

WAR FOR ONE

1. Summarize the main things God has revealed to you in our "War for One" series.

Aloha everyone, we've reached the finale of our War for One series on spiritual warfare. In this final message, we will learn that the Spiritual Warfare we are engaged in is not just a local skirmish but a world war. The Devil is not just interested in you, he wants to take over the world. Before we start our 'One World' series (which starts in earnest next week!), let's see if we can figure out the Devil's plan. Just as the Church is led by Christ our King, the world is led by the Devil. Jesus Himself calls the Devil, "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31). So it's important to understand that the Devil is not just interested in you personally. He wants control over the whole Earth. He knows that his biggest problem is going to be the Spirit-filled, Spirit-built Church, whose King is Christ. So we--every follower of Jesus--has a red dot laser sight right here (forehead). So the devil is, as we learned from Pastor Mark in week 2, the ADVERSARY--"HASATAN," or "the satan," the adversary of Christ. He is "against" Christ. He is "ANTI" Christ--ANTICHRIST. So how does the Devil plan to carry out his plan for world domination? Is he going to send an antichrist world leader? If so, who is this mysterious figure? Is he just one charismatic global leader? Or does he have an army of antichrists? We'll find out today in our finale of War for One.

2. Who or what do you think the Antichrist is? Summarize what the Bible says about the antichrist.

There's so much speculation in the Church today about who the antichrist might be. Some say he was Hitler. But since Hitler died. Maybe it's the Ayatollah? No wait, he's dead too. Maybe Kim Jong Eun? He might be dead, not sure. Is he someone less obvious? Bill Gates? Mark Zuckerberg? Some have even theorized that it's the POPE. Rather than deal in speculation, let's go to the Word of God for guidance. So the exact word "antichrist" appears only 5 times in the Bible, all of them in the letters of John. There are tons of references in the Bible to "antichrist" type figures, like the Beast, the False Prophet, the Man of Lawlessness, and Babylon the Great Whore. But let's stick with these for now. Let's read the first passage together. Ready go: *"Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour"* (1 John 2:18 NLT).

Here John says rather cryptically that "antichrist is coming" and that "many antichrists" are already here. Christians have a couple different views when it comes to the antichrist. Is he a single individual who is still to come? Or are there many antichrists already here? Well, from this passage, both are the case. John is clearly saying that antichrist is coming AND many antichrists have appeared. Even though John said this 2,000 years ago, he says this means human history is in "the last hour." So it would seem that antichrists have been here for quite some time and they are a sign of the end of the world. Let's read the next passage together. Ready go: *"Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son"* (1 John 2:22 NLT).

WAR FOR ONE

Here we learn a little more about the nature of the antichrist. He is a deceiver, a liar, with a very specific lie: He DENIES that Jesus is the Messiah and he denies the Father and the Son. So to summarize so far, the antichrist is both a future person as well as people who are alive today who deceive others by professing that Jesus is not the Messiah and not the Son of God. Let's keep going. Ready go: *"And 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 NLT).

In this passage, John reveals even MORE about the antichrist. So far, we know he is both a person who is coming and persons already here, who deceive others by denying that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. NOW we learn that there is a "spirit of the antichrist" that prevents people from believing in Christ. Paul says the same thing: "The god of this world has blinded the minds of those who don't believe" (2 Corinthians 4:4). So these antichristian people are actually influenced by a spirit. What have we been saying all along in our series? People are not our true enemy. We're not fighting flesh and blood. Our enemies are spirits, so we pray for people to be set free. This is why Jesus prayed for people while He was being crucified, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." He knew who His true enemies were. Finally, let's read this, ready, go: *"For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist"* (2 John 7 NLT).

So to sum up we see that the antichrist is not just a single individual who wants to take over the world, but a spirit that influences many people to oppose God, prevents people from believing in Jesus, deceives the world by denying that Jesus is the Messiah, who are themselves deceived by the spirit of antichrist. Now we learn a very interesting twist: This spirit convinces people that Jesus never came as a human being. In other words, Jesus was not a real historical figure. He's just a mythical hero, the stuff of legend, whose exploits have been greatly exaggerated. Or, Jesus never existed at all.

3. Now that you've studied the Bible about the antichrist, who do you think is under the control of the spirit of antichrist today?

