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Has Germany's Strongman Finally Arrived?

We have been prophesying of this for 70 years. Crises in Germany and Europe are reaching new heights. Watch what happens next.

- Gerald Flurry
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Germany is facing one of the worst crises in its modern history. Refugees from the Middle East are flooding into Europe by the hundreds of thousands, and more are traveling to Germany than to any other nation—an estimated 1.5 million just this year!

This is an emergency with massive implications for Germany. First is the financial cost of assimilating all those people into German society, including the strain on public services and welfare programs. Many Germans are also troubled by the cultural and religious influence of so many Arabs and Muslims. Then there is the very real danger of violent terrorists entering in among the refugees!

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has been very liberal in opening Germany's borders to this flood of foreigners, and she is quickly losing popular support as a result.

One prominent politician who has strongly criticized Chancellor Merkel for her response to the refugee crisis is Edmund Stoiber. He was once chairman of the Christian Social Union (csu), sister party to Merkel's Christian Democratic Union. "Certainly he would ask the question, how many people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds can our country accommodate?" he said, according to Germany's *Der Bayernkurier*. "There are limits in transportation and hospitals and soccer stadiums. There are also limitations for our country. ... *How much foreignness can a country handle?* What do we really mean with 'integration'? What is the purpose of right to asylum? And how much more immigration is possible?" (September 4, *Trumpet* translation; emphasis mine).

Mr. Stoiber warned that all Europe faces an oncoming "era of immigration." He said, "We have watched for too long seeing our external borders cease to exist in southern Europe." He flatly rejects Merkel's statement that Islam is a part of Germany. "I'm not adopting this proposal," he said.

This crisis could alter Germany's political landscape. It would do so even faster if one of these refugees committed a deadly terrorist attack. Chancellor Merkel already appears vulnerable on this issue and would become far more so.

And this is hardly the only crisis in Germany and Europe! The whole eurozone faces economic and financial collapse. Russia's resurgence under Vladimir Putin is deeply troubling to Eastern Europeans in particular.

Together these crises constitute one of the most significant threats Germany and Europe have experienced since World War II, and easily the most significant since German reunification in 1989.

Europe's greatest need right now is leadership.

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Stoiber's Mentor

Edmund Stoiber's criticisms are of special interest because of this man's fascinating history.

The German-language article that reported on his comments was actually about an event Stoiber spoke at commemorating Franz Josef Strauss. Under the headline "Stoiber: Strauss Is the Father of the People's Party," *Der Bayernkurier* reported, "The csu honorary chairman and long-standing Bavarian Prime Minister Edmund Stoiber describes his personal memories of Franz Josef Strauss, who would have turned 100 years old. Stoiber called Strauss 'the father of the people's party' and 'the greatest political son of Bavaria.'" In the article, Stoiber wrote, "He was a Bavarian in the heart of Germany and European in vision. The modern people's party was embodied in Franz Josef Strauss. ... For me, he remains a teacher and fatherly friend" (ibid).

Mr. Stoiber sees Strauss as a mentor, and seeks to continue his legacy. He was one of the first to support Strauss's campaign for the chancellorship in 1980 and served as a campaign aide. Stoiber followed in Strauss's footsteps as minister-president of Bavaria and csu chairman.

To understand the significance of this association, you must know more about Franz Josef Strauss.

Strauss is a giant in German postwar history. His remarkable political career spanned nearly four decades from the 1950s until his death in 1988. He was literally known in the press as "the strongman of Europe"—not just Germany. They called him "a man for emergencies." He was unafraid to challenge others. When the first post-Nazi chancellor needed someone to build up West Germany's military to help stave off Soviet Russia—even though the German military was at that time synonymous with Nazi evil—this seemingly impossible job went to someone tough enough to handle it: Franz Josef Strauss.

