

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 246 – Revelation 16:17-17:18

Day 1226: Revelation 16:17-21

Verse 17

Καὶ ὁ ἕβδομος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ἀέρα· καὶ ἐξῆλθεν φωνὴ μεγάλη ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου λέγουσα, Γέγονεν.

ἕβδομος, η, ον seventh
ἀηρ, ερος m air
γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

Cf. 15:1. Moffatt translates "All is over!"

Verse 18

καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταί, καὶ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας οἷος οὐκ ἐγένετο ἄφ· οὐ ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τηλικούτος σεισμός οὕτω μέγας.

ἀστραπη, ης f lightning
βροντη, ης f thunder
σεισμος, ου m earthquake
οἷος, α, ον relative pronoun such as
τηλικουτος, αυτη, ουτο so great, so large
οὕτως and οὕτω adv. formed from οὗτος thus

Cf. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19.

Verse 19

καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη εἰς τρία μέρη, καὶ αἱ πόλεις τῶν ἐθνῶν ἔπεσαν. καὶ Βαβυλων ἡ μεγάλη ἐμνήσθη ἔνωπιον τοῦ θεοῦ δοῦναι αὐτῇ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ.

πολις, εως f city, town

Some take the great city as Jerusalem (cf. 11:8). Others think the reference is to Rome. Morris thinks it is a general picture of the complete destruction of "civilised man ... ordering his affairs apart from God."

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three
μερος, ους n part, piece

"Perhaps because it is ruled by the unholy trinity, so that the punishment fits the crime." Witherington.

ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω
fall, fall down
ἐμνήσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s
μιμνησκομαι remember, call to mind
ἔνωπιον prep with gen before
δοῦναι verb, aor act infin διδωμι
ποτηριον, ου n cup
οἶνος, ου m wine

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury
ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

Verse 20

καὶ πᾶσα νῆσος ἔφυγεν, καὶ ὄρη οὐχ εὐρέθησαν.

νησος, ου f island
φευγω flee
ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill
εὐρισκω find

Cf. 6:12-14. Witherington comments, "This is, of course, metaphorical, but it draws on the OT notion that all of creation quakes when God comes down to visit, especially when he comes in judgment."

Verse 21

καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη ὡς ταλαντιαία καταβαίνει ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄνθρωπους· καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸν θεὸν ἐκ τῆς πληγῆς τῆς χαλάζης, ὅτι μεγάλη ἐστὶν ἡ πληγὴ αὐτῆς σφοδρά.

χαλαζα, ης f hail
ταλαντιαιος, α, ον weighing a talent
(perhaps about 90 pounds)
καταβαινω come down, descend
βλασφημεω cf. 16:9,11,21.
πληγη, ης f plague
σφοδρα very much, very, greatly

"This leads to no repentance, only a blasphemous scream complaining about the severe weather." Witherington.

Day 1227: Revelation 17:1-5

17:1-19:10 – A tale of two cities, two women

This section contrasts two cities, Babylon and the New Jerusalem. They are personified and contrasted as two women, a great whore and a bride.

Witherington comments, "Rev 17 should not be seen as the sequel to Rev 16. It is an expansion or close-up of the seventh cup or perhaps the sixth and seventh cups. The procedure of recounting a vision and then following it with an interpretation is common in apocalyptic literature, not least because such highly symbolic visions required interpretation, even to those who received them... Rev 17:1-19:10 demonstrates how Babylon is made to drain the cup of God's wrath. The lamentation in Rev 18 and the worship in Rev 19:1-10 underscore that the fall is final. A good deal of the description of Babylon draws on Jer. 51." Witherington includes an interesting excursus on the connection between a city and religion in the ancient world: cities were often believed to be the earthly seat of a god. Witherington concludes, "These things need to be kept in view as we evaluate what John says about both Babylon/Rome and the New Jerusalem. He understood quite well that such cities were profoundly religious in character, in design, in practice, and in belief structure. John does not oppose a secular to a sacred city in his visions. He opposes two categorically opposed visions of a holy city, one involving the deification of the human in the person of the Emperor and of the city, and of nature/creation in the form of a multitude of other gods and goddesses, and the other involving the deity of an only God who always maintains the creator/creature distinction and so makes relationships between the human and divine eternally possible."