So now that we've studied the antichrist from God's Word, we now know that we are not just looking for one world leader, but instead a people with a clear anti-God, anti-Bible, anti-Church, anti-Christian pattern of behavior. Looking back on history, can you name some antichrists? I can tell you that in the Apostle John's day, he was most likely thinking of Rome. Emperor's like Caligula and Nero were genocidal maniacs who didn't just try to annihilate the Church, they made sport of their deaths in the arena. But it wasn't just the Romans. Don't forget that it was the Jewish Sanhedrin that condemned Jesus to death. And can you think of any Jew in particular who was especially passionate about wiping out Christians? That's right. Saul of Tarsus, who would later become the Apostle Paul--the greatest church planter in the ancient world. I want to come back to Paul later on when we, as a Church, try to figure out how

WAR FOR ONE

to deal with people with the spirit of antichrist. Remember, these folks are not just merely "non-Christian," they are "anti-Christian." Who are modern-day antichrists? You see this spirit in some government leaders, as in California or Canada, for example, who, during the pandemic, allowed mass rioting in the street with no social distancing and no masks, but then told the Church they could not meet for worship services. This spirit is in our education system where just this past school year, a second grader in Illinois named Gabrielle liked to read her Bible out loud to her friends during recess. None of the kids complained, but one of the teachers confiscated her Bible telling her she was not allowed to do that. Planned Parenthood wanted to promote abortion in a public high school in New York, but in the permission slips sent home to parents concealed the fact that abortion was their agenda. When the spirit of antichrist comes against the Church, that's one thing, but it is especially despicable when it goes after children. As you can see, "The Antichrist" is much more than a demonized global leader who will try to take over the planet. I'm not ruling that out, by the way, but while we're worried about the Pope or Bill Gates, the enemy is taking over school boards, news media, college campuses, and cities.

4. Has God been caught "off-guard" by the rise of antichristianity in the world?

Before we push the panic button, we need to realize that the "god of this world" has been setting up infrastructure and governance for world domination since Genesis and the Fall. We see the first major expression of a global world power in Nimrod. Remember what he built? The Tower of Babel. That was a symbol of his own defiance of God and his vain attempt to become a god. He was trying to take over the world, so God judged the Tower of Babel, made it sound like they were all BABBLING at each other, and Nimrod's tower collapsed. But Babel later became Baby-lon, which was conquered by the Assyrians, who were conquered by the Persians, who were conquered by the Greeks, who were conquered by the Romans. All of these were anti-God empires bent on ruling the world--like a gigantic wheel crushing people who opposed them. So this "spirit of antichrist" has a very obvious pattern, a well-established playbook, as it controls people. Make no mistake, these people want total control of the world, as in TOTALITARIAN control. See the word "total" in there? You know how every villain in the movies wants TOTAL CONTROL of the world? That's pretty much it, plain and simple. And like every movie we've ever seen, the bad guys lose and the good guys win. That same anti-God spirit back then is the same anti-Christ spirit today. Let me say that again: that same anti-God spirit back then is the same antichrist spirit today. Like Mark said, new level, old Devil. So don't panic, amen? God's got this. God always has a plan. And God's team wins in the end.

5. How will Jesus be an amazing alternative to the world leaders we've seen throughout history?

WAR FOR ONE

Enter Jesus. Jesus wanted to show the world a different kind of world ruler. His Kingdom would not be one of selfishness and evil. He would establish an "upside down" Kingdom. What's this? In His Kingdom the least are the greatest, the last are first, the humble are exalted, the poor are rich, and the meek are strong. In the Kingdom of Jesus, you are not enslaved to serve a dictator, you are set free to love God with all your heart. Followers of Christ seek to serve not be served, because this King came to serve, not be served. Jesus came to break the power of oppression and slavery over people by judging oppressors and slave masters. Jesus came to break the wheel. But not by military force, but by love, grace, compassion, and forgiveness. All the other would-be kings forced the people of the world to die for them. Jesus is the only King who died for the people of the world.

So the Bible is really talking about two very different worlds that co-exist side by side. There's the world of darkness, ruled by the god of this world. Then there's the Kingdom of Heaven, ruled by Christ the King. These two worlds could not be more totally opposite from each other. Like oil and water, fire and ice, these two worlds are at war. And as soon as you become a Christian, you've chosen sides. You become a target for those who are anti-God, anti-Bible, anti-Church, anti-Christ, the spirit of the antichrist. We need to become a Church with God's vision to transform the world of darkness into the Kingdom of Heaven. And we will learn about that in our new original series that starts next week, called ONE WORLD.

