

The Lord calls upon all His true followers, particularly those of the nation of Israel, to rejoice with Jerusalem because of the wonderful things that He will bring to pass. For many centuries the Jews have been wanderers upon the face of the earth, having no secure home and no certainty of continuing in the enjoyment of such material blessings as they may acquire for a time. Now they are told that they will have security and peace in the wonderful period God has promised. Those who were like orphans, cast out from the presence of their parents, are to be like children upon the knee of their mother, enjoying absolute security and peace while receiving great blessings from her. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

Verse 14 ends this wonderful passage of blessing with a suggestion of destruction. A contrast is drawn between the joy which is to come to God's true people in Jerusalem and the indignation which He will pour out upon His enemies. Here the emphasis is not upon those who should belong to the family of God but have turned away from Him, as in the earlier part of the chapter. It is upon those outside, who are opposing God's control. The Lord will execute judgment upon all flesh: and the slain of the Lord will be many (cf. American Standard Version here). In verse 17 the emphasis is again on false worship and may include those who are departing into the abominations of the heathen instead of following God in truth.

The fact that verses 15-17 follow verses 10-14 does not mean that the outpouring of wrath described in verses 15-17 comes after the blessings of the previous verses. It is described here in connection with the time of blessing and possibly as a reason why we can look forward to that period as certain to be accomplished. Before it begins God will pour out fire and the sword upon the nations that are hostile to Him and will bring destruction upon all their abominations.

The first section of verse 18 should be taken with what precedes. Those involved in these various forms of evil will come to an end together, "for I know their works and their thoughts." The word "know" is italicized in the English versions, for it is not expressed in the Hebrew. Literally the Hebrew reads: "And as for me, their works and their