Verse 1

Καὶ ἦλθεν εἷς ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλων τῶν ἔχόντων τὰς ἑπτὰ φιάλας, καὶ ἐλάλησεν μετ' ἐμοῦ λέγων, Δεῦρο, δεῖξω σοι τὸ κρίμα τῆς πόρνῆς τῆς μεγάλης τῆς καθημένης ἐπὶ ὑδάτων πολλῶν,

ἑπτὰ seven

δευρο adv. come, come here

Cf. 21:9.

δείξω Verb, fut act indic, 3 s δεικνυμι
show, reveal

κριμα, τος n judgement

πορνη, ης f prostitute

Cf. Nahum 3:4; Isa 23:16,17.

καθημαι sit, sit down, live

ὑδωρ, ὑδατος n water

Cf. v.15 and Jer 51:13. The picture from Jer. 51 of the various canals of the Euphrates which distributed water throughout the area around Babylon is now applied to Rome and its many peoples – "the influence of Rome flows throughout the entire world." Mounce.

Verse 2

μεθ' ἧς ἐπόρνευσαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐμεθύσθησαν οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς.

πορνευω commit sexual immorality
βασιλευς, εως m king

"They represent the apostate nations which Rome has enticed into idolatrous worship of herself and the beast." Mounce.

Witherington comments that "M. E. Boring has rightly noted that fornication here refers not only to idolatrous worship of the Emperor but likely also worship of the city of Rome in the form of the goddess Roma. This in effect involves 'accepting Rome as the point of orientation for life in this world, that is, making Rome herself a god'."

μεθω be drunk, drink freely

κατοικεω live, inhabit

οἶνος, ου m wine

πορνεια, ας f sexual immorality

Verse 3

καὶ ἀπήνεγκέν με εἰς ἔρημον ἐν πνεύματι. καὶ εἶδον γυναῖκα καθήμενην ἐπὶ θηρίον κόκκινον, γέμον[τα] ὀνόματα βλασφημίας, ἔχων κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ κέρατα δέκα.

ἀπήνεγκέν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀπαγω
lead away, lead, bring

ἐρημος, ου f deserted place

"In this context the wilderness is not a place of divine protection and nourishment (as in 12:6, 14), but an appropriate setting for a vision of judgement." Mounce.

γυνη, αικος f woman, wife

θηριον, ου n animal, beast

κοκκινος, η, ον scarlet, red

Witherington comments, "The colour of the Beast is probably intended to recall the colour of the dragon in 12:3. But Beasley-Murray may be correct that the colour is meant to suggest royalty. Scarlet and purple were colours much beloved by the wealthy and royalty of Rome. But it is also true that all purple outfits were worn by high-class prostitutes."

γεμω be full, be covered with

ὄνομα, τος n name, title

βλασφημια, ας f slander, blasphemy

"The reference is to the blasphemous claims to deity made by the Roman emperors who employed such titles as *theios* (divine), *soter* (saviour), and *kyrios* (Lord). The blasphemies are not so much directly spoken against God by the beast as they are implied by his self-deification. The beast (like the dragon of chap. 12) has seven heads and ten horns (cf. 13:1). John supplies his own interpretation to these later in the chapter (vss. 9-14, 16-17)." Mounce.

κεφαλη, ης f head
 ἑπτα seven
 κερας, ατος n horn
 δεκα ten

Verse 4

καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἦν περιβεβλημένη πορφυροῦν καὶ κόκκινον, καὶ κεχρυσωμένη χρυσοῖν καὶ λίθω τιμίω καὶ μαργαρίταις, ἔχουσα ποτήριον χρυσοῦν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτῆς γέμον βδελυγμάτων καὶ τὰ ἀκάθαρτα τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς,

περιβεβλημένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s
 περιβαλλω put on, clothe, dress
 πορφυρους, α, ουν purple; purple garment

Signifying the luxury and splendour of ancient Rome. See also Witherington's comments in the previous verse.

κεχρυσωμένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s
 χρυσοω cover or adorn with gold
 χρυσιον, ου n gold
 λιθος, ου m stone
 τιμος, α, ον precious, valuable
 μαργαριτης, ου m pearl
 ποτηριον, ου n cup
 χειρ, χειρος f hand
 γεμω be full, be covered with
 βδελυγμα, τος n something detestable

The καὶ is probably exegetical, meaning 'even'.

ἀκαθαρτος, ον unclean
 πορνεια, ας f see v.2

Cf. Jer 51:7 and Dan 9:27. "In view of Mark 13 and other texts, the reference to the abominations should probably be taken to mean idolatrous practices, since abomination was a common Jewish euphemism for 'idol'." Witherington.

