

John 15:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

Analysis

Jesus promises 'the Comforter' (ὁ παράκλητος/ho paraklētos), a title appearing only in Johannine literature (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1). Paraklētos literally means 'one called alongside' and encompasses multiple functions: advocate, helper, counselor, comforter. Jesus identifies the Comforter as 'the Spirit of truth' (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας), indicating the Spirit's essential character and primary ministry—revealing, teaching, and guiding believers into truth (John 16:13). The Spirit's procession is described: He 'proceedeth from the Father' (ὁ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται). The verb ἐκπορεύεται (ekporeuetai, 'proceeds') indicates eternal procession, the Spirit's personal relation to the Father within the Godhead. This became foundational for pneumatological doctrine—the Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father (and historically, Western churches added 'and the Son,' the filioque controversy). Jesus declares He will 'send' (πέμψω/pempsō) the Spirit 'from the Father,' establishing both the Spirit's divine origin and Jesus' authority to send Him. The Spirit's mission is to 'testify of me' (ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ)—the Spirit's testimony always points to Christ, exalting Jesus and applying His work to believers. The Spirit doesn't draw attention to Himself but illuminates Christ's person and work. This promise assured disciples that Jesus' departure wouldn't leave them orphaned (14:18); the Spirit would come as another Comforter, continuing and intensifying Christ's presence in believers.

Historical Context

Jesus spoke these words in the Upper Room on the night before His crucifixion as part of the extended Farewell Discourse (John 13-17). The disciples were troubled by Jesus' announcement of His imminent departure. The promise of the Spirit addressed their anxiety—Jesus was leaving physically, but the Spirit would come to indwell, teach, and empower them. In Jewish thought, the Spirit of God was associated with prophetic inspiration, divine power, and the age to come (Joel 2:28-32, Ezekiel 36:25-27). Jesus promised that what had been occasional and external would become permanent and internal. The Spirit had rested 'upon' prophets and kings temporarily; now He would dwell 'in' all believers continuously (John 14:17). The promise was fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2) when the Spirit descended on gathered disciples with visible and audible signs. The subsequent book of Acts demonstrates the Spirit's testimony to Christ—through apostolic preaching, miraculous signs, and the global spread of the gospel. Early church theology developed the doctrine of the Trinity partly through reflection on Jesus' teaching about the Spirit. The Spirit is distinct from Father and Son (three persons), yet shares fully in deity. He is sent by both Father (14:26) and Son (15:26), proceeds from the Father, and testifies to the Son. Later theological debates centered on whether the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone (Eastern Orthodox) or from Father and Son together (Western Catholic/Protestant). Regardless, this verse establishes the Spirit's divine personhood, eternal procession, and Christ-exalting ministry.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does the title 'Comforter' (Parakletos) reveal about the Holy Spirit's relationship to believers?

2. How does the Spirit's designation as 'Spirit of truth' connect to Jesus' claim to be 'the truth' (John 14:6)?
3. What is the significance of the Spirit's eternal procession from the Father and His being sent by the Son?
4. How does the Spirit's primary mission to 'testify of me' (Christ) guard against Spirit-focused theology that marginalizes Jesus?

Interlinear Text

Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃ ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν
 when But is come the Comforter which I will send unto you
 G3752 G1161 G2064 G3588 G3875 G3739 G1473 G3992 G5213

παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ
 from the Father even the Spirit of truth which
 G3844 G3588 G3962 G3588 G4151 G225 G3739

παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ¹
 from the Father proceedeth he shall testify of
 G3844 G3588 G3962 G1607 G1565 G3140 G4012

ἐμοῦ.
 me
 G1700

Additional Cross-References

John 14:26 (Spirit): But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Acts 5:32 (Spirit): And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Acts 15:8 (Spirit): And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

Revelation 22:1 (Parallel theme): And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Hebrews 2:4 (Spirit): God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

1 Corinthians 1:6 (Witness): Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:

John 16:7 (Truth): Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

Luke 24:49 (Parallel theme): And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

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