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## **Islam, the Rape of Europa and the Woman astride the Beast:**

### **Current Scaremongering Readings of Revelation 17**

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Robert Fuller published in 1995, with Oxford University Press, a history of how the idea of the Antichrist and Biblical apocalyptic imagery in general has engaged many conservative evangelical and Pentecostal circles in the United States and spawned a constant stream of interpretation relating present events to the cataclysmic destruction and demise of civilisation which will supposedly herald the return of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Any reader of his *Naming the Antichrist: The History of An American Obsession* would have anticipated how the horrifying devastation and apparent religious motivation of the '9/11' attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York would prove grist to the mill of those Christian groups in the United States who claim to relate successfully prophetic Biblical texts to present events. 'Apocalyptic' scenarios now surround the interpretations such groups place on the recent American–British invasion of Iraq, the continued presence of troops in the region, and the possible future tasks to which such forces might be directed. These views include outright claims

that the defeat of Saddam Hussein in ‘Operation Iraqi Liberation’ is part of a sequence of events that will herald the second coming of Christ. Christian presses in the United States now offer shelves of ‘Biblical Prophecy’ type publications with an anti-Islamic tone to indulge the fancies of those who would relate prophetic texts from the Bible to present events in the near East and demonise Islam as the vehicle of the Antichrist;<sup>ii</sup> such appetites may be sated too on numerous websites.<sup>iii</sup>

In Europe, such views are increasingly disseminated by specialised religious cable and satellite television broadcasting. Since many people increasingly use their television sets as their principal source of news and commentary, satellite/subscriber television broadcasting has become significant for the formation of religious and political opinion. Pastor John Hagee of San Antonio, Texas some years ago preached a series of sermons, repeatedly televised in North America and Europe through the religious channels available via cable and satellite broadcast, proclaiming before a massive, cinema-style tableau depicting visually his own thoroughgoing apocalyptic scenario. At the centre a massive passenger jet airliner flew at a crazy angle towards Texas oil-derricks, a portent of the threat posed by Islamist terrorism to the internal economy of the United States. The tableau included a massive portrait of Saddam Hussein; a lurid depiction of the

harlot astride the seven-headed beast of Revelation 17; and a scene of the glorified, returning Christ receiving his elevating saints as they are caught up in the air.<sup>iv</sup> The conjunction of text and image in Hagee's presentations points to the ease with which images can be combined and reproduced with digital electronic equipment and the possibility that religious communication is becoming increasingly a matter of text and image used in combination, even in traditionally text-focused Protestant groups. Such programming, which is frequently recycled and is widely distributed via satellite and cable networks in the United States, was not without importance in recent presidential elections. Hagee and other Christian broadcasters emphasised that to vote is a Christian duty and barely concealed their view that a Republican vote was the appropriate Christian ballot, seen as consonant with their vocal opposition to abortion, homosexual marriage and embryonic stem-cell research and their stress on 'family values'. The tone of a great deal of broadcasting in the last two US presidential elections was 'apocalyptic' in character, well suited to combine in the perceptions of many US evangelical voters with the defining feature of the Republican campaign, its fear-generating emphasis on the threat to the United States posed by Islamist terrorism. US Christian programming is also the staple and majority content of the free-view Christian satellite

television broadcasting available in Europe (e.g. in Britain Sky TV channels 671 to 679), in the Near East (including broadcasts dubbed into Arabic transmitted via the Hotbird 6 satellite) and beyond. *God Channel* 1 and 2 are transmitted via uplinks from Jerusalem; the presenters proclaim this as an end-time fulfilment of the oracles of Isaiah and Micah concerning the going forth of ‘the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.’<sup>v</sup>

The visual medium of satellite television increasingly forms a major part of the information base for much popular Christian perception in Britain and continental Europe. The common social retreat in Britain from communal activity to a lifestyle dominated by the demands of work, in which down-time is increasingly spent in short evenings (or day or night viewing sessions for shift workers) before the television set, likewise contributes to the influence of American Christian programming. A recent survey found that 41% of Britons spend every evening in their own home, calling ‘Staying In’ the ‘New Going Out’ and commenting: “We are living increasingly busier lives, making our spare time more precious. From our research there’s an increasing trend to spend this time at home rather than on traditional activities such as going down the pub or visiting the cinema. As a result we’re spending more money on home improvement and on entertainment systems.’ Home cinemas including plasma TV screens and

satellite TV access have become a prime constituent of consumer budgets.

Of around twenty million British households, by June 2005 some 7,787,000

had Sky satellite antennae and rental boxes, and 3,000,000 had cable TV.

Sky TV is presently acquiring more than 80,000 new subscribers each year;

other subscriber satellite broadcasters are available to consumers,

particularly to those who seek access to broadcasting in the languages of

continental Europe.<sup>vi</sup>

Satellite television may indeed be more important as an opinion-former than the internet; while material posted on the internet must be actively searched out, satellite television broadcasts are passively received and require only a few moments of channel-flicking with a remote handset to find. Most religious programming gives accompanying or concluding reference to websites, and foregrounds popular named preachers whose materials can be found easily on the internet once interest in their views has been ignited. Tele-preachers usually present their views with considerable dynamism and forceful rhetoric. Particularly in the light of this developing social,<sup>vii</sup> religious and technical trend, which we might call 'visual home religious entertainment', this paper considers a recent polemical characterisation of Islam, apocalyptic in tone and disseminated extensively not only in print and on video-tape, but also through Christian broadcasting

over the wide footprints of satellites covering Europe, the former soviet republic union, and the Near East, proffered by the British Pentecostal healing evangelist David Hathaway.

### *David Hathaway*

Hathaway advocates an antipathetic and supposedly Biblical view of Islam as the beast of Revelation 17, and combines this with a polemical rejection of the European Union, for Hathaway depicted in this section of Scripture as the woman astride the beast. He has had significant influence in Pentecostal circles and in some evangelical congregations in Britain, promulgating his 'apocalyptic' view of Islam through speaking engagements and also through the marketing of his video *The Rape of Europe*. This three-part documentary, available from his bookstalls and website<sup>viii</sup> has also been broadcast through the satellite TV *God Channel*. Hathaway's free quarterly magazine *Prophetic Vision*, in which his polemical, apocalyptic view of Islam has predominated for several years, has a circulation of half a million copies. In Hathaway's articles and video presentation, images and text depict the European Union as Babel, the prostitute of Revelation 17, clueless astride the beast of Islam, in a reading which interprets the images of Revelation 17 through the classical myth of the rape of Europa.

Hathaway's constant thesis is that Satan, in the form of the beast of Islam, is about to rape Europe, having seduced its victim through the attraction of near Eastern oil wealth. Hathaway gives the appearance of profound scholarly capacities of Biblical interpretation through cross-reference from the text of Revelation to archaeological artefacts and classical mythology, supposedly unravelling for lay audiences the knotty problem of the identity of the woman astride the beast as the European Union. Audiences and readers without some historical and exegetical training appear unable to raise argument against Hathaway, revealing an insidious aspect of his supposedly learned anti-Islamic propaganda.

Born in London as the younger twin son of the Rev. W. G. Hathaway, one of the founders of the Pentecostal movement in Britain, Hathaway graduated from Elim Bible College and ministered as a pastor and evangelist. In 1964 he began to smuggle Bibles into Eastern Europe, initially to Bulgaria. Eventually the secret compartments of his 'Crusader Tours' bus could conceal two tons of Bibles at a time (150,000 copies) for transport to various Christian groups in Eastern Europe. In 1972 he was arrested on the Czechoslovak border with 5,000 Bibles intended for underground churches in Russia. He suffered interrogation and torture and was sentenced to a long prison term, but through the intervention of British



Prime Minister Harold Wilson was released after ten months, leaving Czechoslovakia in the company of the British Prime Minister. Photographs of Hathaway with Harold Wilson and press articles covering his imprisonment and release figure regularly in his *Prophetic Vision* magazine, enhancing his credentials with conservative Christian groups in the U.K., Europe and across the former Soviet Union. Hathaway continues to speak widely in Britain and in continental Europe, and has since the fall of the Soviet Union focused on evangelism in Russia, the Ukraine and Siberia, widely supported by Pentecostal and evangelical-charismatic churches in Britain and Europe. He broadcasts extensively by television across the former Soviet Union.

