

December 20, 2023

# The Three Battlegrounds by Francis Frangipane

---

## Chapter 16 - Exposing the Spirit of Antichrist! (Part 1)

*There is an order of beings whose iron fist rules the empire of hell; their cloud of evil darkens nearly every facet of life on earth. To topple this wicked kingdom and prevail victoriously in our warfare, we must discern our enemies and set to flight these commanders of darkness.*

### More Than Just a Man

There exists a ruler of darkness, a principality of the deadliest order, that has been tolerated by believers for so long that its influence is considered normal for the church. This diabolical entity is the spirit of antichrist. While this spirit manifests itself wherever true Christianity is openly persecuted, it is a demon whose nature is primarily religious. This spirit stands firmly in opposition against the unfolding restoration of the church of Jesus Christ.

As this demon's name is, so is he. He is simply "anti" or against Christ. He manifests empty religion as truth instead of the actual life of Christ Himself. This principality uses the power-demons of jealousy, fear, unforgiveness and ambition - whatever is necessary to keep independent, local churches from becoming the "armed and dangerous," united body of Christ.

It is easy to lock our interpretation of the antichrist into a particular personage who will be revealed just prior to Christ's return. Indeed, most Christians are in agreement that such a man will ultimately emerge. This individual "opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). But, if this is the antichrist in his human, manifested form, then this also describes the nature or essence of the antichrist spirit in its invisible form.

This spirit of antichrist has been prevalent in the church since the first century. In fact, the apostle John plainly states that there were "many antichrists" in the first century. He wrote, "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared" (1 John 2:18). When we compare this verse with 2 Thessalonians 2:4, we see that our understanding of the term "antichrist" has been too narrow when limited to one man in the future. John said, "even now many antichrists have appeared."

It is important to grasp that John is actually speaking of people who once seemed to be members of the united, citywide Christian community. The apostle tells us that “they went out from us.” He said, “if they had been of us, they would have remained with us” (1 John 2:19).

What motivated these misled souls? Later in John’s epistle, the apostle reveals it was the antichrist spirit. He wrote in chapter four, “Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world” (1 John 4:3). John makes a distinct reference here to the spirit of antichrist, which he stated was already in the world.

John identifies this spirit as one that does not confess Jesus. To a first-century saint, to “confess Jesus” meant more than simply mentioning His name after a prayer. Essentially, it was to speak from a state of oneness with Him, enabling His actual Spirit to be manifest (see Matthew 10:32 AMP). They confessed the Person Jesus, not just the name “Jesus.” Christ Himself was revealed through their attitudes of love, commitment, and sacrifice!

In the next verse John explained the nature of the antichrist spirit.

1 John 4:6-8 NKJV

[6] We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. [7] Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. [8] He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

We discern the spirit of truth from the spirit of error - or more specifically, the Spirit of Christ from the spirit of antichrist - by the measure of Christ’s love operating in an individual or church. John says that “the one who does not love does not know God.” *An individual or church that thinks God is pleased with them, yet they do not walk in love, may actually be serving the spirit of antichrist.* Christians are to be known by their love, not merely their theology (see John 13:35). When John wrote of truth and error, he spoke specifically of the antichrist spirit and our openness to this spirit through loveless church attitudes.

This display of the antichrist is far more subtle and much more subversive than what may take place when the “man of sin” (2 Thessalonians 2:3) is openly revealed. The antichrist spirit hardens the heart, keeping it from love. It nurtures unforgiving attitudes, causing those under its influence to splinter from a church due to various criticisms and minor doctrinal differences. It is the “strong man” behind most church splits.

Following Christ, however, calls us to embrace forgiveness and love as a way of life. It is simply “anti” Christ to justify unforgiveness, division, and selfish ambition. *The antichrist spirit will be disguised behind any number of issues, but those issues are simply tools this principality uses to divide the church.*

The spirit of antichrist is simply that spirit which is anti-Christ. It is anti-love, anti-forgiveness, anti-reconciliation. Perhaps more than all others, this principality keeps good churches divided from one another.

Antichrist is the true source of numerous church splits. Indeed, if you pray against this spirit instead of what seems like the immediate issues, many church splits would be averted. In this sense, we must guard very carefully how strongly we cling to our ideas and criticisms. For if our thoughts exalt themselves above God’s ability to correct us, we will certainly become a target for the spirit of antichrist. Remember, the antichrist spirit may use jealousy or fear or even the color of the church bathrooms as smoke screen, but the essential cause of most division is simply Christians yielding to someone or something other than the Spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ. Any situation can be reconciled by returning to the words of Jesus. Once all parties agree to yield to Him, love and victory soon follow.