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Wanted: A Leader for Europe!

Europeans need a leader: They are about to get a fierce king.

- Richard Palmer
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You can divide most of Europe into three sections: places that are on fire, places that are charred, and places that are starting to smoke.

Greece is a largely burned-out country. Eight years after being walloped by a serious economic crisis, its economy produces only three quarters of what it once did. One in five Greeks is still unemployed. The country is dependent on bailouts from the rest of the world. Its economy is effectively under German control.

The Ukraine crisis continues to smolder, with nearly 100 civilians killed between the start of the year and mid-August: The total death toll now exceeds 10,000. With Russia holding its largest-ever post-Cold War drills just north of Ukraine in Belarus, all Eastern Europe is nervous.

Meanwhile Spain, right at the core of Europe, is grappling with its largest crisis since it became a democracy in 1978. The autonomous region of Catalonia voted to secede from Spain on October 1. The central government in Madrid declared the referendum illegal and tried to stop it by force. Police fired rubber bullets at unarmed civilians, violating Catalan law. The crisis has continued to escalate, and Madrid is now locking up political leaders and threatening to revoke the region's autonomy.

In Austrian elections on October 15, the center-right Austrian People's Party shifted so far to the right that it won a third of the vote. Now, its leader, Foreign Affairs Minister Sebastian Kurz, is in line to become the next leader of Austria. He is set to form a coalition with the Freedom Party of Austria, a far-right party founded by ex-Nazis, which won a quarter of the vote. Last year, the Freedom Party of Austria came within a whisker of taking the presidency. This is only the latest in a series of elections that have seen fringe parties win big in Germany, France and the Netherlands--and that's just since March.

Meanwhile migrants continue to pour into Europe. Italy alone has absorbed 100,000 migrants so far this year and is struggling to cope.

Given its economic, migration and political crises, what Europe needs is *leadership*. What it has instead is the European Commission. That bureaucratic administration has repeatedly proved incapable of providing decisive direction.

Europe's super-bureaucracy is being overwhelmed by crises, and it is being rejected by citizens who are voting for nationalistic parties. In times like this, Europe's most powerful and prosperous nation is expected to step up. That would be Germany, the bloc's widely acknowledged de facto leader.

Except Germany is now incapacitated. Its domestic leadership was critically injured in its September 24 federal election. This political paralysis, coming at a time when Germany's leadership is needed more than ever, will trigger some major changes in Europe.

Headless Governments

Belgium set a new world record on Oct. 11, 2011. On that day, the nation finally formed a government after 589 days of coalition negotiations--the longest-ever delay for a modern developed nation. The Netherlands set a similar record in October, spending 209 days in coalition negotiations--the longest period in its history.

This is the future Germany appears to be heading for. Few expect the nation to have a government in place by the end of the year. In fact, it took almost a month of fractious talks before the political parties even agreed on the new *seating arrangement* in parliament.

Chancellor Angela Merkel has a history of wiping out her coalition partners. She forces them to compromise with what they promised their supporters, which causes them to lose votes in subsequent elections. So other parties have little incentive to join a coalition with her Christian Democratic Union (cdu)--and if they do, they have little incentive to compromise. Her previous coalition partners, the Social Democrats, fared so badly in the September elections that they have already ruled out joining a coalition this time around.

The Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party went from zero seats in parliament to roughly 90, which would be valuable to a governing coalition. However, the party includes some radical far-right elements, and the other major parties have said they will not work with the AfD. They also ruled out working with the far-left Left Party.

This leaves just one viable possibility for accumulating enough seats in parliament to form a ruling coalition--and it's a complicated one. Merkel's cdu and its sister party, the Christian Social Union (csu), will have to join with the pro-immigration and environmentalist Green Party, as well as the pro-business Free Democratic Party (fdp).

Germany has never had a coalition with so many different parties. Worse, these parties contradict each other in important ways.

Immigration is the big subject of the moment. After losing votes to the AfD and facing state elections next year, the csu has shifted to the right and supports capping immigration and denying recent refugees the option of inviting family members to join them.

The Greens are one of the most leftist parties. They oppose capping immigration and support recent refugees bringing family members into Germany. In fact, the Greens promised during the election campaign to *not* enter any government that places a cap on migrants or doesn't allow family members to immigrate. Most Green Party supporters want it to stay out of any coalition, so the Greens have little incentive to compromise with the cdu, let alone with the fdp.

And migration is far from being the only sticking point. The Green Party and the fdp fiercely opposed each other during the campaign. The Greens campaigned to destroy the internal combustion engine; the fdp promised to save it. The Greens want the German government to do more to help the rest of the eurozone financially; the fdp wants it to do much less.

Somehow Chancellor Merkel must bring all these parties together.

Merkel is trying to produce a series of carefully crafted compromises. For example, she agreed with the csu to implement a pseudo-cap on migration that allows in a maximum of 200,000 new refugees. Yet once this limit is reached, additional refugees will not be turned away at the border. And the cap can be lifted in case of an emergency. And nobody will call it a "migrant cap" so as not to upset the Greens.

But even with this cap-that's-not-a-cap, the Greens are upset. Party co-chair Simone Peter said the policy is "far" from what they expected.

Ms. Merkel may be able to cobble together a coalition with such compromises, but these compromises will merely put off the points of contention. What happens when Germans repeatedly see two members of their ruling coalition advocating two directly opposing policies? What happens when the 200,000 cap is reached, and the Greens and csu cannot agree on how to proceed?

