

4. February 2025

## THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

### “The father of lies”

Jn 8:37-47

*Jesus said to the Jews: “I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me, because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.” They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do what Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God; this is not what Abraham did. You do what your father did.” They said to him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.” Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded and came forth from God; I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But, because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? He who is of God hears the words of God; the reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”*

In His confrontation with the Jews who oppose Him, Jesus leaves no doubt as to the origin of this hostility, or rather this obstinacy. His word, spoken in tune with and on behalf of the Father, finds no place in them. They have another father, even if they call Abraham their father. The discrepancy between them and Jesus is obvious, and the Lord points it out: *“I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father”*.

The father of those who want to eliminate Jesus is the devil. It is he who urges them to kill Him and they listen to him. All their justifications were useless, for their evil intentions, which would later be consummated in the crucifixion, bear witness to who led them to commit such crimes against the Son of God. Their wickedness can no longer

be hidden in the presence of Jesus. Those who encounter the truth either open themselves to it - responding to the heavenly Father who draws them and allows God to work in them - or they close themselves off and, in the worst case, become enemies of the truth.

Although, logically, the human side of such a hardening must also be taken into account, in the case of the Pharisees we can immediately believe Jesus' interpretation. Their murderous intentions are inspired by the one who is the liar and murderer from the beginning.

Jesus is referring to the fallen angel and his followers who, driven by their hatred and blindness, want to destroy the works of God and usurp the place of the Almighty. They have never given up this claim, and to this day the powers of darkness are still at work, persecuting man with their envy and tempting him to rebel against God. They like to take advantage of man's evil inclinations, intensifying them and using them for their own ends. This is clearly seen in the passage from the Gospel of John that we have heard today.

Why were the Jews so obsessed with killing Jesus? The Lord Himself answers this question: *"you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God"*.

Here is the crux of their enmity! It is enmity against the truth and therefore against God. In its most extreme form it is manifested in the fallen angel who, though he knew God, rebelled against the Heavenly Father. In him, hatred, lies and murder are seen in their fullest expression. When man opens himself to his influence, all his evil inclinations are strengthened and, in the worst case, take root in him to the point where he becomes a plaything of the forces of evil, unable (perhaps even unwilling) to resist them.

Then there is an unholy alliance with evil, a kind of father-son relationship with the devil, which is a perverse parody of the relationship between man and God.

Jesus expresses this in a very simple way: if these Jews were really the children of Abraham, they would listen to his voice, because Abraham was distinguished by his obedience to God. Since the coming of Jesus reveals the same God to whom Abraham was obedient, the children of Abraham would love Him and not want to kill Him.

Again Jesus makes it clear: *"Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. "*

This is the tragic situation of the encounter between Jesus and the hostile Jews. The devil has gained a foothold in their lives, and when the One who could free them from his clutches arrives, he even incites them to eliminate Him so that the truth will not come out: the truth that Jesus is the Messiah of the Jewish people and of all humanity. To this day there are many Jews who do not recognise Him, and the devil is still trying to prevent the veil from being lifted from their eyes, because, as Saint Paul says: *"If their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?"* (Rm 11:15)

This is what the devil is still trying to prevent.  
Vade retro, Satana!