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# 1

## THE FOCUS OF WORLD ATTENTION

Why is Israel the focus of attention in the world's media? Why do leaders of governments, who are normally pragmatic and statesmanlike, erupt with emotional outbursts when Israel is discussed? Why does the United Nations devote thirty percent of its time and one-third of its resolutions to Israel – a tiny country with a population of only five million?

There is only one source for a clear and authoritative answer: *the Bible*. Although it was completed millennia before the current problems in the Middle East arose, the Bible provides a supernaturally inspired analysis of both the issues and the forces that are involved.

Israel occupies a unique place in the current controversies because the place which Israel occupies in God's purposes is likewise unique. The prophetic word of God reveals that this present age will culminate with the restoration and redemption of Israel. The nearer we come to the close of the age, therefore, the more intense will be the pressures surrounding Israel.

These events that centre around Israel will also determine the destiny of Satan, the age-old adversary of God and man. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Satan is called 'the god of this age'. He is well aware that when Israel's redemption is completed and this age closes, he will no longer be able to pose as a god. He will be stripped of his power to deceive and manipulate humanity, and will be subject to the judgement of God. Consequently, he is at this time deploying all his deceptive strategy and exercising all his evil power to resist the process of Israel's restoration.

Here, then, are the two main spiritual forces that meet in conflict over the Middle East: on the one hand, the grace of God working toward Israel's restoration; and on the other hand, the deceitful strategies of Satan, opposing by every means in his power the process of restoration. This is the real, but invisible, reason for the struggles and tensions to which Israel is currently being subjected.

A major part of Satan's strategy against Israel has been to obscure the truth as revealed in the Bible. It is amazing that so much confusion has existed, and still exists, in the Church today concerning God's purposes for Israel. The battle for Israel is, in fact, the battle for truth. There are two vital areas of truth which we will consider here: Israel's identity and Israel's destiny. After we have examined these, we must consider whether the destiny of Israel also sheds light on the destiny of the Church. Finally, what is the responsibility of the Church towards Israel in this hour of crisis?