

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
κτήνη	καὶ	πρόβατα	καὶ	ἵππων	καὶ	ρεδῶν	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;