Verse 5

καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῆς ὄνομα γεγραμμένον, μυστήριον, Βαβυλων ἡ μεγάλη, ἡ μήτηρ τῶν πορνῶν καὶ τῶν βδελυγμάτων τῆς γῆς.

μετωπον, ου n forehead

γεγραμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
 nom/acc s γραφω write

"John was probably also drawing on the practice of Roman harlots of wearing a headband with their name on it." Witherington.

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery

Opinions differ as to whether μυστηριον forms part of the name. The NEB thinks not and translates it "written on her forehead was a name with a secret meaning..."

πορνη, ης f see v.1
 βδελυγμα, τος n see v.4

She is the "mother of whores and of every obscenity on earth." NEB.

Day 1228: Revelation 17:6-8

Verse 6

καὶ εἶδον τὴν γυναῖκα μεθύουσαν ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν μαρτύρων Ἰησοῦ. Καὶ ἐθαύμασα ἰδὼν αὐτὴν θαῦμα μέγα.

μεθυω be drunk
 αἷμα, ατος f blood
 μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m witness, matryr

Probably not meant to imply two different groups but a double reference to believers who had given their lives as a result of their faithfulness to the gospel. Witherington, however, comments, "We have here two phrases following the preposition of ἐκ, which most naturally suggests two different groups. Before we have had the tandem of the prophets and martyrs/witnesses. The reference actually could be to the OT saints and the Christians (cf. Heb 12:1ff.)."

θαυμαζω wonder, be amazed
 ἰδων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὄραω see
 θαυμα, τος n wonder

"The revolting and gory spectacle causes John to wonder 'with a great wonder.' Upon being taken to the wilderness he had expected to see the judgement of the harlot, but up to this point she appears triumphant. Ostentatiously attired and adorned in wealth, she sits upon the scarlet beast advertising her base trade and intoxicated with the blood of her victims. The true nature of the empire is at last fully revealed." Mounce.

Verse 7

καὶ εἶπέν μοι ὁ ἄγγελος, Διὰ τί ἐθαύμασας; ἔγω ἔρω σοι τὸ μυστήριον τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ τοῦ θηρίου τοῦ βαστάζοντος αὐτήν, τοῦ ἔχοντος τὰς ἑπτὰ κεφαλὰς καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα·

ἔρω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s λεγω
μυστηριον, ου n see v.5
βαστάζω carry, bear
ἔχοντος Verb, pres act ptc, m gen s ἔχω

ἑπτὰ κεφαλὰς... see v.3.

Verse 8

τὸ θηρίον ὃ εἶδες ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν, καὶ μέλλει ἀναβαίνειν ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου, καὶ εἰς ἀπωλείαν ὑπάγει· καὶ θαυμασθήσονται οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὧν οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, βλέπόντων τὸ θηρίον ὅτι ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν καὶ παρέσται.

εἶδες Verb, 2nd aor act indic, 2 s ὄρω
see

ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν An obvious parody of the Lamb (cf. 1:18; 2:8). The description is an intentional antithesis to the One "who is and was and is to come" (1:4,8; 4:8).

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about
ἀναβαινω come up, ascend
ἀβυσσος, ου f abyss, underworld
ἀπωλεία, ας f destruction, utter ruin

"In the broadest sense the beast is that satanically inspired power that, although having received the stroke of death, returns to hurl himself with renewed fury against the forces of God. It is this incredible power of resuscitation that causes those who dwell upon the earth to stand in awe. He is the beast of chapter 13 who had received a death-stroke and yet survived (12:3, 12, 14). Down through history he repeatedly 'comes up from the abyss' to harass and, if it were possible, to destroy the people of God.... The beast *was*; at the moment he *is not*. John wrote under the shadow of an impending persecution. The beast is about to come again. This coming will be his last, for now the King of kings and Lord of lords will cast him (along with the false prophet) alive into the lake of fire. This is what it means that he goes into perdition (see vs, 11 as well)." Mounce.

θαυμασθήσονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl θαυμάζω
κατοικεω live, inhabit
γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω
write
βιβλίον, ου n book, scroll

ζωη, ης f life
καταβολη, ης f beginning, creation
κοσμος, ου m world, universe

Cf. Ps 69:28; Is 4:3; Rev 3:5.

βλεπω see
παρειμι be present

"The verb used to describe the coming of the beast is closely related to the noun which regularly describes the parousia or second coming of Christ (1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thess 2:19; 1 Jn 2:28; etc.)." Mounce.

