

Revelation 18:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

Analysis

The merchandise list concludes with 'slaves, and souls of men,' exposing Rome's dehumanization through slavery. The distinction between 'slaves' (Greek 'sōmatōn,' bodies) and 'souls of men' may emphasize the complete exploitation—not just bodies but personhood itself commodified. Reformed theology condemns treating image-bearers as property. This indictment reveals Babylon's moral bankruptcy—pursuing luxury through human trafficking. The placement at the list's end emphasizes this sin's grievousness. Material prosperity built on human exploitation faces certain judgment.

Historical Context

Roman economy depended heavily on slavery, with estimates of 25-40% of Italy's population enslaved. Slaves were legal property, bought and sold as merchandise. This included sex trafficking and forced labor. Early Christianity's countercultural treatment of slaves as brothers in Christ (Philemon) challenged Roman society. The vision condemned economic systems built on human trafficking.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the mention of human trafficking at the merchandise list's end reveal God's priority in judging economic systems—how they treat people?
2. What modern economic systems or practices involve exploitation of human beings ('souls of men') for profit?

Interlinear Text

καὶ κινάμωμον καὶ θυμιάματα καὶ μύρον καὶ λίβανον
And **cinnamon** **And** **odours** **And** **ointments** **And** **frankincense**
G2532 G2792 G2532 G2368 G2532 G3464 G2532 G3030

καὶ οἶνον καὶ ἔλαιον καὶ σεμίδαλιν καὶ σῖτον καὶ
And **wine** **And** **oil** **And** **fine flour** **And** **wheat** **And**
G2532 G3631 G2532 G1637 G2532 G4585 G2532 G4621 G2532

κτῆνη καὶ πρόβατα καὶ ἵππων καὶ ῥεδῶν καὶ σωμάτων
beasts **And** **sheep** **And** **horses** **And** **chariots** **And** **slaves**
G2934 G2532 G4263 G2532 G2462 G2532 G4480 G2532 G4983

καὶ ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων
And **souls** **of men**
G2532 G5590 G444

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 27:13 (Parallel theme): Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market.

Amos 2:6 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes;

Isaiah 50:1 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

2 Peter 2:3 (Parallel theme): And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

Nehemiah 5:8 (Parallel theme): And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer.

Exodus 21:16 (Parallel theme): And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

Deuteronomy 24:7 (Parallel theme): If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you.

1 Timothy 1:10 (Parallel theme): For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;