Hathaway preaches an interpretation of European history and of Islam's culminative role in it based principally on an interpretation of the dream-visions of Daniel 2 and 7, of the symbolism of Revelation 13 and 17, and of the reference to the 'seat of Satan' in Revelation 2:12–13. Hathaway's historical-eschatological thesis is complex yet its various parts interlock with surprisingly persuasive force when presented through the visual mediums of his luridly illustrated *Prophetic Vision* magazine and his video documentary, which is designed for exhibition in church study groups and seminars as well as television broadcasting. In this visual presentation

religious imagery and potent scenes from the history of Europe play on deep religious and moral impulses in European psychology. Images of religious import from near eastern archaeology and iconography, and from European art, film footage from the first world war, from the Nazi period and of the Holocaust and second world war, and footage depicting the construction and fall of the Berlin wall, are combined with explanations which supposedly expose the true religious (or occult) character of the iconography and architecture of the institutions of the European Union. Hathaway's prodding commentary, often in the form of eerily posed rhetorical questions, asks what spiritual forces have dominated or sought to dominate recent European history. For Hathaway the tragedies of twentieth century European history were driven by barely-perceived yet powerful and evil, metaphysical spiritual forces deriving from near eastern occultism; these same metaphysical forces are ready, in the twenty-first century, to unleash dreadful catastrophe on Europe again. The music behind Hathaway's commentary is often martial and tensely rhythmic, seemingly chosen with the intent of generating a sense of foreboding in the audience. The major concluding section of commentary, engaged with themes from the book of Revelation and discussion of the occult power of ancient near eastern deities, accompanies footage of the Nazi period and the construction of the

Berlin wall, interspersed with shots of the crescent moon as it appears in the Near East, symbolising both Islam and the horns of beast/bull Satan. One sequence in the video hauntingly closes with the destructive explosion of the giant swastika over the Nazis' Nuremberg grandstand by American forces in 1945, apparently symbolising the destruction again about to envelop Europe.

*The major elements of Hathaway's interpretation of Revelation 17*

Hathaway's apocalyptic synthesis can be broken down for the purpose of analysis into six elements, which can be briefly summarised as follows:

- 1) *Daniel and Revelation predict the European Union as the last manifestation of Babylon/Rome.* Hathaway first of all reads the Biblical book of Daniel as giving a panorama of near eastern and European history stretching down to the present day, as is common amongst 'Biblical Prophecy' interpreters. The sequence of four world empires of Daniel 2 and 7 concludes with the remains of the Roman empire, itself the continued expression of the occult Satanic spirit initially manifest in the first empire of Daniel's sequence (Babylon)

and which is about to reconstruct itself in a new Babylon, the European Union. The Kingdom of God succeeds and destroys the Daniel's four oppressive empires. Terrible, apocalyptic events have unfolded in recent European history and are about to unfold again in the present day. The imminent, calamitous re-manifestation of the Satanic spirit in Europe, which will be finally manifest in a European persecution of Christianity, will be the precursor of the second coming of Christ, the final coming of the Kingdom predicted by Daniel. This interpretation of Daniel is common enough in various 'Biblical Prophecy' premillenarian schemes. Hathaway seems to be original, however, in attaching to it the following elements.

- 2) *The iconography of the European Union identifies it as Babel, the vehicle of Zeus/Satan.* The occult, Satanic evil of the present attempt to create political union in Europe is revealed by the chosen iconography of the European Union. Key are the politico-architectural choice of Brueghel's classic painting of the tower of Babel as the model for the European Parliament building in Strasbourg, and the prominent employment of the image of the classical myth the rape of Europa, displayed in sculptures before

buildings of the European Union and increasingly portrayed on European banknotes, coins, and postage stamps, in celebratory murals, and on European identity cards. For Hathaway, the choice of the imagery of Babel reflects approval by an increasingly secular Europe of the Satanically-inspired rebellion against God expressed in the construction of the original tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9). The Judaeo-Christian tradition and the Christian Gospel itself are mocked by the European Union's self-identification with the imagery of Babel. Christians should likewise beware the use of the Europa myth, for the bull is a symbol of ruthless Satanic power, and the myth approves the horrifying violence of rape. The bull which abducts Europa on the sands of Phoenicia in the ancient myth was the incarnation of Zeus, the false Greek father of the gods, for Hathaway none other than Satan himself, who is presently seeking a spiritual takeover of Europe.

- 3) *The Rape of Europa myth is depicted by the woman astride the beast in Revelation 17.* Hathaway is confident of the eschatologically significant, spiritually demonic power behind the choice of symbols used by the European Union since he finds them in the Bible,

especially in the book of Revelation. Zeus, who appears in the classical myth on the sands of Phoenicia and departs with Europa across the sea to Crete, may be identified with the violent empires that emerge as beasts from the sea in Daniel 7 to oppress the people of God, with the beasts that emerge from the sea in Revelation 13 to persecute violently the Church, and with the dragon Satan. Hathaway finds a close and significant reproduction of the pagan myth of the abduction and rape of Europa in the imagery of the harlot astride the seven-headed, ten-horned beast of Revelation 17. The woman (i.e. Europa) dressed in purple and scarlet is the arch-persecutor of the church, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs (v. 6), a portent of which European Christians should presently take heed. Moreover, Europa (as the present continent of Europe, increasingly united in the European Union) is at present being as unwittingly seduced by the metaphysical power of the bull/Satan as was Europa by the bull Zeus's beauty in the classical myth. Hathaway urges Christians to pray. Hathaway's exhortation to prayer seems most directed towards Christians in the United Kingdom, for he depicts the United States as a bulwark of freedom struggling against the dark European plot. The United Kingdom may

yet withdraw from the European Union and be saved from the awful horrors sure to descend on those remaining within the European project. His message to former soviet republics not yet involved with the European Union is to steer well clear of the Satanic European plot.

- 4) *Twentieth century German imperialism, the Nazi period and the Holocaust demonstrate the special incursion of Satanic Evil into European History.* Hathaway claims that there was a special incursion of occult, Satanic evil into European history at the beginning of the twentieth century; this Satanic incursion expressed itself in the two most destructive wars that the world has ever seen, World War I, in which some 10,000,000 died, and World War II, in which over 55,000,000 died worldwide, including over six million Jews in the Holocaust. For Hathaway these events are not simply secular history, but manifest a scale of suffering and destruction which betokens the massive involvement of metaphysical, demonic power in German government and a Satanic attempt to exterminate God's chosen people (the Jews) and thereby to thwart God's plan (to bless the world through the Jewish people). The militaristic

imperialism of Kaiser Wilhelm II's attempt to dominate Europe in the first world war, and the unbridled violence of the occult-inclined Nazis' attempt to conquer and unite Europe under German hegemony in the second world war, with its attendant anti-Semitism and occult perversion of faith, reveal the very Devil's character and plot in their ruthless lust for power, moral corruption, destructiveness, occultism and quest to exterminate the historic people of God.

- 5) *The special incursion of Satanic evil into European history began with German transport of major occult artefacts from the Near East to Berlin, and their reception in deliberately pagan festivities.*

Hathaway claims to know a primary vehicle of the drastic incursion of occult forces into the heart of Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, thereafter driving German policy through two world wars: the importation of two vast, major pagan cult-objects from the near east to Berlin by German archaeologists, and their reception with pagan festivities. One is the Ishtar gate of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, constructed c. 575 BC, now housed in the Pergamum Museum on Berlin's *Museum Insel*. After visiting Jerusalem in 1898 in his capacity as King of Jerusalem, a title earlier



held by Holy Roman Emperors, Kaiser Wilhelm II visited in 1899 excavations at the ancient site of Babylon, where German archaeologists worked for twenty years up to the outbreak of World War I, and encouraged the transport of the Gate to Berlin. The Ishtar Gate is over thirty eight feet high and decorated with reliefs, in tiers, of dragons (or griffons, i.e. fantasy-creatures) and bulls, in glazed brick, which Hathaway understands as representations of demons. Hathaway explains the number of the 337 representations as numerologically related to the term *She'ol*, the underworld or 'hell'. In 1913 the first parts of the structure, through which the ancient Jewish exiles entered Babylon, reached Berlin; soon after war broke out in Europe. By 1930, the entire structure had been reconstructed in Berlin. Hathaway asks eerily: 'Was it Bablyon's snake-dragon god, the Devil himself, that spoke through Hitler, announcing the final solution to the Jewish question?' He calls World War II 'truly hell on earth' – i.e. Europe had invited hell into its midst, and the living hell of Nazi power was the result. Hathaway is of course incorrect to state that Hitler proclaimed his holocaust 'final solution' publicly, a point where Hatahway's portrayal of history takes perhaps a form which his

perception of the metaphysical origins of the holocaust makes seem more likely.

