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## The Aftermath of a German Election ‘Earthquake’

What’s behind Germany’s deepening political crisis?

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- [29-09-2017](#)

*The following is from today’s Trumpet Brief. These daily e-mails contain personal messages from theTrumpet staff. [Click here](#) to join the nearly 20,000 members of our mailing list, so you don’t miss another message!*

Germany’s election was not so [boring](#) after all. Germany’s bestselling newspaper, *Bild*, called it a “political earthquake.” Deutsche Welle and Spiegel Online called it “a historic turning point” and “an attack on our liberal democracy.”

What was so earthshaking about Sunday’s German federal election?

- The Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) entered parliament as the third-largest party in government. This is the first time since World War ii that the AfD or any far-right party has entered parliament.
- Angela Merkel’s Christian Democratic Union (cdu) suffered its worst result since 1949.
- The Social Democrats (spd) suffered their worst defeat in postwar history.

What does this mean for Germany and Europe? The effects of this political quake will hit nations around the world. Here’s why.

## The Rise of the AfD

Germany now has a right-wing fringe party in its parliament for the first time since the Nazis were in power under Adolf Hitler during World War ii.

The party is hard to categorize. Some of its leaders are similar to conservative commentators in Britain and America—commentators we quote often at theTrumpet.com because they have a clear view of the dangers of radical Islam and mass migration. But other members of the AfD are [much more extreme](#) and come close to being neo-Nazi.

The AfD won 12.6 percent of the vote, according to the latest projections. In some regions of Germany, it won a much higher percentage: Among men in former East Germany, the AfD was the most popular party.

Winning 88 seats (at last count) in parliament is not only a symbolic victory, but also a very real and practical victory. AfD extremists will now be walking Germany’s greatest halls of power. Men like Andreas Gauland, who believes that Germans should be “proud of the achievements of the German soldiers in two world wars,” will appear much more often on German television screens.

“In a nutshell: Things are about to get a lot nastier,” wrote Deutsche Welle, warning:

What the AfD will have is a soapbox beyond the considerable speaking time the party will enjoy in the next Bundestag. Political talk shows and other institutions of German political culture will now have no choice but to give spokespeople for the far-right party a platform. That will make the tone of German politics far less measured, far more coarse and cutting, than it is now.

It remains to be seen how Merkel, who is known for being absolutely unflappable, will fare in a new daggers-out environment.

Other parties will still shun the AfD, so it will not be able to pass any laws. The party also seems on the brink of a split. AfD chairwoman Frauke Petry just announced that she will not join the AfD's parliamentary group—all but quitting the party. She disagrees with the party's more extreme members.

The AfD's newly elected legislators cannot come close to transforming Germany. But they can claim to speak for millions of Germans, because they do. This is going to bring the sharpest change in tone of German politics perhaps since the end of the war. And it will have a major effect on Germany's biggest political parties, which have just sustained heavy losses.

## Angela Merkel's 'Victory'

German Chancellor Angela Merkel won the election and will enter her fourth four-year term as Germany's federal chancellor. German chancellors are not directly elected by voters; they are appointed by the parties that win the largest number of seats in parliament. According to the latest results, Merkel's center-right Christian Democratic Union won 33 percent of the vote. But this is barely a victory: It marks her party's worst performance since 1949, and a major drop from the 41.5 percent she won in the previous election. "It's the kind of setback that in normal times would be a reason for the chancellor to consider resignation," wrote Deutsche Welle. "But these circumstances are not normal times for Germany."

It seems that the only reason Merkel can remain chancellor after such a poor election performance is that her main opposition, the leftist spd, did even worse. Germans are abandoning mainstream parties for ones both further to the left and to the right.

Angela Merkel's authority is weakened. She has held Germany's highest office since 2005, and the search for her replacement has already begun. But now it takes on new urgency. "Merkel's will be a long *auf wiedersehen* [goodbye], but there's no denying her grip on power began to loosen the moment the first returns rolled in," wrote Politico. "Yes, she won, but support for her party fell by more than 20 percent compared to 2013, despite low unemployment, a strong economy and a host of other positives that by all rights should have guaranteed the Christian Democrats an easy win. Not even Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble's balanced budget was enough for voters to forgive Merkel for her handling of the refugee crisis."

Worse, for Ms. Merkel, she owns this defeat. Her signature style of politics is to blame. Throughout her whole tenure as chancellor, she has moved her party to the left, borrowing policies from the spd and even the Green party. If it wasn't for that, the AfD may not exist—certainly not as the electoral force it is today. Her party will now be forced to go against her entire style of politics. It can't be long before it rejects her too.

Chancellor Merkel will find it harder to govern during her fourth term. But before she even gets there, she has to put together a coalition.

