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Are These Angela Merkel's Last 13 Days?

It has taken just three months for Germany's new government to reach the brink of collapse.

- Richard Palmer
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German Chancellor Angela Merkel is facing what could be the greatest crisis of her career. Some questioned if she could survive last weekend. She did, and she has put off the day of reckoning—for 13 days.

Once again, the migrant crisis is shaking German politics. In 2015, Ms. Merkel opened the floodgates to migrants. German Interior Minister and chairman of the Bavarian-based Christian Social Union (csu) Horst Seehofer wants to shut them again, no matter what his boss tells him.

The conflict could bring down Germany's government, just three months after it was finally sworn in.

European Union law generally requires that refugees claim asylum in the first EU country they enter. That is almost never Germany. Unless a migrant travels by air, he or she enters Europe through another EU country.

Merkel opened the floodgates by suspending these rules. This allowed a million migrants to enter Germany.

[Seehofer wants to reverse this and impose border checks](#). Any migrant who arrives having first been registered in another EU country will not be allowed to enter Germany.

Last week Seehofer threatened to impose these controls on Monday, without Merkel's permission. If Merkel tolerated this open rebellion against her authority as chancellor, she would lose all credibility. Other ministers would defy her and her government would fall apart. Or she could fire Seehofer for insubordination. But without Seehofer's csu party, Merkel lacks a majority in the Bundestag, and her shaky coalition government would fall apart.

Instead, Seehofer gave her a lifeline—a very short one. EU leaders meet at the end of the month. Merkel convinced Seehofer to give her at least until then to solve this at the European level. The csu has published a statement saying that if "no effective results are achieved at the upcoming EU summit," they will begin defying Merkel and imposing border checks at the start of July.

"Angela Merkel's hope of salvation is in Europe. But it is a Europe that is itself fiercely divided," wrote Deutsche Welle's Katherina Kroll. "It's not a safety net for Merkel; it's more just a thin thread."

"Angela Merkel has already been trying for three years to solve the refugee issue at the EU level," Kroll wrote. "Three years without results." Now she has to get results within two weeks.

"This mission is not likely to succeed," continued Kroll. "But she does not have a choice. For Angela Merkel, everything is at stake: her political convictions, her legacy and her chancellorship. Now, it's not just about Germany anymore. It's about the unity of Europe."

Ms. Merkel is in this situation because her coalition is weak and her power within that coalition is weak. "Thecsu is bullying the chancellor with its ultimatum, openly and in plain sight," wrote Kroll. "It's an outrageous maneuver that shows how weak

the chancellor has become in her own political camp. ... A strong chancellor would not put up with it."

It's a tight spot. But over the last 13 years of her chancellorship, Ms. Merkel has shown she is very good at wiggling out of tight spots.

Which brings me to the main point I want to make. Germany's government has been in place for just three months, and it's already engulfed in a storm. If Ms. Merkel stays afloat, how long until the next one hits? And the next? How long until one finally sinks her?

This flare-up began only last Monday. The political weather in Germany is changing fast.

The crisis exposes how unstable Germany's coalition is.

This is exactly what we said would happen after Germany's election. In our November *Trumpet* issue—which went to press just after the vote—we wrote, "Germany is set for months of coalition negotiations followed by an unstable and uncertain coalition." Germany then had its longest-ever coalition negotiations, and sure enough, the coalition is unstable.

The first coalition attempt between Ms. Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (cdu), the csu, the Free Democrats and the Greens fell apart last November. "Hardly anyone could have imagined that talks to form a new German government would collapse," wrote Deutsche Welle. We weren't surprised. Less than a week after the election, the *Trumpet.com* managing editor [Brad Macdonald wrote that these negotiations](#) are "not going to be easy. Personally, I wouldn't be surprised if it turns out to be impossible."

He was right. But why?

Here at the *Trumpet.com*, the Bible gives us insight into German politics that even Deutsche Welle, the nation's public international broadcaster, can't match.

[The Bible tells us to expect a strong leader in Germany.](#) The *Trumpet* has long watched for a strong German leader. In one of our earliest issues, in 1991, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote, "If a real crisis develops, will the Germans call for a new führer? Your Bible says that is going to happen! That crisis will probably be triggered by an economic collapse in the U.S."

Daniel 11:21 describes *how* this man will come to power. The European people "shall not give" this strong man "the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries." The *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary* says that "the nation shall not, by a public act, confer the kingdom on him, but he shall obtain it by artifice, 'flattering.'" *Barnes' Notes on the Old and New Testaments* states, "[I]n other words, it should not be conferred on him by any law or act of the nation, or in any regular succession or claim."

"This man doesn't come to power the *honorable* way—by being voted into office," Mr. Flurry wrote in [November 2002](#). "He takes it dishonorably! He will work behind the scenes and come to power by *flatteries*—not votes!" In a 2009 *Key of David* program, Mr. Flurry said this leader could "perhaps take advantage of a weak coalition."

With that as our guide, we were quick to grasp the scale of the problem facing Germany. "Too many see the problem before Germany as simply a tricky election result," [I wrote last November](#). "If Ms. Merkel can find exactly the right compromises to create a coalition, then the problem is solved, they believe. It won't be easy, but the solution is some clever negotiator. But this approach fails to ask, *Why?* Why this awkward result?"

Mainstream German political parties are collapsing. This collapse has major ramifications for all levels of German society.

One consequence is unstable coalitions. In the last parliament the cdu, csu and Social Democratic Party (sdp) formed a government together. They controlled 80 percent of seats in the German legislature. This time they control only 56 percent. This fact alone makes this coalition unstable: Just a handful of delegates can threaten to overthrow it. Seehofer's ultimatum would have carried much less force in the last parliament. Ms. Merkel could have fired him, and even if his csu had rebelled, she could have kept ruling without it.

Because each mainstream party had historically bad election results last September, Merkel has only been able to eke out an unstable coalition with a small majority. Each party lost votes to parties that had been on the fringe of German politics. The csu lost votes to the more right-wing Alternative für Deutschland. The sdp lost votes to the Left and Green parties. To win those votes back, they have to refuse to compromise with Merkel. Both have a strong incentive to shift toward the fringes—away from Merkel and the center.

This is a coalition built to lurch from crisis to crisis.

Germany now has the "weak coalition" that Mr. Flurry warned us to watch out for almost 10 years ago.

The stage is set. This government went from calm to storm in just a week. Even if the seas calm again, the next storm is only a matter of time. The strongman the *Trumpet* has been watching for could emerge at any time.

For more information about that man and what the Bible says on German politics, read our free booklet [A Strong German Leader Is Imminent](#). ■

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