The other massive cult-object to reach the Kaiser's Berlin was the Pergamum altar to Zeus, again the principal exhibit of the Pergamum Museum in Berlin following its return from Soviet Russia, where it was taken as booty following World War II. This huge, steeply stepped structure is built on a winged plan of thirty-six metres by thirty four metres. The walls of the altar display a frieze, one hundred and twenty metres in length, depicting scenes from Greek mythology. It was constructed by Eumenes II, ruler of Pergamum, between c. 180 and c. 160 BC. Hathaway points to the role the altar played as a centre of emperor-worship and as a place where many Christians were martyred for their faith for refusing to sacrifice to the emperor. He identifies the Pergamum altar with the 'throne of Satan' referred to in the letter to the Church of Pergamum in Revelation 2:12–13. Since the altar was dedicated to Zeus, and Revelation seems to call this structure the 'seat of Satan', Hathaway identifies Zeus with Satan and his associated beast and dragon imagery in Revelation. Hathaway emphasises that in 1902 Wilhelm II celebrated the erection of the Pergamum altar to Zeus in Berlin 'with an extravagant festival to the

pagan gods' as 'the proudest monument of his reign', for Hathaway an occult celebration inviting Satanic power into the German imperial establishment and bringing catastrophe to Europe. Hathaway points out Nazi fascination with the Pergamum altar and emphasises its use by Hitler's supreme architect Albert Speer as the model for the super-scaled grandstand at the Nazi parade ground in Nuremberg. From this reproduction of Satan's throne, Hathaway claims that Hitler proclaimed his 'final solution', evidence of the dreadful metaphysical evil that drove German policy. The last part in Hathaway's synthesis perhaps suggests a similar dread and revulsion of a semitic people, and certainly provides the most provocative, if not inflammatory, aspect of his edifice, for he finds Islam, the principal Arab religion, to be the final vehicle of Satanic evil in the 'last days'.

- 6) *Islam, the last manifestation of the Satanic evil of moon worship previously expressed in the Canaanite Baal cult, in the cults of Mesopotamian deities, and in the Zeus and Jupiter cults, is presently seducing Europe/Europa through the attractive power of near-eastern oil wealth, and will ultimately seize power, raping Europe in the final apocalyptic struggle. Hathaway's final move is to bring*

together in perception all near-eastern supreme deities apart from the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition as manifestations of Satan. Such in his view was the Greek father of the gods Zeus and the Roman supreme deity Jupiter, in whose names Christians were persecuted in the early church. Hathaway links the use of ancient bull-symbolism for pagan deities to the symbol of the crescent moon, and by this means he even includes Allah within his compressing equation. His synthetic apocalyptic vision, which he claims shows the present fulfilment of biblical prophecy, gives a wide-ranging interpretation of European relations with the Near East and spectacularly labels Islam as the source of metaphysical evil presently lunging at Europe, with the collusion of Babylon, the European Union. The following excerpt from his commentary illustrates the tone of his demonisation of Islam and his conviction that through Islam, Satan is about to rape Europe, as Zeus raped Europa in the Greek myth:

*“In mythology, the woman Europa clung to the father of the gods, who had disguised himself as a bull with crescent-shaped horns. The symbol for the father of the Middle East pagan gods Baal, as we know him from archaeology and the Bible, Zeus or Jupiter as*

*we know him from Greek or Roman culture, was a bull with great crescent-shaped horns and the ruling god of ancient Babylon and the Middle East was the moon-god, again depicted as a bull with crescent horns, or simply as a crescent moon. We have every reason to believe that Allah is the same moon-god that Muhammad chose to worship, and who is worshipped by many people today. The crescent moon is the universal symbol of Islam on its mosques and flags everywhere today.*

*“So what connection has Europe to Islam? Looking at history, Islam from the beginning has struggled with Europe. First the incursions of Islam into Europe through Turkey, the Balkans, Spain and France to overwhelm Europe by war. Then the European crusader invasions into the bible land of Israel to wrest control of it back from Islam. Then one hundred years ago oil was found in the Middle East, making the Islamic nations politically and economically the most powerful and desirable on earth. A violent union between Europe and Islam began. In World War I the European armies fought each other in the Middle East. In 1917 when the French and the British were driving the occupying Turks out of Israel and Jerusalem and the surrounding lands the British government cut deals with both*

*Jew and Arab to gain maximum support, laying the foundation of today's conflicts. Britain promised first to the Jews through Lord Balfour to view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and second, to the Arabs, through the British Commissioner in Egypt to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs from the Turks.*

*“This violent union of Europe and the lands of Islam begun in World War I took another twist in World War II. On 30<sup>th</sup> November the Muslim Grand Mufti of Jerusalem met with Hitler to make a covenant. The Muslim Arabs would give their support to Hitler's war on condition that after eradicating the Jews of Europe, Hitler would then eradicate the Jewish national homeland in Palestine. Arafat, with whom Europe deals today, is the grand-nephew of that Grand Mufti who made this covenant with Hitler.*

*“Since World War II the union between Islam and Europe has continued. A peaceful invasion of Europe has taken place. Migrant workers and refugees have been welcomed in. Germany has 3,000,000 muslim Turks. France has 5,000,000 North African Muslims and Britain has 2,000,000 muslims from her former colonies and elsewhere. Islam is the second largest and fastest growing*

*religion in Britain today. Europe has been penetrated extensively, Islam welcomed liberally, land donated freely for her mosques and schools. And whilst European culture is suppressed in Islamic countries and the practice of the Christian faith forbidden by law, in our European countries we are afraid to offend Islam. Our European Christian leaders make loving interfaith overtures towards the Babylonian moon-god Allah to recognise him as another revelation of the God of the Bible.*

*“This is the place we are in today spiritually. This is part of the great battle we are in in the last days. Saudi Arabia has been building mosques worldwide, even where there are few Muslims. Yet in Saudi Arabia you can be jailed for having a Bible and no churches can be built there. The West may practise interfaith and invite leading Imams into Christian cathedrals and churches, but the Islamic cities of Mecca and Medina and now even the Temple Mount in Jerusalem are forbidden to anyone who does not practise Islam.*

*“Allah is not our God at all. Look at their symbols: the crescent moon on the mosques and on the flags of the Muslims is in the shape of the horns of a bull. It appears they are worshipping Baal, a bull, who is the Devil himself.*

*“Is Europe, the woman, about to be raped by the bull, Islam, she is riding?”*

It is noteworthy that Hathaway makes oil the source of the desirability of the bull/Near Eastern nations and says that ‘Europe has been penetrated extensively’, his choice of words alluding to the ‘rape of Europa’ myth. His allegorical interpretation of this myth is in fact the source of his alarmism regarding Islam and Europe, rather than the Biblical passages he claims to interpret. Yet while the myth has no authority for Christians, the Bible does; Hathaway distorts the Bible by reading it via the myth of Zeus’s rape of Europa. There is much to reject in Hathaway’s concluding synthetic commentary. Most surprising of its many shocking connections is the weight given to the use of the symbol of the crescent moon in Islam as proving a link to the moon-god, to Zeus who manifested in the Europa myth as a crescent-horned bull and who is also the Beast of Revelation 17, and the consequent collective identification of all, Allah included, with Satan.

*Analysis*



The following will seek to assess the six components of Hathaway's complex thesis.

