

Does John 8:44 Imply That the Devil Has a Father?

Contesting the Pro-Gnostic Reading

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Abstract

John 8:44 has been a source of concern because of its ambiguity. Is it to be read “of (your) father, the devil” or “of the father of the devil”? This article contends that the former, traditional reading is not ungrammatical as suggested in the grammars and more recently by DeConick and that accordingly the verse cannot be considered pro-gnostic.

Keywords

John 8:44 – apposition – gnosticism – father – devil

Introduction

The viewpoint of a minority, when it later assumes the mantel of majority, can be dangerous in the extreme; for the powerlessness that had once evoked that view and simultaneously constrained the ability to act upon it is now removed. Such is the case in the history of Christianity as it moved from a persecuted sect within the wider Graeco-Roman world to become the religion of empire

and Christendom. In particular, the danger is borne out in its dealings with Judaism where the Gospel of John and its hostility to “the Jews” are concerned. As Raimo Hakola notes concerning the verse under consideration here:

John 8:44 joins the charge that the Jews are of the devil to the charge that they murdered Jesus. This has given a strong impetus to the growth of anti-Jewish Christian tradition where these two charges had a prominent role. John cannot be kept completely apart from this sad and far-reaching development, even though the evangelist and his community could in no way anticipate the coming horrors of history.¹

The traditional reading of John 8:44, as reflected in modern translations,² has recently been questioned by April DeConick as she seeks to explore the text’s ambiguity against the back-drop of readings within pro-gnostic circles.³ And although her suggested reading does not alleviate the charge of anti-Semitism against the gospel, it does question the text’s orthodoxy and thus place within the larger Christian tradition.

Engaging DeConick’s Pro-Gnostic Reading

DeConick offers the following translation with her sense units indicated:

a.	You are from the father of the Devil,	ὁμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ
b.	and you want to carry out the desires of your father.	καὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὁμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν.
c.	That one was a murderer from the beginning,	ἐκεῖνος ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἦν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς,

1 Raimo Hakola, *Identity Matters: John, the Jews and Jewishness* (Leiden: Brill, 2005) 214.

2 The majority of scholars also attest to the traditional reading “(your) father, the Devil” and “the father of lies”. For recent example, see Sonya Shetty Cronin, Raymond Brown, “*The Jews, and the Gospel of John: From Apologia to Apology*” (LNTS 504; London: T&T Clark, 2015) 7, 33; Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Satan: A Biography* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006) 108; Terrence L. Donaldson, *Jews and Anti-Judaism in the New Testament: Decision points and divergent interpretations* (London: SPCK, 2010) 81; and Ruth B. Edwards, *Discovering John: Content, Interpretation, Reception, Discovering Biblical Texts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015) 139. Edwards (still in this vain) clarifies that the term “children of” is not specifically used in John 8.44, but rather the language “of” or “from the devil” bears an ethical rather than ontological significance.

3 April DeConick, “Why are the Heavens Closed? The Johannine Revelation of the Father in the Catholic-Gnostic Debate,” in *John’s Gospel and Intimations of Apocalyptic* (ed. C.H. Williams and C. Rowland; London: Bloomsbury, 2013) 147-179, esp. 149-150.

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| d. | and he did not stand by the truth,
because there is no truth in him. | καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ οὐκ ἔστηκεν, ὅτι οὐκ
ἔστιν ἀλήθεια ἐν αὐτῷ. |
| e. | When he lies, he speaks from his own
characteristics, | ὅταν λαλῇ τὸ ψεῦδος, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, |
| f. | because he is a liar and so is his father. | ὅτι ψεύστης ἐστὶν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ. |
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DeConick highlights two important divergences at 8:44(a) and 44(f), and indicates that the reason for them is found in the use of the definite article before *πατὴρ* in v.44a (ὁμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατὴρ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ).⁴ In so doing, she agrees with the judgement of BDF §268(2):