In 1965—just 20 years after World War II, when few would have envisioned Germany as a re-emergent world power—Strauss wrote a book titled *The Grand Design: A European Solution to German Reunification*. It explained how Germany could rise to power again—as part of a federal Europe. The central idea behind Strauss's vision was what he called "a massive drive to achieve, step by step, a European political federation." He spoke out for the reunification of Germany, effectively preparing the nation for its unification in 1989, and was instrumental in developing the European Union as a means of achieving German ambitions.

A great deal of Strauss's vision has since become reality. Beyond that, the strongman persona he embodied is one that could hold the key for Germany's future!

A Prophecy About a Strongman

One man who closely watched Strauss's political career was Herbert W. Armstrong. He was founder and editor in chief of the *Plain Truth* newsmagazine, forerunner of the *Philadelphia Trumpet*. Mr. Armstrong observed world events closely, especially in Europe. He devoted much of his work and his message—which reached millions of people worldwide—to analyzing Germany in particular. Why? Because he studied and proclaimed Bible prophecy, and Bible prophecy forecasted not only that Germany would reunite, but that it would lead Europe once again—exactly what we are seeing today.

Bible prophecy gets specific about Germany's future. Analysts say that Europe's political unification project is about to fall apart without really ever having gotten started. But the Bible reveals that Europe will not only unite, but that it will become a *superpower*! It specifies that it will consist of 10 nations, and that it will be glued together by the Vatican and powered by a *political leader in Germany*. A strongman.

God revealed symbols of future events to the Prophet Daniel. But interestingly, He did not explain to Daniel what those events would be. The prophecy was sealed until the "time of the end" (Daniel 8:17; 12:4, 9). Compare these events to today, however, and it is clear that these prophecies are for now! Daniel 8:23 describes a "king of fierce countenance" who rises to power not democratically, but "by flatteries" (Daniel 11:21). The Bible prophesies that this powerful leader will reign over the

“king of the north” (Daniel 11:40). He will be from a war-making nation descended from ancient Assyria: Germany. Mr. Armstrong prophesied about a fierce king ruling a German-led federal European superpower—beginning in the 1930s! And even when Hitler rose to lead Germany, early on in World War ii, Mr. Armstrong said the fulfillment of this prophecy was yet future. Now we are seeing it happen! The future of Europe is tied to this king of fierce countenance. We are watching for him.

Mr. Armstrong watched Franz Josef Strauss, a powerful man and a favorite of the Vatican, to see if he would fulfill the biblically prophesied role of Europe’s strongman. In a 1983 letter, Mr. Armstrong mentioned two “outstanding political leaders.” The first was Strauss; the second was Otto von Habsburg, who led the 700-year-old house of Habsburg, a dynasty that ruled the Holy Roman Empire for centuries. It is one of the most prestigious royal families in Europe. Habsburg was a leading member of the European Parliament who devoted his life to European unification. Both of these men, Strauss and Habsburg, forged personal friendships with Mr. Armstrong (sidebar, above).

Mr. Armstrong wrote, “The world appears bereft of ‘great men.’ But a world-recognized ‘strong man’ in all probability will now very soon appear. ... There will be 10 [kings], ruling 10 nations or groups of nations in the area of the once-great Holy Roman Empire. But there will be one super-king over the 10” (*Plain Truth*, May 1969).

Concerning that super-king, Mr. Armstrong wrote that Europe was “waiting for the *confidence-inspiring leader*” Mr. Armstrong felt Franz Josef Strauss might be that leader. Yet Strauss died in 1988. Habsburg died in 2011. German strength and the dream of European unification, however, did not die with them. When Strauss first published his ideas, he knew he might not live to see his dreams carried out. “... I am under no illusions about the length of time it will take to set this sequence of events in train,” he wrote. “It might take a generation. ... If the process is to take time, then it must be time put to good use.”

During Strauss’s day, the groundwork was laid for the fulfillment of the prophecies of a Vatican-German alliance and the rise of a German strongman. Still, those prophecies have yet to be fulfilled.

Though conditions weren’t quite ready for such a strongman to emerge then, the stage is set for his appearance today. That man is out there somewhere—ready to take control of Europe and literally shock the world!

Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg

Now, Europe’s refugee crisis is bringing this question to the forefront, a question Herbert W. Armstrong first asked more than 80 years ago: *Who will be the strongman of Europe?* Europe clearly needs a leader with vision, a leader able to confront these epic problems.

Germany is the strongest, healthiest nation in Europe, and the only nation capable of addressing these crises. The German people also have a history of repeatedly turning to a strongman for leadership in an emergency. Recall Otto the Great, Charles v, Otto von Bismarck and Adolf Hitler, to name a few.

One man we have watched for some years is Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, another Bavarian political leader. Guttenberg entered the scene as Stoiber was running for chancellor. (Incidentally, Stoiber nearly became German chancellor in 2002—his party lost by only the tiniest of margins to that of Gerhard Schröder. Then after the Federal elections of 2005, Stoiber turned down a cabinet post in a messy grand coalition that seemed to have been doomed before it started. The very next day, he was in Rome for an audience with then Pope Benedict xvi, who is also a Bavarian. So Stoiber has a close connection with the Vatican.)

Guttenberg is bright, young, aristocratic and popular. He is the protégé of Stoiber, who is the protégé of Strauss. He is also yet another favorite of the Vatican. Interestingly, part of his family line traces back to the House of Habsburg. Politically, he is descended from the lines of Strauss *and* of Habsburg.

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In an August 17 article headlined, “Guttenberg, the Savior in Demand,” Germany’s *Wirtschafts Woche* wrote, “Germans are

constantly fascinated by every new action of the former defense minister, even after he escaped to a luxury property in New York following his downfall for plagiarism in 2011. This unwavering fascination also explains why yet another traditional German organization is vigorously courting Guttenberg as their savior, the csu—the party of Strauss and Stoiber.

When he became defense minister in 2009, Guttenberg was reportedly welcomed by the military as “one of their own,” largely thanks to his centuries-long aristocratic background. The influence of the aristocratic class in the military and elsewhere in German culture has remained strong.

If we understand Germany’s recent military history, that could be a vital piece of information! For example, that nation started World Wars i and ii. (Request [The Holy Roman Empire in Prophecy](#) for more information.)

Note the full name of the aristocratic Karl-Theodor Maria Nikolaus Johann Jacob Philipp Franz Joseph Sylvester Freiherr von und zu Guttenberg. *Freiherr* is a title of nobility (also known as *reichsfreiherr*) denoting a *baron of the Holy Roman Empire*. Do you think the man who bears that name and those centuries of heritage shares the same deep desire of Strauss, Habsburg and Stoiber? Does he want to unify Europe under the Vatican?

In 2008, Bild.de wrote, “When asked if he felt like a political grandson of Franz Josef Strauss, Guttenberg clearly avows the csu patriarch, even though he was just 16 years old as he died: ‘Strauss has influenced even me. Therefore I feel neither shame nor fear to repeatedly appeal specifically to the impressive legacy of Franz Josef Strauss.’”

Such statements powerfully recall what Mr. Armstrong said about Strauss and the prophesied emergence of a German strongman. We continue to watch Europe the same way Mr. Armstrong did and are seeing prophecies snap into place faster than ever! It is amazing how much of what we see today traces straight back to the vision and even the persons of Otto von Habsburg and especially of Franz Josef Strauss. Clearly, Strauss’s legacy continues through Edmund Stoiber and Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg.

Given the atmosphere of crisis and the political climate in Germany today, we should watch for this prophecy to be fulfilled at any time!

Spiegel Online published an article about the crisis on August 31. Its title: “Dark Germany, Bright Germany: Which Side Will Prevail Under Strain of Refugees?” Will this nation lose control of its borders and succumb to the flood of immigrants until much of it becomes more foreign than native? That is what we are seeing in Britain and the U.S. Or will Germany find some bright, enlightened course of action to solve this crisis?

Or—will it respond with a *strongman*—and a *dark* Germany?

Biblical prophecy makes the answer clear. A strongman is on the scene, just waiting for the right moment to emerge in order to realize Strauss’s vision for Germany and for Europe! ■