- 1) The view that the prophecies of Daniel refer to the Roman empire and ultimately to Europe today depends on drastic impositions on the text and unsustainable suggestions of linkage in European history common among 'Biblical prophecy' interpreters. The golden head of the idol of Daniel 2:31–45 is referred within the text to Nebuchadnezzar (v. 38) and thus to the neo-Babylonian Empire. The historical sequence of succeeding empires is known and their encoding in the vision clear. The Neo-Babylonian empire was succeeded by the Medes; the conquest of Darius the Mede being referred to within the book of Daniel itself (chapter 5; cf. Herodotus, *Medikos logos* I:96–122). The Medes are represented by the idol's chest of silver. Median dominance gave way to Persian rule when Cyrus the Persian defeated Astyages, as recounted by Herodotus, *Medikos logos* I:123–130. The Persian empire is represented by the idol's midriff and thighs of bronze. The Persian empire fell to the Macedonian Alexander the Great and his united army of Macedonians and Greeks, represented by the idol's legs of iron. As is well known,

rule in Alexander's empire after his death was distributed between various of his generals, from whom soon independent and mutually quarrelsome empires and dynasties arose. By 275 BC a situation of relative but uneasy stability had emerged with three kingdoms related to Alexander's generals, the Antigonid kingdom of Macedonia, the Seleucid kingdom of Syria, and the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt. In addition to these, at the expense of Seleucid domains a fourth dynasty had emerged, unrelated to Alexander, the Attalid kingdom of Pergamum in Asia. The derivation of these kingdoms from Alexander's conquests and empire, their mutual warring and increasing weakness is well represented in by the idol's feet of iron and clay. A comparable sequence (Assyrians, Medes, Persians and Syrians) appears in the Jewish *Testament of Naphthali* (5:8).

There is neither justification nor need to extend the interpretation of Daniel to include the Romans, who did invade Palestine until 63 BC. Moreover, the weakness of the kingdoms of the Diadochi in the second century BC, due to Roman and Parthian pressure at their borders, caused the power vacuum which allowed the progressive casting off of foreign domination by the Jews of Judaea from the Maccabean revolt (167–164 BC) to c. 128 BC, after which Jewish

independence was established for about ninety years. The crushing rock which symbolises the coming of the Kingdom of God in Daniel refers to the success of the Maccabees in successfully overturning the Syrian Antiochus Epiphanes IV's attempt to proscribe the Jewish faith. The sequence of empires and events after the fall of the neo-Babylonian empire are also clearly encoded in the vision of Daniel 8. Antiochus Epiphanes IV, the opponent of the Maccabees in the Jewish revolt, is very clearly referred to as the 'little horn' (verse 9), and the events surrounding the Maccabean revolt are well encoded in Daniel 11.

The 'Biblical Prophecy' school of interpretation on which Hathaway depends only achieves its extraordinary 'stretching' of the dream-visions of Daniel to the present by a confused interpretation that collapses together different historical periods and misses out others. The Median and Persian periods are combined as the idol's silver chest; the assertion that the midriff and thighs of bronze could together represent both the empire of Alexander and the period of the Diadochi misses the appropriateness of the symbolism of the feet of iron and clay to the latter period. The line followed by Hathaway omits the period of Jewish independence completely in its

interpretation of the idol of Daniel 2, though the legs of iron certainly represent the utter and extraordinary power of Alexander's military machine. The four-metal myth, employed by Daniel, had ancient origins in Asia, and had already been employed in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (106–121), with the iron, concluding period appropriately referring to Hesiod's own day, the era of corrupt, iron men. The scheme reached Hesiod in the same Iranian form which was later taken up and modified in a different way by the author of Daniel.<sup>ix</sup> For Hesiod, iron weapons characterise the inferiority of the men of his day to the grander preceding warriors of Bronze, the heroes of Homer's Bronze Age. Similarly, iron and clay represent the corrupt yet weak, dominating powers of the author of Daniel's own era, the early second century BC. The origins of the 'stretched' interpretation of Daniel lie with pre-critical Christian interest in extending the reference of the dream-visions to include the era in which Jesus preached the Kingdom of God, the Roman period, but this is an indefensible extension of the reference of this Jewish book. It is interesting to note that in the best-selling study Bible in the United States, the notes on Daniel also support the 'stretched' Christian interpretation of Daniel.<sup>x</sup>

Hathaway's extension of the reference of Daniel to later European history down to the present day is yet more implausible. This involves the claim that the institutions of Rome actually continued long after the demise of Rome in the Roman Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire. The German Kaiser, who held the title of King of Jerusalem that had previously belonged to the Habsburg emperors, somehow also continued Roman power. Other flimsy grounds offered are that 'Kaiser' was a title used by the Austrian emperors from 1806 to 1918 and by the emperors of newly created Germany from 1871 to 1918. The project of a united Europe supposedly continues Roman/German imperial intentions. This is clutching at straws, and reveals more about Hathaway himself than the text he claims to interpret; he unjustifiably assumes, with much pre-critical interpretation, that Old Testament prophecies refer forward over millenia to the present day. This is a product of compulsive belief in 'Holy Text' and the search of a religious community for its identity within it. Hathaway's view of Scripture allows him to find in the text implausibly extended reference, investing Scripture with, in effect, magical significance. Yet he actually abuses the Scripture by using it to legitimate views that can neither be derived from it nor based upon

it. Belief in ‘Holy Text’ should rather lead interpreters, Hathaway included, to treat the revered text with greater caution, respect, and self-criticism. Daniel describes, albeit in the obscure apocalyptic form of supposed visions, history down to the successful Maccabean revolt of 164–167 B.C. – the historically informed Scripture interpreter should not look for more history than that. Jewish apocalyptic was a vehicle for the criticism of rapacious agrarian empires, which became land-devouring beasts as the economic surplus accumulated by the elite through severe taxation was used to create armies from the surplus rural population, also created by rapacious taxation, enabling the conquest of ever more territory and agricultural resource. Jewish and Christian apocalyptic always paint a panorama not of future but of past history, and only offer, as it were in a last chapter, a projection of the yet to come.

- 2) Hathaway’s disapproval of the European Union’s choice of symbolism can be met with more sympathy. The choice of the symbol of Brueghel’s ‘Tower of Babel’ for the European Parliament building in Strasbourg was, to say the least, rather unreflected. The architects and planners had in mind to symbolise the union of many peoples of

different languages in a single political institution, and at a surface level defensibly employed the picture of Babel, a story about the origin of languages. Yet the insensitivity of the choice of image is remarkable, for, as Hathaway emphasises, Babel/Babylon is a universally negative symbol in the Biblical narrative, and, we would add, in Christian tradition too. In Genesis 11 it is the symbol of hubris and rebellion against God. At the time of the Jewish exile it was also the source of displacement and the place of captivity and sad yearning for the tribal homeland. We might ask if its employment in Strasbourg might be thought anti-Semitic. In the New Testament Babylon represents Rome's wanton excess, abuse of power and violence in the persecution and killing of Christians;<sup>xi</sup> use of the symbol of Babel might be construed as anti-Christian too.

Perhaps it may be countered on behalf of the Strasbourg Parliament's architects and planners that symbols may change or reduce their reference as they are transmitted from one cultural context to another, and that there was no intention to go beyond the references to union and languages in the employment of the symbol of Babel. If this is a fair defence, it is also testimony to how far European culture has become detached from the symbolic worlds of

the Bible, Judaism and Christianity. Yet this is barely an adequate defence, for standards of political correctness are usually strict in European parliamentary discourse, and in this case offence has been caused which could have been avoided.

For Hathaway, of course, the employment of the Tower of Babel symbol betokens the incursion of incipient, metaphysical evil into European political and cultural life through the European Union project. It is neither possible to verify nor falsify this claim; tests for incursions of metaphysical evil are not easily defined. At least from the point of view of the practice of the Anglican Church, where each diocese appoints an ordained priest as exorcist, and exorcists are employed to expel evil from places, metaphysical, demonic evil may be said to exist and to become associated with places or objects. Some viewers of the parliamentary building in Strasbourg may legitimately find it shocking and disturbing on the grounds of their perception of its symbol-language through the lens of the Bible, while others may wonder what all the fuss is about. It would appear, however, that Hathaway really appeals in his presentations to anti-European Union sentiment in Britain and elsewhere which arises on other grounds. Many who take his arguments seriously will have objections to the



European Union on the grounds of perceived political over-centralisation, about which they are hesitant because of the British memory that continental Europe has been the source of military attempts to limit British power, and to invade these islands. Into this mix may come a belief that small institutions are beautiful and large institutions uncontrollable, perceived excess of bureaucracy and bureaucratic excess, even the factual corruption in the European Union's institutions. When Hathaway emphasises to his British audience that 'their own taxes have contributed to the construction of the Tower of Babel in Strasbourg', he is without doubt offering a religious legitimation of his audience's negative political and economic assessments of the European Union.