John 8:44 ὁμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατὴρ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ would be, acc. to strict grammatical analysis, “of the father of the devil”; but it is certainly meant as “of your father (cf.38) the devil” (the omission of τοῦ before πατὴρ is thus correct in many minusc.).⁵

Unfortunately, the point that BDF seeks to make is not immediately obvious. The reasoning, however, appears to be that the first article in the expression τοῦ πατὴρ τοῦ διαβόλου is problematic because:

- (1) it is a genitive of relationship (BDF §162) that is used predicatively;
- (2) nouns in the predicative on the whole omit the article;⁶ and
- (3) though there are exceptions to this, i.e. when the noun marks something “which alone merits this designation” (BDF §273), the noun “father” by itself does not meet this criterion of exception.

4 DeConick, “Why are the Heavens Closed?,” 150 and 156 in particular.

5 Robert W. Funk (ed.), *Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961) §268(2). Cf. also F. Blass, A. Debrunner, F. Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) §268(5): Joh 8,44 ὁμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατὴρ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ wäre nach korrekter Grammatik „von dem Vater des Teufels“ (vl om τοῦ πατὴρ; oder urspr. Glosse?), ist aber nach v 38 (bes. vl ὁμῶν) zu verstehen als „von eurem Vater, dem Teufel“ (nach Bultmann).

6 Both Blass and Turner appear to understand the noun *πατὴρ* as the predicate of the pronoun ὁμεῖς. See Friedrich Blass, *Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1896) §47.10—Joh 8:44 ὁμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατὴρ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ müsste heißen „ihr stammt von eurem Vater (vgl. 38) dem Teufel“; aber der erste Artikel scheint falsch (*πατὴρ* prädikativ, o. 6), and Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Vol. 3: Syntax* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963) 206.

The aim of this article is to assess the application of the above three point to the interpretation of John 8:44a and then in the light of the discussion to look at 8:44f. We will proceed by addressing each of the above three points in turn.

1 John 8:44a: ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστέ

1.1 *That a Genitive of Relationship Is Used Predicatively*

The principal objection to the use of this criterion to question the traditional translation of John 8:44a is that the predicate is not τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστέ but ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστέ. In other words, it is a prepositional phrase that is used predicatively and not a genitive of relationship *tout court*. Taking a functional approach to linguistic usage it is clear that such prepositional phrases can fill the same adjectival slot (i.e. function) that adverbs, participles, particles, numbers or genitival expressions do.⁷ To take one example that offers a parallel between prepositional and genitival phrases consider 2 Cor 7:10:

For godly grief (ἡ γὰρ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη) produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief (ἡ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη) produces death.

Therefore in discussing the predicative usage at John 8:44a we need to take full cognisance of the presence of the preposition ἐκ. One need look no further than the opening verse of the gospel, where the predicate πρὸς τὸν θεόν is found, to see the significance of this point.

1.2 *That Nouns in the Predicative on the Whole Omit the Article*

Once it is recognised that the predicate is a prepositional phrase, the question of the presence or absence of the article with the preposition itself is otiose. As

7 Cf. Ronald D. Peters, *The Greek Article: A Functional Grammar of δ-items in the Greek New Testament with Special Emphasis on the Greek Article* (Leiden: Brill, 2014) 219-225 and 264-266. Peters seeks to offer a unifying theory to explain the function of the article but insofar as he sees this in the subjective imagining of the speaker, the theory appeals to the unknowable with concepts (e.g. “concrete”, “characterization”) that are ill-defined. See, for example, p.70: “The article is used to subjectively characterize the head term as *concrete*, as belonging to experience of an actual person or thing, or as a specific instance. With regard to nouns, it will also be argued that when the article is not employed, the head term is characterized as *abstract*, as not belonging to experience of an actual person or thing, or a specific instance.”

to the question of the article's use with the head noun within the prepositional phrase, i.e. as in ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου, numerous examples can be cited:

