has revealed Himself to them.

The phrase "the arm of the LORD " has occurred several times in previous chapters to indicate God's power to save. In 51:9 the arm of the LORD was called upon to awake and help His people. In 52:10 it was declared that the LORD had made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, so that all the ends of the earth should see His salvation. This outreach of the arm of