Witherington comments, "Caird points out that at 11:7 we hear of a beast that rises from the abyss. Rev 13:1ff. must be compared at this juncture. There the monster in question was the Roman Empire, and it seems likely that this is true here as well. But the idea of the second coming refers to the epitome of evil (i.e., Nero back from the dead). The figure apparently does not exist while the author is writing but is expected again, having lived once in the past. Did John really believe Nero would return? Probably not, but he is drawing on common notions to convey the idea of an anti-Christ figure. Evil takes many shapes, though ultimately it all goes back to the same source – the abyss and the Devil."

Day 1229: Revelation 17:9-14**Verse 9**

ὧδε ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἔχων σοφίαν. αἱ ἑπτὰ κεφαλὰὶ ἑπτὰ ὄρη εἰσὶν, ὅπου ἡ γυνὴ κάθηται ἐπ' αὐτῶν. καὶ βασιλεῖς ἑπτὰ εἰσὶν·

ὧδε adv here
νοῦς, νοος, νοι, νουν m mind,
understanding
σοφία, ας f wisdom, insight

'Here *is needed* the understanding which is wisdom'. "John is saying that although the interpretation of the seven heads is not obvious, it may be understood by those who ponder the riddle with care and wisdom." Mounce.

ὄρος, ους n mountain, hill

An obvious reference to Rome, built on seven hills.

ὅπου adv. where
καθημαι sit, live
βασιλευς, εως m king

The seven kings would appear to be symbolic of the universal power of Rome and beyond that the comprehensive reign of the beast.

Verse 10

οἱ πέντε ἔπεσαν, ὁ εἷς ἔστιν, ὁ ἄλλος
οὕτω ἦλθεν, καὶ ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὀλίγον αὐτὸν
δεῖ μείναι.

πεντε (indeclinable) five
ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω
fall

εἷς, μια, ἓν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one
ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
οὕτω not yet

Attempts to identify the five and the other two as particular Roman emperors are fraught with difficulty. Others seek to identify each with historic world empires, Rome being the sixth and the seventh the 'Christian' empire established by Constantine. It is perhaps best to see the number as purely symbolic. "John is not interested in a careful tabulation of the past but is declaring the nearness of the end by the commonly accepted use of a numerical scheme. For John seven is the number of completeness. Five kings have fallen, one is, and the last remains only for a short time." Mounce.

ὅταν when
ὀλίγον adv. a little, only a little
δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary, must
μείναι Verb, aor act infin μενω trans
remain, stay

Verse 11

καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὃ ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν, καὶ
αὐτὸς ὄγδοός ἐστιν καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἐστιν,
καὶ εἰς ἀπωλείαν ὑπάγει.

ὄγδοος, η, ον eighth
ἑπτὰ seven

Mounce suggests that the eighth who is part of the seven is the Antichrist. Witherington argues that it is Domitian.

ἀπωλεία, ας f see v.8

Verse 12

καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα ἃ εἶδες δέκα βασιλεῖς
εἰσιν, οἵτινες βασιλείαν οὕτω ἔλαβον,
ἀλλὰ ἐξουσίαν ὡς βασιλεῖς μίαν ὥραν
λαμβάνουσιν μετὰ τοῦ θηρίου.

βασιλευς, εως m king
οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ
τι who, which

Mounce says that βασιλεια is here used to mean 'royal power', cf. Lk 19:12.

οὕτω not yet
ἐξουσία, ας f authority, power
ὥρα, ας f hour, moment

Many identify the ten kings with the Parthian satraps who were viewed as a threat to Rome. Witherington writes, "We may be talking about provincial governors or local officials who ran the imperial cult in Asia." He quotes Friesen who writes, "The book of Revelation must be understood in its local setting as part of a clash of religious ideologies, for it represents an assault on fundamental issues of social organisation in later first-century Asia." Beckwith, however, says that they are "purely eschatological figures representing the totality of the powers of all nations on earth which are to be made subservient to Antichrist."

Verse 13

οὗτοι μίαν γνώμην ἔχουσιν, καὶ τὴν
δύναμιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν αὐτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ
διδόασιν.

γνώμη, ης f purpose, intent
δυναμις, εως f power
διδόασιν Verb, pres act indic, 3 pl διδομι

They are "willing collaborators" (Morris) who share in Antichrist's hostility to Christ and his followers.