- Within John's gospel: John 7:17 (πότερον [sc. ἡ διδαχὴ] ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν); 7:22 (οὐχ ὅτι [sc. ἡ περιτομή] ἐκ τοῦ Μωϋσέως ἐστὶν ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν πατέρων); 8:23 ('Υμεῖς ἐκ τῶν κάτω ἐστέ, ἐγὼ ἐκ τῶν ἄνω εἰμί), 8:47 (ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἐστέ); 15:19 (εἰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἦτε ... ὅτι δὲ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου οὐκ ἐστέ; 17:16 (ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου οὐκ εἰσὶν καθὼς ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμί ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου).
- Within Johannine epistles: 1 John 2:16 (οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλὰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν); 3:7 (ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν); 3:10 (ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ); 4:1 (εἰ [sc. τὰ πνεύματα] ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν); 4:2-3; 4:4 (ὕμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστε); 4:6 (ἡμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν); 5:19 (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν); 3 John 11 (ὁ ἀγαθοποιῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν).
- Within NT and LXX: Matt 5:37 (τὸ δὲ περισσὸν τούτων ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἐστίν); 1 Cor 12:15-16 (οὐκ εἰμί ἐκ τοῦ σώματος ... οὐκ εἰμί ἐκ τοῦ σώματος of the hand and ear respectively); Judg 12:5 (Μὴ ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ Εφραϊμ); Job 4:19 (αὐτοὶ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ πηλοῦ ἐσμεν); 2 Chr 8:7 (οἱ οὐκ εἰσιν ἐκ τοῦ Ἰσραηλ); 1 Esd 5:37 (ὡς ἐκ τοῦ Ἰσραηλ εἰσίν); see also Test Job 46:8 (ἐπεὶ μὴ εἶναι αὐτὰς (i.e. τὰς τρεῖς χορδὰς τὰς ποικίλας) ἐκ τῆς γῆς, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ εἰσιν).
- More broadly still: Arist., *Problemata* 894b (διότι αἱ τρίχες ἐκ τοῦ δέρματος εἰσίν—because hairs are from the skin); Arist., *De hist. anim.* 561a ('Η μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴ τοῦ νεοττοῦ ἐστίν ἐκ τοῦ λευκοῦ, ἡ δὲ τροφή διὰ τοῦ ὀμφαλοῦ ἐκ τοῦ ὠχροῦ—the principle of the chick is from the egg-white, but its nourishment is via the umbilical cord from the yoke); Demosthenes, *Contra Mac* 59 (οὐδὲ γάρ εἰσιν ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ Ἀγνίου τὸ παράπαν—for they are not at all from the house of Hagnias) & 83 (οἱ εἰσιν ἐκ τοῦ Στρατίου οἴκου—[by these beast] who are of the house of Stratius); Hermogenes, *On Style* 1.6 (καὶ γὰρ αὐταὶ [sc αἱ ἔννοιαι] εἰσιν ἐκ τοῦ Τιμαίου—and these idea are from the Timaeus).

And should it be thought that the grammatical criticism of John 8:44 in some way arises from its use of apposition, i.e. PN + descriptor with def. art.,⁸ there are numerous examples in the gospel of the same construction that is found at 8:44. See, for example, τὸ πάσχα, ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων (6:4); ὁ χριστὸς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος (11:27) and ὁ δὲ παρακλήτος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον (14:26).⁹

⁸ See, for example, Ἀνδρέας ὁ ἀδελφὸς Σίμωνος Πέτρου (John 1:40 and 6:8); Ἀβραάμ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν (8:56); Μάρθας τῆς ἀδελφῆς αὐτῆς (11:1); and Λάζαρος ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν (11:1). Cf. also John 11:16, 28; 18:24.

⁹ See also John 3:13; 6:1, 27; 7:2; 16:13; and 18:1.

