

people as one olive tree, through the ages, whether its branches at any particular time be mainly Jewish or not. Under this striking figure, Paul stresses his great teaching of the unity of God's covenant, and the real unity of God's true people in all times.

If verse 13 were the last verse of the chapter we might readily think it a mere reiteration of the gloom of the previous picture, despite its gentle suggestion that there is hope, even beyond the catastrophe. Verse 14, however, shows that this hope is to be realized. It begins a brief but magnificent passage of rejoicing, "They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea." What a marked contrast to the previous verses of the chapter! Here we have rejoicing and praise to God, and that not only in Palestine but from the sea as well.

The joyful attitude continues in verses 15-16a: "Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea. From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous."

This passage shows God's praise no longer confined to Palestine. The perspective is broadening out. In verse 14 we heard the praise of God coming from the sea. Verse 15 looks still further, to the islands and coastlines beyond. We imagine Isaiah, standing a hilltop in Judea, looking on westward across the Philistine plain to the Mediterranean Sea, looking across the sea to the distant horizon, imagining regions still farther away, and thinking that the exile, terrible as it is, is not to be the end of God's testimony. Later on there will be a time when God's word will cross the sea and distant lands will resound to songs of praise. Greece, Italy, Spain, Britain, even distant America, will be areas in which God's word will be proclaimed and souls born anew into His kingdom. Is it any wonder that the prophet cries out in verse 16: "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous."

The word translated earth in verse 16 is the same word which we translated "land" earlier in the chapter. The vision is broadening out. After the wide vistas of verses 14 and 15, we are probably justified in translating it "earth" from here on.