## Unstable Government

Joining a coalition with Angela Merkel has proved to be the surest way to kill your political party. The Social Democrats are blaming their time as Chancellor Merkel's coalition partner for their historic defeat. The Free Democrats (fdp) also partnered with her in an earlier coalition. The following election, they performed so badly that they lost all their seats in parliament.

So no one is queuing up to work with her this time around. The Social Democrats have already ruled it out. If they don't change their mind, that leaves only one viable alternative: the "Jamaica" Coalition.

This would be a coalition between Merkel's cdu, the pro-business fdp and the environmentalist Green party. The colors of the three parties match the Jamaican flag, hence the name.

It's a recipe for instability. Germany has not been ruled by a three-party coalition since the 1950s. And both parties will have tough conditions. Most Green voters don't even want to be in a coalition with Merkel—they told pollsters they'd rather stay in opposition. And both the fdp and the Greens know Ms. Merkel's history of devouring her coalition partners. She will force them to compromise with the promises that got them elected, and their constituents will then punish them at the ballot box.

But such a coalition cannot work without compromise. How else can the pro-business Free Democrats, who generally oppose government regulation, and the leftist Greens, who support increased government regulation, exist in the same coalition?

"Merkel is about to begin a far less stable administration than in her past three terms," wrote Deutsche Welle. Even if she's able to get a coalition together relatively quickly, there's no guarantee how long it will last or how effectively it will govern.

Ms. Merkel “will have to muster all her powers of diplomacy to keep a fractious multiparty coalition in line, whilst facing sniping from a euroskeptic right-wing populist faction in parliament, as well as jockeying within her party by those vying to replace her,” summarized *EU Observer*. “All of that at a time when Germany faces many challenges both in Europe and on the global stage.”

## A Shift to the Right

The election may have been historically bad for the mainstream Christian Democratic Union and Christian Social Union, but it also points a clear path back to victory: If you want votes, shift to the right.

If the CDU and CSU can regain the votes they just lost to the AfD, they will be in an excellent position to win the next election. The party’s shift to the center under Angela Merkel is over.

The CDU will now “shift to the right,” said Guntram Wolff from the Bruegel think tank. “Conservatives in Merkel’s bloc—especially the Bavarians—are already whispering, ‘I told you so,’” wrote Politico. “Look for that to continue and for the chancellor to inch to the right on migration and questions related to ‘German identity.’”

As the CDU/CSU searches for a replacement for Merkel, they won’t be looking for another centrist. They’ll focus on the right wing.

As the Trumpet.com managing editor wrote last week, former defense minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg is the perfect man for the job:

This man could be the ideal antidote to the rise of the AfD. Guttenberg has a lot to say about the migrant crisis, about Islam and about Germany’s Christian heritage. He too believes some migrants need to be tossed out, and he believes Islam’s presence needs to be curtailed. He also believes that Germans need to “stand up for their culture.” His speeches nearly always have a distinct nationalist tone.

Yet while Guttenberg communicates intelligently, forcefully and patriotically about these issues, he isn’t too extreme. He doesn’t make overtly racist remarks. He’s not unreasonable, and he doesn’t condone extreme solutions. He doesn’t look or sound like a Nazi.

For Germans who are anxious and frustrated, yet who don’t want to go so far as to vote for the AfD—or for AfD supporters uncomfortable with the extreme views of the party—Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg is an attractive alternative.

People are talking this way already! As Martin Rupps wrote at the website of Südwestrundfunk, a prominent regional public broadcasting corporation, “I bet that Angela Merkel appoints Karl-Theodor Baron zu Guttenberg as successor.”

There is still much to watch in German politics. What will the coalition look like? Who will get what job? Can the coalition effectively lead Germany in this increasingly dangerous world?

As we bring you the answers to these questions in the weeks and months ahead, we’ll be basing our analysis on the same source we’ve always based it. The source that allowed us to warn about the rise of the far right in the early ’90s—long before a far-right party entered parliament. The same source that led us to watch Guttenberg nearly a decade ago. The same source that has warned you to watch for political instability in Germany—and for what will spring from this instability. That source is Bible prophecy.

The Bible prophesies that Germany is going to take a radical new direction. A soon-coming political leader will have everything to do with that!

The truth is that soon there will be a German leader who will radically impact every individual on Earth.

That is why we focus so much on German politics. It’s why we’ve been repeatedly urging you to order our free booklet [A Strong German Leader Is Imminent](#).

You need to understand what is happening in Germany. But there is something more important, more fundamental, that will impact you even more. You need to understand the prophecy *behind* what is going on in Germany.

“Bible prophecy is being fulfilled so quickly,” wrote *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry in a co-worker letter over the summer. “There is hope in that because fulfilled Bible prophecy is proof that God exists—and proof of the reliability of God’s Word!”

Read our free booklet [A Strong German Leader Is Imminent](#). Then, as you watch the major changes in German politics, you’ll see Bible prophecy proved before your eyes, and you’ll have hope for the future, knowing God is behind it. ■