1.3 *That Though Exceptions Exist, Πατήρ Does Not Meet the Criterion of Exception*

The evidence and arguments adduced above suffice to problematise the belief that the article before πατήρ is in some sense grammatically incorrect or wrong. Indeed, even Origen does not make this accusation against John 8:44a. For him the issue was one of ambiguity and not grammar.¹⁰ Be that as it may, we must now turn to look at the third and final point.

It is not clear why one noun (e.g. πατρός) with another noun (τοῦ διαβόλου) in apposition cannot mark something “which alone merits that designation”. Indeed, is that not a key function of apposition, be it a case of simple apposition or of a genitive of apposition?¹¹ In the case of John 8:44, the head noun (πατρός) and its appositive (τοῦ διαβόλου) should not be read atomistically in terms of its constituent parts but as a whole. We must therefore look more carefully at the use of πατήρ in expressions involving apposition.

The word order in appositions designating the father are, for the most part, of two forms:

- (1) X + ὁ πατήρ of Y (or, if Y has previously been mentioned, it can be replaced by the genitive pronoun), e.g. John 8:56 Ἀβραάμ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν; or
- (2) ὁ πατήρ with genitive pronoun + X, e.g. John 4:12 τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰακώβ.

Examples of the second word order are: Matt 2:22; Mark 1:20; 11:10; John 4:12; and Rom 4:12.¹² In most instances of this word order, and as the form entails,

10 Origen, *Comment. in ev. Jo.* 20.171-2. Origen comments on the ambiguity of expression (λῆξις) but gives preference to neither one or other interpretation, though he hedges (ἄρα) the assertion of the first and offers a value judgement (ὃ βέλτιον ἐστίν) in favour of the second. The adverbial expression ὅσον ἐπὶ τῷ ῥητῷ qualifies the preceding use of πατρός so that the passage should be read; “For it is asserted from this either that the devil, as it seems, has a father and from this father, to speak literally, those addressed appear to be derived; or better that you are from this father here, by which is signified “devil.” Origen further notes that were the article before πατρός to be removed, ambiguity would still remain but the intention of the speaker (τὸ βούλημα τοῦ ῥητοῦ) would be much clearer. The reasoning here appears to be semantic rather than syntactic, i.e. “a father of the Devil” would imply that there were other fathers of the Devil thus making that reading less likely. Origen thus offers no grammatical criticism but rather merely comments on the ambiguity of expression.

11 See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) §10 on pp.95-100.

12 Further examples can be cited from LXX Gen 31:53; 32:10 (Heb 9); 46:1; Josh 24:3; 1 Kings 2:32; 1 Chr 25:3; Judith 9:2; 4 Macc 7:1, 5, 11; 16:20. Cf. further Josephus, *Antiquities* 1:158; 10:222; 12:433; and 16:52.

a genitive pronoun intervenes between πατήρ and the name. This, one might suppose, is quite important when indeclinable proper names are involved. The risk is one of ambiguity; is one to read “father, X” or “father of X”? The issue of ambiguity is further underlined when πατήρ is itself in the genitive and no genitive pronoun intervenes between it and the proper noun. Both Josephus, *Antiquities* 10:222 (τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς τελευτὴν Ναβουχοδονοσάρου—“the death of (his) father, Nebuchodonosar”) and 12:433 (τῶν τοῦ πατρὸς ἐντολῶν Ματθαίου—“the commands of (his) father, Mattathias”) provide informative examples where a pronoun does not intervene. Here as both πατήρ and the declined proper noun are in the genitive case, the prospect of ambiguity is avoided by the interposition of the nouns (i.e. τελευτὴν and ἐντολῶν) upon which the expressions depend. But regarding these two examples it is important to note that here πατήρ with article is anaphoric and picks out a preceding subject as the source of its definiteness. It is accordingly translated in English with a possessive pronoun (marked in brackets above).