Verse 14

οὗτοι μετὰ τοῦ ἀρνίου πολεμήσουσιν, καὶ
τὸ ἀρνίον νικήσει αὐτούς, ὅτι κύριος
κυρίων ἐστὶν καὶ βασιλεὺς βασιλέων, καὶ
οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ κλητοὶ καὶ ἐκλεκτοὶ καὶ
πιστοί.

ἄρνιον, ου n lamb
πολεμῶ wage war, fight
νικῶ conquer, overcome

Cf. Ps 136:2,3; Dan 2:47; 4:37 LXX.

κλητος, η, ον called
ἐκλεκτος, η, ον chosen
πιστος, η, ον faithful

Cf. Rev 2:26,27.

Day 1230: Revelation 17:15-18**Verse 15**

Καὶ λέγει μοι, Τὰ ὕδατα ἃ εἶδες, οὗ ἡ
πόρνη κάθηται, λαοὶ καὶ ὄχλοι εἰσὶν καὶ
ἔθνη καὶ γλώσσαι.

ὑδωρ, ὕδατος n see v.1
οὗ adv where
πορνη, ης f see v.1
καθημαι see v.1

"The harlot sits on them, which suggests heavy-handed ruling or squashing of local autonomy." Witherinton.

λαος, ου m people, a people

ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude
 ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, ους n
 nation, people
 γλωσσα, ης f tongue, language

The fourfold grouping stresses universality.

Verse 16

καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα ἃ εἶδες καὶ τὸ θηρίον,
 οὗτοι μοιήσουσιν τὴν πόρνην, καὶ
 ἠρημωμένην ποιήσουσιν αὐτήν καὶ
 γυμνήν, καὶ τὰς σάρκας αὐτῆς φάγονται,
 καὶ αὐτὴν κατακαύσουσιν ἐν πυρί·

The fate of the harlot is described in phrases reminiscent of Ezekiel's allegory of Oholibab (Ezek 23:11-35).

κερας, ατος n see v.3.
 θηριον, ου n see v.3.
 μισω hate, despise
 ἠρημωμένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s
 ἐρημοομαι be made waste or
 desolate
 γυμνος, η, ον naked
 σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh
 φάγονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl
 ἐσθιω eat, consume

Cf. 2 Kings 9:30-37.

κατακαύσουσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl
 κατακαιω burn
 πυρ, ος n fire

Cf. Lev 21:9.

"This turning of the beast upon the woman who sits upon him speaks of 'a terrible and mysterious law of political history, according to which every revolutionary power contains within itself the seed of self-destruction' (Lilje...). It describes the self-destroying power of evil. Morris notes that the wicked are not a happy band of brothers, but precisely because they are wicked they give way to jealousy and hatred, so that 'at the climax their mutual hatreds will result in mutual destruction'." Mounce.

Witherington asks, "Do the ten horns represent the Parthian straps invading Rome and led by the returned Nero? This certainly makes sense of what follows in Rev 19:16-18."

Verse 17

ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἔδωκεν εἰς τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν
 ποιῆσαι τὴν γνώμην αὐτοῦ, καὶ ποιῆσαι
 μίαν γνώμην καὶ δοῦναι τὴν βασιλείαν
 αὐτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ, ἄχρι τελεσθήσονται οἱ
 λόγοι τοῦ θεοῦ.

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s διδωμι
 καρδια, ας f heart
 ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιεω

γνώμη, ης f purpose, intent

ποιῆσαι μίαν γνώμην They were of 'one mind.'

δοῦναι verb, aor act infin διδωμι
 ἄχρι prep and conj until
 τελεσθήσονται Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl
 τελεω complete, finish, fulfill

"This verse denies the existence of any ultimate dualism in the world. In the final analysis the powers of evil serve the purpose of God. The coalition between the beast and his allies will continue until the words of God – the prophecies leading up to the overthrow of Antichrist – are fulfilled." Mounce.

Verse 18

καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἣν εἶδες ἔστιν ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη
 ἡ ἔχουσα βασιλείαν ἐπὶ τῶν βασιλείων τῆς
 γῆς·

πολις, εως f city, town
 βασιλευς, εως m king

Again, βασιλεια is used in the sense of 'royal power' (cf. v.12).

"For John, the city is Rome. She is the wicked seducer whose pernicious influence has permeated the whole of the Mediterranean world. Yet Babylon the Great, source of universal harlotry and abomination (vs. 5), is more than first century Rome. Every great centre of power which has prostituted its wealth and influence restores to life the spirit of ancient Babylon." Mounce.