3) Since the 'stretching' of the perspective of Daniel to include modern European history is implausible, Hathaway's employment in the present day of the imagery of the idol of Daniel 2 or the beasts of Daniel 7 in a one-to-one correspondence historico-hermeneutical system is illegitimate. Likewise, to assume a direct historical reference of the beasts and dragon of Revelation to modern Europe as a continuation of Roman power must fail.

However, there are other ways to apply the symbolism of Daniel and Revelation in theological reflection on political realities and symbolism. A Christian or Jew may legitimately object to the use of the symbolism of the Tower of Babel on the grounds that it approves hubris or rebellion against God, stances rejected in both religious belief systems. Similarly, we may focus on the moral position taken by Daniel and Revelation, their implicit statements about values and human behaviour, rather than seeking direct, one-to-one historical correspondences. Both Daniel and Revelation abhor the violence done to communities of faithful by worldly empires for the sake of greater power and wealth. Revelation despises the luxurious excess, sexual indulgence, and idolatry of the city of Rome, for these failures dubbed 'harlot'. Hathaway mingles with his historical-eschatological interpretation statements concerning the values expressed, for example, in the imperialism of the German Kaiser and the murderous lust for power of Nazism. Here his vision gains persuasive force with his audience on the grounds of the verbal and emotional vocabulary his and their moral universes share, especially the deep-seated loathing of the Nazi period in the European psyche. Yet the images of Daniel or Revelation can be legitimately applied to criticise violence

and tyranny without seeking a one-to-one correspondence in Hathaway's type of historical-eschatological interpretation. On these grounds support may even be found for Hathaway's speculative theory of a special incursion of metaphysical evil into European history; for if metaphysical evil exists, Nazi tyranny was surely one of its effects, as Hathaway would argue.

By proposing a link between the myth of Europa and the image of the woman astride the beast of Revelation 17, Hathaway poses a useful challenge to Biblical scholars, who often read the New Testament through a narrow corridor of Biblical and Jewish sources and miss allusions to relevant formulae, concepts or imagery from the Greco-Roman world or other relevant backgrounds. Scholars find references to the geography of Rome, of course (the beast's seven heads are the seven hills on which Rome sits), and interpret the significance of Babylon through Jewish sources (and 1 Peter), but no writer has, to my knowledge, sought a match for the image of the woman astride the beast in Greco-Roman mythology. The Greco-Roman mythology offers only two possibilities. Images of women riding satyrs are known, but if the beast of Revelation 17 were a biped, part-human, part-animal, one would expect a reference to this

in the text. In view of the absence of such reference, we must assume that the beast is a quadruped, as are the various beasts of Daniel or 1 Enoch's *Animal Apocalypse*. Daniel 7 works with a contrast between quadruped beasts that symbolise rapacious empires (with the base body-forms of lion, bear and leopard, 7:4–6) and the biped human form of one like a son of man (v. 13) symbolising Israel. The body-form of the fourth beast is not indicated, but it is described as a 'beast' (i.e. an animal) like the first three and it seems also to be a quadruped. So it is unlikely that the woman of Revelation 17 is riding a biped satyr. The other possibility is a reference to the popular myth of the rape of Europa, which, as Hathaway correctly surmises, would probably have been known to the author of Revelation.

Revelation is certainly written by an oriental, perhaps writing as tradition has it on the isle of Patmos off the coast of Asia, perplexed by the persecution and debauched excess of the European power which has emerged from across the sea – Rome. So it is to take seriously the possibility of reference to the Europa myth, rather than simply to the fourth beast of Daniel 7. However, the beast of Revelation 17, on which the scarlet woman sits, bears only the similarity to the incarnation of Zeus as a bull in the Europa myth that

both are horned animals, and there are striking differences. First, Zeus incarnated himself as a dazzling white bull, whose fairness seduced the playful Europa. The beast of Revelation 17 is scarlet (v. 3), matching the purple and scarlet garb of the woman; the colours do not match. White bulls figure prominently in myths associated with Crete, including the myth of the minotaur, involving Minos, a son of Zeus by Europa, and the seventh labour of Hercules.<sup>xii</sup> Crete was famed for its massive *aurochs* bulls (*bos primogenius*), six feet at the shoulder, once known from France to Siberia but extinct since 1627. The wild white cattle of ancient ancestry of Chillingham, Northumberland, England are similar to the aurochs in the way in which the horns protrude from the skull to form a crescent shape

Second, while the bull was a common symbol of strength, and great strength is a characteristic of the fourth beast of Daniel 7, the beast is not actually called a bull. This contrasts with the three earlier beasts in the dream-vision, the animal bases of which are all explained (lion/eagle, bear, leopard with four bird's wings). The beast of Revelation 17 is not defined more closely, but at 12:3 the same seven-headed, ten-horned creature appears and is called 'a great red dragon.' The dragon's seven heads identify it as the old seven-

headed serpent and chaos monster of near eastern mythology, Leviathan or Lotan. So there is no species parallel between the fourth beast of Daniel 7, the beast of Revelation 17 (and 12), and the incarnation of Zeus as a bull in the Europa myth.

Third, while the fourth beast of Daniel 7 is said to have ten horns, Zeus' manifestation as a bull in the Europa myth was a perfect and beautiful specimen, white with a finely-shaped pair of horns which formed a gorgeous crescent. The beast of Revelation 17 likewise has by contrast *ten* horns. The Biblical beast is a monster, a perversion, unlike the perfect white bull of the Europa myth. Hathaway's claimed association fails both because the number of horns does not correspond, and because it fails to acknowledge a contrast between perfection and monstrosity.

Fourth, the beast of Revelation 17, clearly based on the fourth beast of Daniel 7, as its ten horns show, has grown extra heads, like the four-headed leopard of Daniel 7:6 (which represent the four kings of Persia, cf. 11:2). Leviathan's seven heads now correspond to the seven hills on which Rome sits, a marvellous convenience for the apocalypticist (cf. Revelation 17:9) and also to seven kings (i.e. emperors) of Rome (17:10), though interpreters vary in the precise

identification of these. The monstrous symbolic multiplication of heads (a feature of Jewish apocalyptic) contrasts with the single head of the manifestation of Zeus as a perfect bull. The source of the beast of Revelation is Jewish apocalyptic, not Greek mythology.

So the beast of Revelation, of the wrong colour, with too many heads and horns, a monster rather than a perfect and beautiful creature, not a bull but a dragon without seductive beauty, cannot be identified with Zeus's manifestation as a bull in the Europa myth. Hathaway's claimed correspondence fails on too many points to allow a connection. The only certain parallel is that a woman rides on an animal. The woman too offers no further parallel between the two images. The character of Europa, a virgin princess daughter of the king of Phoenicia, and a victim of seduction and rape, contrasts with the wanton prostitute of Revelation 17. Even if we allow that in the Hellenistic versions of the myth Europa is sometimes portrayed as enjoying her seduction, there is little correspondence to the wantonness of the harlot of Revelation. To kidnap a king's daughter by riding off across the sea with her without her father's permission is a poorly-mannered invasion that damages her reputation less than it is affront to her father, whether she comes to enjoy the ride or not. A

kidnapped princess seduced by divine power is still not a wanton harlot united in will with her Satanic steed.

Hathaway's attempt to tie the image of the woman astride the beast in Revelation 17 via the myth of Europa to modern Europe and to the European Union also fails because of its unmerited stretching of the perspective of Daniel and Revelation, as already discussed. Hathaway's conviction that modern Europe must somehow figure in Revelation arises from an *a priori* conviction that modern history must be discoverable within the contents of Scripture, rather than any features of the text and imagery of Revelation itself. Moreover, one suspects that Hathaway's reading of Revelation is conditioned by his own prior caution about and rejection of the project of the European Community, a 'Little England' perspective he shares with many in his audiences, who thus receive readily his anti-European Union preaching, writing and video-tapes. It is not only Hathaway, but also many in his audience, who are looking for religious legitimation of their rejection of the politics of union in Europe.

