

is meant. If _____ was always translated "land" in verses 1 to 12, it would bring out the true meaning of the passage, fit better with its contents, and also with the analogy of prophetic usage elsewhere.

At this point someone may well raise the question, how can Hebrew be so absurd as to use one word to express two such different ideas as to mean either the whole globe or just a small section of the globe, such as the land of Egypt or the land of Israel. In answer we must say, "Yes, indeed; like all languages, Hebrew has its absurdities. It is surely absurd that one word should have two such different meanings. Yet it is not nearly as absurd as the corresponding situation in the English language. In English the word 'earth' is frequently used to indicate the entire globe. Yet it is equally common in a very different sense. A man could fill a pail with earth, carry it into a house, and then pour out the earth upon the floor. Surely English is a step more absurd than the two meanings of Hebrew when it uses the same word either to represent the entire globe or to indicate a mere pailful of soil."

Interpreting the passage in this way, and translating _____ as "land," verses 1 to 12 present a clear picture of the sad effects of exile and depopulation so often predicted by Isaiah and Jeremiah. All is gloom, despair and misery until we reach verse 13. By the time we reach verses 14 and 15 we know that we are in a different atmosphere. They are verses of joy and happiness. Verse 13 is a transition verse. It reads: "When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done."

This verse might be approached in either of two ways. It might be taken as showing the greatness of the calamity. Nothing remains but the little that will fall when an olive tree is shaken. Nothing remains but the little that is overlooked in the harvest. There is left only "the gleaning grapes when the vintage