6. Very important application question: Discuss how Christians are supposed to respond to people with the spirit of antichrist.

But for now we need to be very clear about how to respond to people with the spirit of antichrist. Saul of Tarsus was a man with a very dark mission--obliterate this radical cult of Judaism called The Way, the Christian Church. While Stephen was being stoned to death for his love for Jesus, Saul gleefully held the coats of the murderers. Saul's heart was full of hatred and righteous indignation against the Church. Saul was controlled by the spirit of antichrist. But one day Saul was on the road to Damascus looking to put away more Christians, when he was knocked off his horse by a blinding light. And a voice said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" "Who are you?" Saul asked. "Jesus, Whom you are persecuting." When Saul opened his eyes he couldn't see. He was blind for 3 days until Ananias, led by the Spirit, went and prayed for Saul to be healed. That was Saul's powerful encounter with Jesus in Acts 9 that transformed him into the Apostle Paul. Now, instead of persecuting the Church, he planted Churches. Instead of writing indictments, he wrote epistles. Instead of imprisoning disciples, he was making disciples. Instead of taking Christian lives, he gave his life for Christ. How did this happen? A powerful encounter with Christ. You and I are not going to be able to defeat the spirit of antichrist in the world. We need the Spirit of Christ to lead us! To defeat the antichrist, we need the Spirit of the Anti-antichrist. The Holy Spirit! Be like Ananias and do whatever the Holy Spirit says. Can you see now why we need to work together as ONE? We need to be a fellowship where God shows up. And God loves unity. The Lord says, "How good and pleasant it is when believers live together in unity." God is blessed by our love and unity. Once

WAR FOR ONE

we start fighting with each other, we give the Devil cheap victories. We will not agree on everything here in Church, but we must insist that our common faith and love for Jesus is more essential and more powerful than our differences.

I'll never forget during the pandemic that Antifa tried to attack New Hope Christian College in Oregon to tear down the cross that was on campus. By the way, Antifa and Black Lives Matter are both communist organizations trying to overthrow America and the Church. So Pastor Wayne informed the police and set up security around the campus. But more importantly, Pastor Wayne and the college gathered around the cross--the one Antifa wanted to tear down--and began to pray and worship. The attack was halted when the bus carrying the antifa rioters was stopped by police. [Here's what Pastor Wayne said in an interview with CBN afterward.] In an interview with CBN, Pastor Wayne said, "We were praying for Antifa. Who knows, maybe someone in their group might become the next Apostle Paul." One of the strongest spokeswomen against abortion is Abby Johnson, a former director of a Planned Parenthood Clinic. In fact, in the infamous Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision, the identity of the woman seeking an abortion was kept anonymous, so they called her "Jane Roe." Well, her real name is Norma McCorvey and she later regretted her decision and became a strong pro-life supporter.

Never forget our Rules of Engagement. Our enemy is NOT flesh and blood, not people. In fact the spirit of antichrist has a strong hold on these precious people and they need Jesus to set them free. Keep following the leading of the Spirit. If the Spirit leads and you don't like something the school is teaching your kids, go testify at the school board. If the Spirit leads you, run for the school board. John goes on to say that each of us has an anointing from the Holy Spirit that gives us revelation on what to do. If Ananias went to Saul without the leading of the Spirit, Ananias is a dead man. But when he goes led by the Spirit, Saul becomes Paul. We don't need to panic or get upset or frustrated. What we need to see is that these are precious people whose minds have been abducted. Listen, an eternity with Jesus awaits you at the end of the age. But if they don't get saved, what awaits them on Judgment Day is the lake of fire. Only the Spirit of Christ can set them free from the spirit of antichrist. Let's pray for that while there's still time.

7. What did the Spirit reveal to you today about how you are responding to all the crises happening in our country nowadays? Do you need to repent from anything? Write a prayer in response to what God revealed to you about yourself.

As we conclude our War for One series, our prayer is that we realize as a fellowship that spiritual warfare makes us even more intensely focused on being one with the Father and each other. Don't become an activist like a social justice warrior. Don't trigger people on social media. Our weapons are different. Our weapons are better. Don't sweat the Devil. Trust God's plan. Remember our Rules of Engagement. Let's keep following the Spirit's lead. And let's win the War for One.