

Europe needs more power and strength

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Revelation 17 shows that the European beast is to develop into a powerful and united force. Yet, at present, Europe is perceived as economically and politically weak on the international stage. It may be that the Lisbon Treaty will help to reverse this trend.

IN REVELATION 17:3 it is written, "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns". Later, we read, "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (vv. 12-14). These verses indicate a period of time, symbolically spoken of as "one hour", during which individual European states, symbolised by the ten horns, give "their power and strength" to the European beast. This period of time terminates with the beast being overcome by the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Seeking power and influence

However long the "one hour" symbolises, (Brother Thomas suggested thirty years), we can expect to be seeing signs that the European seven-headed beast is developing in a way that matches what we read in these verses, a beast with power and strength. Yet is this how we

would describe Europe at the present time? The *Economist*, in a recent article following the Irish approval of the Lisbon Treaty on 2 October, entitled "Wake up Europe!", stated that "At present Europe is a weak actor on a stage dominated by America and China".¹ The *Economist* sees the Lisbon Treaty, which at the time of writing needs only the Czech president, Vaclav Klaus, to sign up to it, as an opportunity. As it states: "It is time for the world's biggest economy to rise from its slumber and play a global role". In the *Financial Times*, the journalists Jan Cienski and Joshua Chaffin argued that the Lisbon Treaty "is seen as vital to streamlining the EU and allowing it to project greater power on the world stage".² From a prophetic standpoint we expect Europe somehow to progress from a "weak actor" to a "power on the world stage".

It seems that the Lisbon Treaty may be the means by which this can happen.

One way in which it is thought that the Lisbon Treaty will enhance the EU is that, for many policy areas, majority voting rather than the current stifling unanimity will hold sway in the Council of Ministers. Also, under the treaty, the European Parliament will gain a lot more influence, equal in many ways to the Council of Ministers. Another important development will be the formation of two new posts. Firstly, the current system of rotating presidencies will be replaced



Czech President Vaclav Klaus, who finally ratified the Lisbon Treaty on 3 November 2009.

Petr Novák, Wikipedia

1. "Wake Up Europe!" (2009), *Economist*, 10-16 Oct., p. 12.
2. Cienski, J. and Chaffin, J. (2009), "Czechs seek opt-out in Lisbon pact", *Financial Times*, 10 Oct., p. 6.

by a semi-permanent president. Secondly, a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will be created. This post replaces the proposed foreign minister role envisaged in the original European constitution, which was rejected in 2005 by France and Holland. In fact, the Lisbon Treaty, although not including such things as a proposed anthem, still has many of the key aspects of the constitution. The proposed High Representative will be very similar to a foreign minister and will play a key role in projecting the EU on the world stage.

One of the characteristics of the beast at the time of the end is that its leaders have "one mind" (Rev. 17:13). World leaders have recently announced that there will be a new economic forum, the Group of 20, replacing the old Group of 7. This new forum will take account of emerging economic forces such as Brazil, China and India. Within this new group it is feared by some that it will become in reality a G-2, dominated by the United States and China. In commenting on this, the *International Herald Tribune* quoted an economist, C. Fred Bergsten, director of an international economics institute, as saying that, "Ideally, it would be a G-3, but Europe doesn't speak with a single voice and they can't coordinate and function the way the US and China can".³ At present, then, the "one mind" appears to be lacking, at least in terms of speaking with a singular voice on economic issues. Prophetically we look for a single mind expressed by a single voice to develop.

A wake-up call

The article in the *Economist* ends by saying that "It is time for the world's biggest economy to rise from its slumber and play a global role". Hence the title "Wake up Europe!". This language is significant because it echoes the language of Joel 3: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men

of war draw near; let them come up" (v. 9). As Watchman articles have shown over the years, the theme of waking up is a recurrent one in world affairs. It is remarkable how a leading voice in economic journalism is (unwittingly) repeating the command from Joel. It is just one way in which the fulfilment of Joel is being facilitated. That is, European politicians may well be encouraged to pursue the increase of European influence with renewed vigour. The Lisbon Treaty looks set to play a key role in this regard. We can also expect the influence of the Roman Catholic Church to increase, symbolised by the woman sitting on the beast.

The *Economist* article also has an intriguing subheading. Its final section is headed, "Lift up your heads". In this section it advocates continued enlargement and also the need to ensure that "substantial people" are chosen for the two new posts of president and foreign representative. The subheading is intriguing for two reasons. Firstly, as Revelation 17 describes the European beast as having seven heads, the encouragement to Europe to lift up its heads is appropriate. Secondly, these are, of course, the same words as used by the Lord Jesus Christ to instruct us how to behave at the time of the end: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Lk. 21:28). The saints may well have been called to judgement before the "one hour" in Revelation 17 begins. To what extent we will see the beast develop before Christ returns remains to be seen. However, for us the exhortation is clear. As the world urges Europe to wake up and lift up its heads, we should lift up our heads, knowing that our redemption draws nigh.

3. Schwartz, N. D. and Saltmarsh, M. (2009), "Global crisis puts Europe back in the slow lane", *International Herald Tribune*, 10-11 Oct., p. 13.

The last obstacle to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty by all twenty-seven member states was removed when Vaclav Klaus, the President of the Czech Republic, signed up to the treaty on 3 November 2009. The immediate consequence in Britain is that the hope many had for a referendum on the treaty, which was promised and then not held by the Labour party, and promised by the Conservative party when and if they came to power, is dashed. What effect this will have on Britain's position in Europe remains to be seen. It is possible that increasingly intrusive legislation from Europe, and a sense of loss of sovereignty felt by a significant part of the population, will result in Britain leaving the European Union. It will be interesting to see how Europe's bid for power and influence develops and how it relates to Russia. These developments should encourage believers to watch and be ready for the Lord's return.—E.D.M.