Germany is set for months of coalition negotiations followed by an unstable and uncertain coalition. Meanwhile, Europe continues to burn.

What Next for Europe?

When Belgium and the Netherlands squabbled over government posts, Europe could get by with little inconvenience. But Germany is not Belgium or the Netherlands. It is the only power that can address Europe's crises. While it remains leaderless, the crises will grow. And so will the pressure on Germany.

Europe's acute need for real leadership is about to become more obvious than ever.

The worse this leadership vacuum gets, the more Germans will demand that it be filled with someone who can stop the chaos in German politics and in Europe. *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry has often warned that weak German leadership will open the door for a strong leader to rise in European politics. In a 2009 *Key of David* program, he said this leader could "perhaps take advantage of a weak coalition."

That's certainly the situation in Germany right now. But why would he make such a statement? Because Bible prophecy

foretells a strong leader rising in Europe--and even *how* that strong leader will emerge.

Daniel chapters 8 and 11 are full of prophecy God gave around 500 years before Jesus Christ's first coming. Some of these prophecies are now history. A great "king of Grecia" attacked Persia long ago--this was Alexander the Great, in 323 b.c.--just as Daniel 8:20-21 foretold. But much of these chapters is for "the time of the end" (Daniel 8:17; 11:40).

Daniel 8:23-24 describe the rise of "a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences." Where will he rule? Verse 25 says this king will be defeated after he stands up "against the Prince of princes." Daniel 11:40-45 make similar prophecies about a ruler of a power called "the king of the north." Put the two together, and it's clear that the king of Daniel 8:23-24 and the leader of the king of the north in Daniel 11:40-45 are the same individual.

This man cannot arise in Britain and America--these are the modern descendants of Israel (for proof of this, request our free book [The United States and Britain in Prophecy](#), by Herbert W. Armstrong). Daniel 11:44 describes this king attacking nations to the north and east of Jerusalem, referring to Russia and China, so this fierce king is not from those Asian nations.

That leaves Europe as one of the few major powers remaining.

Daniel 11 shows that this king of the north is a modern successor to the Roman Empire, which further confirms that this leader arises in Europe. (For more information about the Daniel 11 prophecy, request our free booklet [History and Prophecy of the Middle East](#).)

Further confirming this, Isaiah 10:5-19 give a similar prophecy, clearly describing the same leader. This passage adds that this leader shall be "the king of Assyria." Assyria refers to the ancestors of modern Germany. (For proof, request our reprint article "The Remarkable Identity of the German People.")

The prophecy in Isaiah 10 partially refers to Assyria's ancient attack on Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah. Yet much of this chapter was not fulfilled in that time period. This prophecy will remain partially unfulfilled until the time of this future king.

This leader, then, will arise in Germany and lead this coming European power. What will he be like? In our free booklet [A Strong German Leader Is Imminent](#) Mr. Flurry writes: "This soon-coming ruler could literally be called a *king*. Even if he is not, the Bible gives him that label. When the Bible talks about a king, in most cases it's saying that this is not a democratic government. Even if he doesn't have that title, he is going to *lead like a king*. This vision in Daniel shows that the European empire is about to become a lot more authoritative."

Modern Europe is democratic: So how could such an autocratic leader arise? The implication is that European democracy must be in crisis.

Daniel 11:21-31 tell us how. Most Bible commentaries correctly say this passage refers to Antiochus Epiphanes around 175 to 163 b.c. These scriptures describe exactly what this man did. Verse 31 states that he would "pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." Antiochus did exactly this: He attacked and slaughtered the Jews and attacked the Jewish religion. He attempted to stamp out Jewish worship at the temple and he set up a pagan statute to Jupiter Olympius in front of the altar.

Jesus Christ clearly refers to this verse in Matthew 24:15: "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet." But He talks about it as something that will happen *in the future!*

If this was fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanes 200 years earlier, why did Christ tell His disciples to watch for this event? Why have His words been preserved for 2,000 years?

As in Isaiah 10, this prophecy had an ancient fulfillment--but it will also have a modern one. It refers both to Antiochus Epiphanes *and* to a future arrival of a modern-day Antiochus. As the rest of Matthew 24 makes clear, this modern-day Antiochus attacks Jerusalem, just like the king described in Daniel 8 and 11 and Isaiah 10. This Antiochus and this king are the same man.

This is a fearsome leader more deadly and more destructive than any before!

Finally, note what Daniel 11 says about *how* this man will come to power. Verse 21 states that the people "shall not give" this Antiochus "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 that "in 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!"

Complex coalition negotiations or an ineffective coalition government provide the perfect opportunity for these prophecies to be fulfilled. If Germany remains politically paralyzed while troubles multiply at home and Europe burns, it is easy to foresee Germans clamoring for a strong leader. This is where Germany's political paralysis and Europe's crises are leading.

But all these prophecies also have another detail in common. This strongman wreaks his destruction just before Jesus Christ returns to Earth. Christ said, "[W]hen ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matthew 24:33).

Just as sure as the Bible's prophecies were fulfilled by violent Antiochus Epiphanes, they will be fulfilled by a modern-day fierce leader in Germany. And just as sure as this leader's reign will begin soon, so too will the subsequent reign of Jesus Christ!

Conditions are ready for this man to arrive in Germany--which means we are drawing near to Jesus Christ's return and the time when all war and conflict are stopped for good. ■

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