This being said, on Hathaway's behalf one may ask again if the European Union is being adequately thoughtful in its employment of imagery. Is it suitable to have the prelude to a rape displayed before



the European Parliament building? Many Christians, Jews, Muslims and members of other present-day faith communities or none might find this morally objectionable, or might prefer on religious grounds not to have the image of the father of the Greek gods as a bull figure so prominently in European Union iconography. Defenders of Europe's iconographers might argue that, as noted above, there are implications in the later presentations of the ancient myth that Europa enjoyed her seduction by Zeus, and that as symbols are transferred from one cultural context to another, their value may change and their associations reduce. That may be some justification of the European Union's architects and visual designers. Yet it remains to ask if the employment of this symbolism is insensitive. In recent conversation a Christian believer from Freiburg im Breisgau in southern Germany, from a conservative pietist background, objected to me that her new German identity card displayed the European Union image of a bull, knowing that the reference was to the pagan deity Zeus. Perhaps many ordinary Europeans are not so detached from the religious import of such symbols as are their governments.

4) Hathaway's suggestion of an explanation of the evils of the two world wars and of the Holocaust in terms of the incursion into European history of occult, metaphysical evil through the transport to Berlin of the cult-objects of the Ishtar Gate and the Pergamum altar holds considerable fascination for his audience, both because of its apparent scholarly basis and its correspondence with the widespread belief in Christian circles that evil may attach to objects related to pagan devotion. The disposal of cult-objects by converts to Christianity has long been an aspect of the renunciation of occultism required by many Christian missionaries. It has also long figured prominently in the counselling offered to Christians disturbed by involvement in the occult, or who feel that they sense evil presences in certain locations. While the disposal (usually by destruction) of objects with pagan religious associations may be narrowly viewed as an aspect of the focusing of the individual's faith and commitment on God alone, it is more typically done with the understanding that such objects may house and transfer to their owners actual metaphysical evil in the form of demons. This understanding is frequent amongst Christians and transcends all denominational boundaries, though it is perhaps in Britain most prominent in evangelical, Pentecostal and 'charismatic'

circles. It is often held that such objects may exert malicious forces in the life of the individual believer that are barely perceived, but become noticeable by their absence after objects have been disposed of.<sup>xiii</sup> Hathaway's realist perspective regarding the possibility of demonic, metaphysical evil is thus readily accepted in many Christian circles, and offers a ready point of contact for his theories regarding the intrusion of evil into Europe through the transport of the Ishtar Gate and Pergamum altar to Berlin. While their present location in Berlin points to the prominence of German classical science and archaeology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for Hathaway, of course, it reveals much more about Germany.

Many Christians may find Hathaway's claim of a special incursion of metaphysical evil in European history around the beginning of the twentieth century self-evidently true on the grounds of the extraordinary suffering that afflicted Europe between 1914 and 1945. Hathaway's claim is not easily rebuffed, for, as noted above, tests to verify or falsify claims concerning the presence or effects of metaphysical evil are not easily proposed. Perhaps the best would be to propose that extraordinary violence and moral decadence may follow the incursion of metaphysical evil, and by that test, Hathaway

would be proven right, at least in the case of the Nazi period. If false prophets are inspired to extraordinary wickedness and lead their peoples into calamity, Hitler certainly qualified.

Hathaway could also justify his case by pointing to the uncertainty of all historical explanation. We may claim that the causes of the first world war lie in Bismarck's creation of a united Germany, or Kaiser Wilhelm II's failure to renew Bismarck's

*Rückversicherungsverträge* with France and Russia, in German

militarism and autocratic government, in European imperial

competition, in mutual fear and the inevitability of war once

mobilisation had begun, or in the late industrialisation of Germany.

Or perhaps the world wars were caused by the accident of geography

that there is no mountain range to the east of German territory; or

even by the psychological inadequacy of the Kaiser on account of his

short arm. Whatever proposed causes we consider, we can simply

never be certain that we have an accurate or full explanation of the

course of history. Even analysis of the most intimate possible

contemporary account of the speech and motivations of the European

leaders could not give us certainty. All the factors historical study can

propose may be contingent but not necessary causes, and any or all

may have played no real role at all. Hathaway's explanation of the first world war as due to the incursion of occult metaphysical evil in Berlin is, for those who believe in the possible existence of metaphysical evil forces, a plausible and interesting idea, as capable of being the necessary cause of the war as any other proffered explanation. The involvement of metaphysical evil in Hitler's extraordinary hold over the German people and will to conquer at all human cost may seem very likely for those whose world-view allows the existence of metaphysical, demonic evil, for whom it is quite as plausible and legitimate as, for example, any economic or psychological account of the second world war as a consequence of the first. No known law proves the necessity that a people humiliated in defeat and impoverished by hyper-inflation must turn to conquest to heal their damaged economy and wounded pride; no certain principle of causality demands that a nation so many of whose children lost fathers in the first world war would blindly follow a dictatorial father-figure into the second. All such factors may only furnish the doors in the human psyche through which temptation, or metaphysical, demonic evil may seek to enter.

A further argument from the point of view of Christian theology and the Holocaust may be raised in Hathaway's favour concerning a special incursion of metaphysical evil into European history in the twentieth century. Apart from those whose doctrine of the incarnation is purely symbolic, orthodox Christian faith naturally finds for the people of Israel and the Jewish people a special place in world history. This is because theology must offer an explanation for why the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity occurred amongst the Jewish people. Unless the Jewish people are allowed a special place in the divine history of the world, there is no explanation for the appearance of the Son of God as a part of this ethnic group rather than another. The particularity of Christology confirms God's particular choice of Israel. This being so, only those who believe the Church has 'replaced' Israel and that the Jewish people therefore have no special role in the economy of God can view the Holocaust as a moral catastrophe with little further theological significance. For those Christians who allow that God retains a special plan for the Jewish people, as many do, the Holocaust provokes a need for theological explanation. Hathaway's thesis attaches to the commonly felt Christian need for an explanation for the Holocaust, and he offers his

own answer: the Holocaust is not secular history, but reveals the incursion into European history of an intense manifestation of Satanic evil, so intense that the arch-opponent of God sought to circumvent God's care of His chosen people and thwart God's blessing of the world through them (cf. Romans 11:15) by mass extermination. Hathaway's attempt to explain the Holocaust in this way is, in the arena of the popular reception of his views a powerful aspect of his proposal of a special incursion of Satanic, metaphysical evil into European history.

- 5) Hathaway's interpretation of the Pergamum altar as the 'seat of Satan' of Revelation 2:12–13 has merit. It is found in scholarly literature alongside other proposed referents, which include a) the Temple of Augustus and Roma, also known as the 'Sebastion', probably built at the foot of the acropolis by permission of Augustus in 29 BC. b) The judge's bench (*bema*) where the procursul sat. c) The Temple of Asklepios. Asklepios, the healing god, was also associated with the serpent, which Christians associated with Satan. d) The shape of the hill on which the city of Pergamum was built. When approached from the south, this might be thought to represent a chair or throne. e)

Others refer to the city of Pergamum generally as a prominent centre of the imperial cult.<sup>xiv</sup> Of the various proposals, Hathaway seems correct in following the explanation that Revelation refers to the great altar to Zeus Soter, the Pergamum altar now located in Berlin, as the seat or throne of Satan. The designation of the ‘altar’ of a god as his ‘throne’ is very ancient, and is well attested in classical and Hellenistic antiquity. Moreover, the Pergamum acropolis where the altar was located<sup>xv</sup> was the most elevated part of the city and could be seen from a great distance;<sup>xvi</sup> the extreme prominence of the unusually massive altar-structure would make it the most natural referent if massive evil was thought to have its seat or throne in the city.

Some scholars have felt that the very steep steps which form the only means of access to the altar make it unlikely that it was intended for animal sacrifice, for animal victims could only be led upwards with great difficulty. It is certainly unlikely that such a massive structure was conceived only for libations. Thus it has been proposed that the altar was conceived for human sacrifice, most likely of prisoners of war. Male prisoners of war were frequently slain in antiquity and their killing could be incorporated into cultic acts. The use of the Pergamum altar for ritual slaying would go a long way to



explain the terror it held for the author of Revelation and its horrifying designation as the 'throne' or 'seat' of Satan. Revelation goes on to refer to the death of the Christian martyr Antipas 'among you, where Satan dwells' (2:13). This is the only actual reference to martyrdom in the letters to the seven churches that open the book of Revelation, and seems to confirm that the altar to Zeus Soter was used for ritual killing of humans. Many scholars assume that later other Christians were slain as victims in the Zeus cult in Pergamum. If it is correct to identify the Pergamum altar with the 'seat of Satan' of Revelation 2:12–13, Hathaway has a basis in the New Testament for claiming that Zeus may be identified with Satan. His view that the Pergamum altar brought an extraordinary incursion of occult, metaphysical evil to Berlin and to European history depends on the view we take of the possibility of the existence of metaphysical, demonic evil and its attachment to locations or physical objects, which as we have noted are possibilities which are difficult to verify or falsify.

