

[John 15:26 in Oneness Christology](#)

Rodney L. Smith

[August 7, 2021](#)

“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.” ~John 15:26

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” ~John 14:26

Question: How should we interpret John 15:26 with regards to the sending of the Spirit by Jesus from the Father?

Short answer—within the context of all scriptural revelation, including within the N.T., the Gospel of John, and the Passion Discourses of Jesus—chapters 14-17.

Since Oneness recognizes that Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, yet the Holy Spirit is he himself, meaning he is sending his own presence to indwell us, then this verse in no way contradicts Oneness theology. It is fully compatible with my views. One thing it does show, that within the larger context of Scripture, even within this section of John, Jesus refers to himself and the Father interchangeably.

John 15:26 should be understood in harmony with John 14:26, which precedes it. There Jesus says that the Father will send the Holy Spirit to them. In John 15:26 Jesus says that he will send the Spirit from the Father. Is there a contradiction here? Not at all, because Jesus is God, who is his Father and ours (John 8:53; John 20:17). Also, Jesus’ message to his disciples in John 14:15-28, was that he would return to them in the Spiritual form and indwell them. After he revealed to them plainly that he is the Father (vv. 7-11), he reveals to them that the Father who is “in” him (vv. 10-11), indwelling his humanity, will come to indwell them as well. How? As Jesus in them, for he tells them, “I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you” (v. 20). This other Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit will be he—Jesus—himself (vv. 17-21). He tells them plainly in verse 18, “I will come to you,” and again in verse 21, “I will love him and manifest myself to him.” He also proceeds to tell them that this indwelling presence is both him and the Father together (v. 23). This is Jesus’ own explanation of how he will “manifest [him]elf to us [his disciples], and not to the world” (v. 22).

You see, the Scriptures do indeed teach that there is one God and that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each God. The classic Oneness argument is that the Scriptures never teach the second (or third—however you slice it) affirmation of Trinitarianism, that the Father is not the Son, Son is not the Spirit, Spirit is not the Father (an absolutely impossible claim to support from Scripture), etc. My argument goes one step further. Whereas Trinitarians claim similarly that the Bible never so much as hints that the Father is the Son, that the Son and Father, respectively, are the Holy Spirit, and that somehow proves, or at least supports the Trinitarian view over the Oneness view, in this they are sorely mistaken. For John 14 absolutely does more than hint, it states it outright, from Jesus’ own lips, in his last intimate meeting with his disciples before his crucifixion, (1) that Jesus is the Father, (2) that Jesus is the Holy Spirit, and

(3) that the Holy Spirit is both the Father and Jesus simultaneously. Thus, Trinitarianism fails and only Oneness prevails as the best view which accounts for the entirety of biblical revelation.

If this does not fully answer the question to your satisfaction, I can offer you my Oneness understanding of what John 15:26 if you like, so that you can compare it with what you might hear a Trinitarian saying. What is certain, is that if there are two possible interpretations of a specific verse, that does not prove one over the other. John 15:26 can be understood as Jesus restating what he stated earlier in chapter 14 using different words. The distinction that you are getting hung up on between the Father and the Son is real, but not eternal. It is a distinction of modes of being, Jesus the man referring, as he often does, to God his Father, not God the Father as in the first person of the Trinity, but God as a whole, the godhead if you will. That's the Oneness view, and it is completely compatible with all of the Scripture references that Trinitarians use.

As I often say, there is no doubt that Trinitarianism is biblically based, but Oneness is biblical. Therein lies the fundamental difference between the two. Biblical is always better than biblically based.

Positive Presentation of the Oneness View of John 15:26

Out of the many scriptural citations that Trinitarians use to assert their doctrine of the “three-in-oneness” of God, the vast majority are simply poorly chosen. John 15:26, however, is not one of them. On its surface, this verse can be taken as evidence for the Trinitarian doctrine—legitimately, I think. However, it is important to note that John 15:26 can be interpreted with either a Trinitarian or a Oneness slant. I will offer you my Oneness interpretation of the verse for you to consider alongside your Trinitarian interpretation. First, I think that it is important to note that both Oneness and Trinitarian interpretations of this verse can be true, but if that is the case, then Trinitarianism is true and Oneness is false. If the Trinitarian interpretation is ultimately true, then Oneness as a doctrine is false. If the Oneness interpretation of this one verse is true, it does not necessarily prove Oneness over Trinitarianism. To state it another way, if

Oneness View True → Trinity still possible
Trinity View True → Oneness not possible

I can parse that out after I offer the Oneness view of the passage, if you'd like. Without further ado, here is my view of what John 15:26 is saying.

