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“**T**he wall crumbles overnight, Berliners embrace in disbelieving joy and a stunned world ponders the consequences.” So wrote George Church in *Time* in November 1989. On that first day 100,000 people came across the border to participate in an ecstatic celebration and reunion. They danced on the wall while people sang and bands played. The wave of anti-Communist sentiment was so powerful that the East German leader Erich Honecker was soon deposed. Plans were quickly underway for free elections that would pave the way for reunification.

Since that time, even more has happened in Europe to cause the world to wonder. On Christmas Day 1989, Ceausescu, the cruel dictator of Romania, was executed along with his wife after a brief trial. The death of

this evil man who had massacred so many of his own countrymen triggered jubilation in the streets. "The Antichrist is dead!" the people shouted with dizzy disbelief. Suddenly, the country began to enjoy new freedoms even though its economic problems still appeared to be beyond solution.

The political changes in Europe during the past few years and months have been staggering. Beginning with Poland, one by one countries in the Eastern Bloc have thrown off the shackles of Communism and opted for governments that allow greater freedoms and the possibility of private enterprise.

Remarkably, the revolutions have been largely bloodless (except in Romania), and the transition of power has been accomplished with minimal violence. A New Europe is emerging before our eyes. A united Germany appears to be the economic centerpiece that will propel Europe to a position of high stature among the other nations of the world.

The leaders of present-day Europe are witnessing its rebirth as the continent emerges from the long, dark tunnel created by its near suicides in 1914 and 1939. Finally, the stigma of the past can be laid aside, and a new Europe can show the world that unity can exist at the crossroads of the world.

Who should take the credit for these staggering changes? Gorbachev must be thanked for changing the Soviet policy of repression to one of greater openness and realism. But let us remember that he was forced to make reforms because of the total bankruptcy of the Communist system. The decision to allow freedom in Eastern Europe was brilliant, for Gorbachev knew that the euphoria would result in billions of dollars pouring in from the West to prop up the failed economies of these countries. *Perestroika* and *glasnost* cannot account for all that has happened in Europe, however. Gorbachev's charisma could not persuade other Soviet leaders (such as those in Eastern Europe) to give up their power.

The New Age movement wants us to believe that the Harmonic Convergence of August 1987 worked. This was, as you may recall, a mighty metaphysical effort to bring about peace through enlightenment and meditation. Eileen Dunn of Albuquerque, New Mexico, believes there can be no other explanation for these remarkable political changes. "It's not a joke. Things are tumbling really quickly now," she says, quite confident that the New Agers can take credit for the positive changes. And, she believes, we can expect more such developments in the future.

Should we really thank the Harmonic Convergence? I am reminded of the eleven-year-old boy who kicked a light pole several years ago, and immediately all of New York City was plunged into darkness. He went into a deep depression, absolutely convinced that he was the cause of the disaster! No reasoning could convince him otherwise.

As President Kennedy observed many years ago, success has many fathers, but failure is an orphan. While many are lining up to take the credit, we must realize that no action by any human being can account for the miracles we have seen in Europe. The only explanation is that God rules among the nations of the world, and He chose the time for Eastern Europe to take these initial steps toward liberation. God may well be shaking up the nations to prepare the world for the glorious return of Christ. History, as we know it, may be coming to an end.

For years, Bible scholars have predicted that Europe would be unified again and that from this federation of nations a world ruler would arise. This man, as we shall see, will wield worldwide economic and religious power.

Where is the unification of Europe taught in the Bible? What can we expect to happen in the near fu-

ture as the world is being readied for the eventual return of Christ? These and many other questions will be answered as we turn to some ancient prophecies that appear to be in the last stages of fulfillment.

THE RISE AND FALL OF WORLD EMPIRES

One day King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that greatly troubled him. He called in his advisers, the magicians and sorcerers of the day and demanded an interpretation of his vision. But he was shrewd enough to know that any one of his men was capable of making up an interpretation just to please him. So he put them to a test: Before they gave the interpretation, they had to give him the details of his dream. If they could do that, he would know that their interpretation was correct.

Predictably, they failed their assignment. The king was furious and ordered them destroyed. Evidently, Daniel was asked to execute the punishment. But he pled for an alternative plan. He asked if he could be given a chance to take up the challenge and tell the king the details of his dream. His request was granted.

That night God gave Daniel a vision that provided all the information he needed to appease the king and give a correct interpretation of