The Pergamum altar figured prominently in Nazi imagination and action. This, of course, is all grist to Hathaway's mill. The Nazi bid for the 1936 olympic games began with a festive meal before the

Pergamum altar in Berlin. Hitler commissioned Albert Speer, his chief architect, to produce a super-scaled version of the altar for the Nazi parade ground in Nuremberg. Speer based his design for the *Zeppelintribüne* grandstand before Nuremberg's *Zeppelinfeld* on the Doric architecture and concept of the Pergamum altar, magnified to an enormous scale capable of holding two hundred and forty thousand people. The *Zeppelinfeld* was first used for the 1934 *Parteitag*, before the *Zeppelintribüne* was completed; thereafter the grandstand was used regularly. The Nazi rallies at Nuremberg formed a centrepiece in Leni Riefenstahl's film *Triumph of the Will*, in which Hitler is praised as the 'epitome of altruism' and proclaimed himself before the assembled thousands as undertaking a God-given mission, speaking from the centre-front of the grandstand. On 25<sup>th</sup> April 1945 the conquering Americans famously exploded the all-dominating swastika emblem which topped out the *Zeppelintribüne*.<sup>xvii</sup> Hathaway makes much of the Nazi employment of the Pergamum altar and extensive use of related film records; this aspect of his documentary presents information usually not previously known to his audiences and seems to give particular persuasive force to his thesis in popular reception by affording it an air of scholarly discovery and

extraordinary revelation. He also works deeply on his audience's feelings of revulsion towards Nazism, and offers audiences of a religious bent a seemingly plausible explanation of Nazism which links the greatest horrors of recent European history tangibly to the text of Scripture and the malignant spiritual forces of the Biblical world-view.

Inspection of Hathaway's case regarding the Ishtar Gate reveals, by contrast, significant weaknesses. The appeal to Hebrew numerology to justify the gate's description as the 'gate of *she'ol* /hell' is not sustainable, being both anachronistic and based on an appeal to the wrong language. The gate's foundation inscription is in Akkadian, not Hebrew, and makes no reference to the underworld. Hathaway makes a connection via the city foundation inscription of Nebuchadnezzar's father, found elsewhere on the site of Babylon, which refers to foundation on the 'heart of the underworld', but this is too distant a connection to justify understanding the gate as an entrance to the underworld. Moreover, Ishtar/Innana (if the gate is properly connected to this goddess; there is debate) was the goddess of the storehouse of dates, of sheepfolds, or of the morning and evening star, but not a moon deity. Ishtar's father was the moon god,

her brother the sun god. By compressing associations, Hathaway thus invests the gate with a significance which the evidence does not sustain. Only if Hathaway's audience believe in metaphysical evil powers, and that all pagan deities are demons subordinate to Satan, will they see value in Hathaway's claims on the basis of this *a priori* understanding brought to the evidence, which makes scholarly objections about Hathaway's compression of associations irrelevant.

- 6) Hathaway lays far too much weight on the use of the crescent moon symbol in Islam, though if one searches the internet one finds many claims presently emerging from conservative Christian circles in the United States that the use of the crescent moon shows that Muslims worship the moon. It is true that the crescent moon is a very old symbol in the religion of the Arabian peninsula. In the biblical book of Judges (8:24–26) we find a reference to 'crescents' in connection with reference to Ishmaelites/Midianites and their camels; Midian was a region of north west Arabia. In pre-Islamic southern Arabia there were important cults of the lunar gods Almaqa in Saba, Wadd in Ma'in, 'Amm in Qataban and Sin in Hadramawt.<sup>xviii</sup> A Muslim

response to the claim that Allah was a moon-deity or that Muslims worship the moon might be to cite these two texts from the Quran:

*“Among his signs are the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Prostrate not to the sun and the moon but prostrate to Allah, who created them, if it is him you wish to serve.” (41:37)*

*“No, we hurl the truth against falsehood and it knocks out its brain and behold falsehood perishes. Ah, woe to you for the (false) things you ascribe to us!” (21:18)*

A Muslim might also respond that the moon is none the less important for it is by observation of the crescent moon that the new month and the new year are set, and thus also the time of pilgrimage.

As the Quran says:

*“They ask you about the new moons. Say: they are signs for people to mark fixed periods of time, and for pilgrimage” (2:189)*

The symbols of a religion are not always objects of worship. The cross is not an object of worship in Christianity, and the moon is not an object of worship in Islam. If Hathaway wants to emphasise the early presence of moon-cults in Arabia, a Muslim protagonist could as easily emphasise that the use of Easter eggs by Christians as symbols of new life derives from rituals connected with the anglo-saxon goddess (originally of the dawn), *Eostre*. But what would that prove?

The principal deity of Babylon, forcefully sponsored by Nebuchadnezzar, was Marduk, who was also called Bel-Marduk. Bel, the equivalent of the Hebrew *ba'al*, 'lord', 'owner' or 'husband', progressively became a proper name for Marduk. Marduk was not a lunar deity, as Hathaway claims. In 556 BC Nebuchadnezzar's son was overthrown by Aramean Nabonidas from Harran, who sought to make the moon-god Sin the supreme god of Babylon, alienating the priests of Marduk. In 539 BC Babylon was attacked by Cyrus the Persian, who posed as a legitimate supporter of Marduk, and Babylon went over without resistance. Babylon never gained pre-eminence again in Mesopotamia, and nor did the moon-deity Sin. In Canaanite religion the deity designated Ba'al, son of the high god (El/Il), was not a moon-god. He could be depicted as a human figure with horns,

and commonly stood on a bull or calf, emblematic of his fertility or strength. He may have been a solar deity. Thus Hathaway's claim that the moon-god was the supreme deity of Babylon and Canaan and may be connected with the worship of Allah fails; none of these were lunar deities, and they cannot be equated as easily as Hathaway claims.

Hathaway's synthesis thus collapses, for his cases regarding Daniel's dream-visions, and regarding the identification of Europa/the European Union with the woman of Revelation 17 and of Baal/Allah/Zeus with the Beast on which she rides all fail. Hathaway's claims regarding the Pergamum altar and the Ishtar Gate are harder to dispose of, for their metaphysical aspects are not falsifiable. There is no basis in Scripture for his theory of the eschatological roles of Islam and of the European Union, and a close comparison of Revelation 17 with the myth of Europa reveals no significant similarity. Yet Hathaway might claim in response that identification of the 'seat of Satan' of Revelation 2:12-13 with the Pergamum altar to Zeus proves the equation Zeus/Satan, and could further claim that this confirms his reading of the Beast of Revelation 17 as Zeus of the Europa myth. The multiple-connection, interlocking character of Hathaway's manipulation of symbols, most effective when presented

visually, rapidly and with heavily intonated commentary to audiences unfamiliar with the archaeological and mythological background on which he draws, gives Hathaway's synthesis great persuasive force for Christians who are not personally able to dissemble his complex claims for analysis and subject them to historical-exegetical critique. Rational analysis is difficult for the audience while being rapidly bombarded with a cleverly and densely connected variety of emotionally evocative images and themes. Viewers may afterwards not be intellectually convinced, but retain a sense of unease which effects their future religious and political perception and action. The filmic/television medium, in which visual imagery is accompanied by both text and intonated commentary, appears particularly suitable for conveying an argument about the interpretation of apocalyptic. It combines several channels of perception simultaneously to provoke emotional as well as intellectual reactions; perhaps the emotional response may overwhelm the rational or even moral responses of the audience. That, of course, was the method of Hitler's rhetoric, of the Nuremberg rallies and of Leni Riefenstahl, all of which are connected by Hathaway with the incursion of demonic evil.

The overarching weakness of Hathaway's interpretation is that he regards apocalyptic as a mysterious code, to interpret which one has to



labour hard to find the penetrative and insight-opening key. He claims through his complex of associations to have solved the 'Mystery, Babylon' on the brow of the woman in Revelation 17. But the interpretation of apocalyptic code is not hard at all: it is an open code whose interpretation is intentionally obvious, and contains no deeper meanings than the writer intended the cursory reader to find easily. The Mystery was an open mystery, as all knew: 'Babylon' was 'Rome'; that is all there is to be found, and Rome was long ago.