It is, however, not the case that a word necessarily intervenes, as the following examples show:

- 4 Macc 7:5: ὁ πατήρ Ελεάζαρ ... περιέκλασεν τοὺς ἐπιμαίνομένους τῶν παθῶν κλύδωνας—(our) father Eleazar broke the maddening waves of the emotions;¹³
- 4 Macc 7:11: ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ Ααρων τῷ θυμιατηρίῳ καθωπλισμένος διὰ τοῦ ἐθνοπλήθους ἐπιτρέχων τὸν ἐμπυριστὴν ἐνίκησεν ἄγγελον—For just as (our) father Aaron, armed with the censer and running through the multitude of the people, conquered the fiery angel; and
- Josephus, *Antiquities* 16:52: καλὸν δ' ἴσως μηδὲ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς Ἀντιπάτρου παραλιπεῖν ἀνδραγαθίαν ἀμνημόνευτον—equally it is fitting not to leave unmentioned the valour of (his) father Antipater.

And to widen the net further to include Xenophon and Polybius as a sample corpus:

- Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.3.30: τιμώμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου κατὰ τὸν πατέρα Ἀγωνα—honoured by the demos as (his i.e. Theramenes') father Hagnon;
- Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 8.8.4: ὥσπερ Μιθριδάτης τὸν πατέρα Ἀριοβαρζάνην προδοῦς—as Mithridates betraying (his) father Ariobarzanes;
- Polybius, *Histories* 11.2.3: ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς εἰρηνέοις καιροῖς ἀξίως μὲν τοῦ πατρὸς Βάρκα, καλῶς δὲ καὶ γενναίως τὰς περιπετείας καὶ τὰς ἐλαττώσεις διετέλει

13 But cf. 4 Macc 7:1 τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ελεάζαρου.

φέρων—in the previously investigated times both worthily of (his, i.e. Hasdrubal's) father Barcas, and admirably and nobly he continually bore the vicissitudes and losses; and

- Polybius, *Histories* 20.5.12: ταύτην αὐτῷ χάριν ἀποδιδούς τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς Νέωνος εὐεργεσίας—handing over this (city) to him (i.e. Brachylles) because of the benefaction of (his) father Neon.

All seven examples use πατήρ with article and a proper noun in apposition. Again, in English the definiteness of πατήρ is rendered by the possessive pronoun, thus indicating its anaphoric nature and the source of its definiteness. Of more interest still are Josephus, *Antiquities* 16:52, Polybius, *Histories* 11.2.3 and Polybius, *Histories* 20.5.12 where both πατήρ with article and proper noun in apposition are in the genitive. In such instances, which closely resemble the expression under consideration at John 8:44—τοῦ διαβόλου is almost invariably definite and is functionally equivalent to a proper noun—it appears that context and the shared knowledge of speaker and audience were sufficient to counter any risk of confusion. In other words, though the discussion here does not immediately bear on the predicative use of πατρός in John 8:44a, it does, however, indicate that certain pragmatic and contextual elements were on occasion sufficient to make the risk of ambiguity minimal and so to allow the omission of the genitive pronoun or other deictic marker.¹⁴ Furthermore, all seven examples, where the genitive pronoun is omitted but to be inferred, share the same abbreviated format (article + “father” + proper noun) and should act as a caution against reading it in an atomistic manner.

2 John 8:44f: ὅτι ψεύστης ἐστὶν καὶ ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ

DeConick has also suggested an alternative reading of 8:44f, i.e. “because he is a liar and so is his father”. At first sight the reading “his father” (ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ) seems plausible given the frequency of this type of construction, i.e. definite article + father + genitive pronoun. See τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν in the very same verse as well as the numerous examples cited above. In such instances the genitive pronoun indicates the individual whose father is the topic of conversation. Unfortunately, if one so reads the construction at v.44f, one cannot understand it as a reference to the Devil's father, as DeConick appears to do, but a reference

14 Origen, *Comment. in ev. Jo.* 20.171-2: ἕτερον δέ, ὃ βέλτιόν ἐστιν, ὅτι ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦδε τοῦ πατρὸς ἐστε, καθ' οὗ κατηγορεῖται τὸ “διάβολος”.