“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”

As I have just shown, in John 14:26 it is the Father sending the Spirit in Jesus' name, and here it is Jesus sending the Spirit from the Father. There is no contradiction here. The two harmonize perfectly in Oneness theology. Consider also, John 14:14, “If you ask anything in my

name I will do it," = "that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you" (John 15:16) and "whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you" (16:23). Do you see how throughout these final Passion discourses the Lord is saying the same thing to his disciples, multiple times, in different ways, while referring to the Father and to himself interchangeably? Oneness believers do!

When Jesus is glorified, he is fused together with the Father. The limited, frail humanity is no more. He becomes a "life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45). He, as the Son, then becomes omnipresent, and there is no longer a stark distinction between Father and Son as there was during the earthly life of Jesus. The two, once seeming opposites—God and man—are now fully compatible and complimentary. He is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). His glorified body does not return; it is seated on God's throne until his glorious return at the end of the age. Yet his glorified humanity is fused together with the eternal Spirit of his Father and, although it was always his true, transcendent identity all along, thus becomes an extension of his glorious body. This is what I believe the Bible refers to as his glorification, which had to take place prior to the Spirit being given (John 7:39). He comes to indwell us by God's Spirit, which is him (John 14:18), both him and his father (John 14:23). This is why Jesus said, "A little while longer and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19) and:

"These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father."

Let us consider the phrase "figurative language." The Lord is speaking using human terms of sending and being sent. This is figurative language. When he says, "I will come to you," this is a plain declaration of the assurance of Jesus' presence. It is akin to, "And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" in Matthew 28:20.

Jesus sends the Spirit (and the Father is sending him as well), because Jesus is the Father. The Spirit is with us, and this is both Jesus and the Father indwelling us. Another way this is described in scripture is Jesus baptizing us with the Holy Spirit, who is his Father (Luke 1:35), in the same way that John uses water! These metaphors are all different ways of saying the same thing, that Jesus Christ would come back after his ascension to spiritually indwell and empower his followers. Thus, the Spirit proceeds forth from God and fills all things. The term "Holy Spirit" refers to God's omnipresence. So Jesus is glorified, fused together with the Power on High (Matt. 26:64), the inapproachable light which no man has seen nor can see (1 Timothy 6:16), in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18) and becomes a live-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). Then he indwells us who follow him and accept his plan of salvation (Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19-20, etc.)

Now if this view of Jesus on the throne indwelling us as the Holy Spirit is true. This alone doesn't prove that they're not 3 distinct persons, the Father, Son, and Spirit, but it makes Oneness a viable option. If however, the Father bids the newly arrived Christ to send the Spirit, and each are distinct individuals, and the Christ is only "with us" and "in us" representatively through the Holy Spirit, then Oneness can't be true. This, however, cannot be proved by this verse (especially out of context as a verse out of context can prove very little) nor has it ever been conclusively proven from any part of the Bible. Every verse or passage in the Bible that provides legitimate evidence for the Trinity can also be understood in Oneness terms. Every verse is fully compatible with Oneness theology. However, not every verse is compatible with the Trinity, namely any verse or passage which specifically identifies Jesus as the Father or the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Spirit as the Father of Jesus, and I would add, any passage which states that GOD is Jesus' Father and it cannot be substantiated that a first person within GOD is meant and not GOD in his entirety (i.e. John 3:16).

In conclusion, in Oneness interpretation of the Scriptures:

The Father sending=Jesus Sending=Jesus Coming=Jesus and the
Father Coming=the Spirit Coming=Jesus Baptizing with the Spirit

The same thing goes for the indwelling of God's Spirit in us. Notice, in closing, that Jesus states this in two ways in John 14, both before and after Judas' question:

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21).

Which is equivalent to:

"Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (John 14:23).

I think that about settles it.