### *Concluding observations*

- 1) Apocalyptic was a vehicle for the criticism of the violence and exploitation of oppressive agrarian empires and can be encountered on the level of its moral values rather than as a timeline of future history.
  
- 2) It is noteworthy that Hathaway offers no theological argument to justify his view that Allah is not the God of the Bible; though such is easily argued,<sup>xix</sup> he prefers instead a prophetic-eschatological polemic that has no foundation in the Scriptures to which he appeals.

- 3) Hathaway's influence is likely to be greatest amongst the large and growing urban Pentecostal congregations in Britain. Some, through African leadership and immigrant African members have links to African countries where Muslims are numerous, and where there has been experience of Muslim persecution of African Christianity (e.g. Nigeria and Sudan). These are the fastest growing British churches. Hathaway's views may also have significant influence in the newly-forming Pentecostalist churches of eastern Europe, the Ukraine, Russia and Siberia, where he is a well-known figure and where his preaching may contribute to hostility towards Islam. His preaching may also contribute to hostility between Christians and Muslims in the Islamic former soviet republics of central Asia, where Hathaway's television broadcasting is expanding.
- 4) It is not possible objectively to affirm or deny Hathaway's claim that there was a special incursion of metaphysical evil in European history at the beginning or the twentieth century, nor that one is taking place through Islam and the European Union presently. Hathaway and traditional Islam agree on the existence of metaphysical, demonic evil. Should metaphysical, demonic evil exist, it is perhaps proper to

- contemplate the possibility of its presence and action in all religious and secular communities, including Hathaway's own circles.
- 5) The filmic/televsual medium is well suited, perhaps dangerously well-suited, to conveying a polemical argument employing Biblical apocalyptic imagery, working strongly through the use of images, commentary and music on the audience's emotions and deeply ingrained cultural and moral vocabulary.
- 6) It would be interesting to attempt to quantify the effect of the dissemination of the views of contemporary polemicists such as Hathaway via satellite television broadcasting; given the increasing importance of subscriber television as an opinion-former amongst Christians in Europe, views like Hathaway's may be having a private yet substantial effect both on lay members and ministers, cultivating hostility towards Islam, in a Europe in which individuals are increasingly isolated from extensive social contact and discussion, but able to consume a common diet of religious programming via satellite television.

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<sup>i</sup> Robert Fuller, *Naming the Antichrist: The History of An American Obsession* (Oxford: OUP, 1995).

<sup>ii</sup> Among many examples of such preaching and writing are Mike Evans, *Beyond Iraq. The Next Move* (Lakeland, Florida: White Stone Books, 2003), which reached the New York Times best seller list, and Ron Graff's *Is Antichrist About to Be revealed?* and his *Iraq in Prophecy* (CD and booklet sets, available from [www.bible-prophecy.com](http://www.bible-prophecy.com)) subtitled with more reserve than many treatments: 'Prophecies about the destruction of the land of Babylon may be fulfilled in our days because of Saddam Hussein and the War on Terrorism'. Mark Hitchcock's *The Second Coming of Babylon* (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah, 2003) relates the present prominence of Iraq to Biblical prophecies regarding Babylon in Jeremiah and Revelation; his *The Coming Islamic Invasion of Israel* (2002), *Is America In Bible Prophecy* (2002), *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. End Time Answers Series No. 7* (2004) and *The Complete Book of Bible Prophecy* (1999), all also published by Multnomah, give more in the same vein. Charles Dyer's *The Rise of Babylon* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Publishers, updated edition 2003) offers a wide-ranging explanation of the present near-east crisis in terms of 'biblical prophecy', displaying Saddam Hussein prominently on its front cover; advertisements proclaim Dyer's Th. D. from Dallas Theological Seminary.

<sup>iii</sup> Such titles and much more of the same ilk, including diagrams of future history drawn up by prominent evangelicals, figure prominently on the 'prophecywatch' website, [www.prophecywatch.com](http://www.prophecywatch.com). Or one may peruse the Jesus-is-the-way website's discussion 'The Anti-Christ, European Union, and Rome', where the European Union is regarded as

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the Beast of Revelation 17 and the fifth kingdom of the dream-visions of the book of Daniel, and Iraq features prominently in a timeline leading up to Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ, [www.jesus-is-the-way.com](http://www.jesus-is-the-way.com). Similarly, J. Grant Swank proposes, reflecting many interpretative elements typical of those who view contemporary events through the lens of 'biblical prophecy', that the sweeping anti-terrorist measures to be adopted within the European Union pave the way for the strictly anti-democratic type of government to be exploited by the False Prophet of Revelation 13 and Antichrist, who will together rule through the European Union over the area of the revived Roman empire. For J. Grant Swank's articles see [www.michnews.com](http://www.michnews.com). Such views are more common in conservative North American Protestantism than the academic writings of evangelical seminary professors would suggest.

<sup>iv</sup> Cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17. Hagee has published various books linking current events in the near east to 'Biblical Prophecy. Crossroads Television Systems, a Canadian inspirational channel, withdrew the last two of John Hagee's 'Islam in America' series of sermons because of their perceived inflammatory tone, and also part of his 'Iraq' series; cf. the report by Art Moore on [www.worldnetdaily.com](http://www.worldnetdaily.com)

<sup>v</sup> Cf. Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2.

<sup>vi</sup> Sources: Survey from More than Insurance, spokesperson Spokesman Graham Hollebon interviewed, Sky TV News, 8.1.2005 and the *Western Mail* (Wales), Saturday 8.1.2005; Sky TV preliminary results press release, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2005, see [www.sky.com](http://www.sky.com)

<sup>vii</sup> Cf. Robert D. Putnam, "The Strange Disappearance of Civic America," *The American Prospect* 24 (Winter 1996).

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<sup>viii</sup> [www.propheticvision.co.uk](http://www.propheticvision.co.uk)

<sup>ix</sup> Cf. Bodo Gatz, *Weltalter, goldene Zeit und sinnverwandte Vorstellungen* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967).

<sup>x</sup> *New American Standard Version Zondervan Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1999) and *Zondervan New International Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, revised edition, 2002), ad loc.

<sup>xi</sup> Cf. 1 Peter 5:13; Revelation 14:8; 16:9; 17:2, 5, 9; 18:10, 21.

<sup>xii</sup> Minos asks Poseidon to send him for sacrifice in a contest for the kingship a bull from the sea. Poseidon obliges by sending a dazzling snow-white bull, able to walk on the water's surface, but Minos finds the beast so handsome that he sacrifices a lesser beast instead. As a punishment, Poseidon makes Pasiphae fall in love with the beautiful bull. Pasiphae has Daidalos make a wooden mating device in the shape of a cow within which Pasiphae hides; the resultant offspring was the biped Minotaur, a bull from the shoulders up. Heracles' seventh labour is to capture the Cretan white bull; he rides on its back as it swims to Tiryns on the Peloponnesus.

<sup>xiii</sup> A particularly influential text in this regard in evangelical-charismatic circles has been Derek Prince's long-selling *Blessing Or Curse: You can Choose. Freedom from Pressures you thought you had to live with* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Chosen Books/Baker Publishing Group, tenth edition 2000); cf. also his shorter *Blessings and Curses Biblical Truth Simply Explained* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books/Baker Publishing Group, 2003).

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<sup>xiv</sup> Cf. the survey in David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5* (Waco, Texas: Word Biblical Commentary 25a, 1997) pp. .

<sup>xv</sup> Cf. Pausanias 5.13.8.

<sup>xvi</sup> Cf. Aristides *Or.* 23.13.

<sup>xvii</sup> For photographs and full accounts of the use of the Nuremberg grounds see the website maintained by the Nuremberg museums, which includes the Documentation Centre for the Nazi Party Rally Grounds, [www.museen.nuernberg.de](http://www.museen.nuernberg.de)

<sup>xviii</sup> cf. Maxime Rodinson, *Muhammad*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, second edition 1996) p. 23.

<sup>xix</sup> Cf. the theological discussion offered by Hathaway's fellow evangelical David Pawson, *The Challenge of Islam to Christians* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2003)