to his grandfather.¹⁵ The reason for this is simple. The antecedent of the genitive pronoun αὐτοῦ in v.44f can only be the father of the Devil as, according to DeConick's reading of 8:44a, he is the subject whose qualities are described in v.44b-e. In other words, the ἐκεῖνος of v.44c can only be the father of the Devil for the antecedent of ἐκεῖνος in v.44c is τοῦ πατρὸς in v.44b, i.e. in the nominal expression τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν.¹⁶

DeConick also questions the plausibility of the traditional interpretation of v.44f, stating: "The standard English translation is not only peculiar, but strained, reading as a genitive 'it' referring to an unnamed singular antecedent such as 'lying' or 'falsehood.'" The problem with the argument here is that the antecedent is in the text and within the same sentence (ἔταν λαλῇ τὸ ψεῦδος, ἐκ τῶν ιδίων λαλεῖ, ὅτι ψεύστης ἐστὶν καὶ ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ). The genitive pronoun refers back to τὸ ψεῦδος (the lie) and the reference to that antecedent is facilitated by naming the subject himself as a liar (ψεύστης). So BDF §282 (3). In other words, the underlying topic of the sentence concerns lying and so the translation can hardly be described as "peculiar" or "strained" and the antecedent, "the lie," as "unnamed." More broadly, the section as a whole concerns the truth that Jesus speaks and the lie that the Devil and his so-called children perpetuate.¹⁷

Conclusion

DeConick's argument is based on the contention that John 8:44a is in some way ungrammatical. Once this contention is refuted the other arguments founder, namely, that non-orthodox circles captured the original meaning of John 8:44a in reading "of the father of the Devil," and that 1 John was a corrective to that original meaning. Clearly, the fourth evangelist could have expressed himself more clearly, but this does not mean that he held the view that others came to ascribe to him. 1 John does not have to be construed as a correction of John 8:44a, but a simple reiteration of the evangelist's position (1 John 3:8 and 10):

15 It is his father that is the referent of ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ in v.44f., a point recognised by Epiphanius. See DeConick, "Why are the Heavens Closed?," 159-160.

16 Cf. also the usage of ἐκεῖνος at John 13:27 which refers not to Simon but Judas in the expression "Judas (son) of Simon."

17 The text of 8:44 also seems to be informed at a fundamental level by a reading of Gen. 3 and the lie spoken by the snake to the woman: מוֹת תָּמוּתָּ לָא—Οὐ θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖσθε (Gen 3:4). It is this allusion that explains the use of both ἀνθρωποκτόνος and ἀπ' ἀρχῆς in v.44c (ἐκεῖνος ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς). The story of Cain and Abel also has been seen to lie behind this texts and 1 John 3:7-17. Cf. Judith Lieu, *The Theology of the Johannine Epistles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 34-35, 40.

Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil (ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν); for the devil has been sinning from the beginning (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) ... The children of God and the children of the devil (τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου) are revealed in this way: all who do not do what is right are not from God (οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ), nor are those who do not love their brothers and sisters.

The article has argued against DeConick's pro-gnostic reading of John 8:44. We suggested that it misappropriates the text. As we intimated in the introduction, this pro-gnostic reading is but one misappropriation of the text. Indeed the more predominant misappropriation of the text is the anti-Semitic reading, which presupposes an ethnic violence inherent to the theology of John. To conclude this article, we very briefly want to propose that the fall of DeConick's pro-gnostic reading entails also the fall of the presumed anti-Semitic reading. In other words, we think that it would be better to characterise the confluence of invective and dualism in John 8:44 not as anti-Semitic but rather as intra-Semitic. The discourse is especially heated because the participants are especially close, namely Jesus and those who ostensibly believe him because of what he has been saying (see John 8:31). The language and the theology of the text apply exclusively to dialogue among insiders: to *Ioudaioi* fighting with other *Ioudaioi* for the status of *Ioudaioi*.

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