

Do You Know the Holy Spirit?
Lesson Five: “Measures” of the Holy Spirit
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Introduction: How Does the Holy Spirit Work in People’s Lives?

- A. A brief survey of Bible history demonstrates that the Holy Spirit worked in different ways with different individuals (e.g., **John 3:34; Acts 2:4, 38; 8:14-17**).
- B. Recognizing these differences and why they occurred is *extremely* important to our understanding of how the Holy Spirit worked and how He works today.
- C. What we can know **for sure** about how the Holy Spirit works in the lives of people will not be based upon what is unrevealed (God’s silence), but *only upon what is revealed in the Scriptures*.

I. The Different Ways the Holy Spirit Has Worked with Various Individuals.

- A. **Jesus:** The Holy Spirit was given to Him “*without measure*” (**John 3:34**).
 - 1. According to the context (**John 3:30-34**), the One who gave the Holy Spirit without measure to Jesus was **God**.
 - 2. “Measure” / METRON: “a limited portion (degree)” (Strongs); “determined extent, portion measured off, measure or limit” (Thayer’s).
 - 3. Otherwise translated: “He gives the Spirit in an abundant way” (Louw-Nida Lexicon): Jesus, without restriction or limitations was given the Spirit.
 - 4. Jesus was “*full of the Holy Spirit*” (**Luke 4:1**): Jesus’ ability to speak the words of God (**Mat. 12:17-21**) and perform miracles (**Mat. 12:28**) had a *direct* connection to the Spirit given to Jesus “without measure.”
- B. **Apostles and Cornelius’ household:** The Spirit given to them in a *limited* way.
 - 1. They received the baptism with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:5; 2:4; 10:44-47**) administered to them by the Lord Jesus (**Mark 1:8**).
 - 2. The purposes for this baptism were *inspiration* (**Acts 2:4ff; 10:46b**) and *confirmation* (i.e., proof that it was from God) (**Acts 2:33; 10:47; 11:17**).
 - 3. When they were “filled with the Spirit” or when He “fell upon” them, He worked in them, bestowing **only** the gift of speaking in tongues God’s revelation (i.e., the Word of God in a language of men they did not know).
- C. **The Apostles of Christ:** The Spirit was given to them with **restrictive limits**.
 - 1. Set apart from all other Christians, they were chosen by Christ to be His apostles (**Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:21-26; 9:15; 26:16; cf. 2 Cor. 11:5**).
 - 2. Apostles performed miracles by the power of the Spirit (**Rm 15:18-19**).
 - a. Only *genuine* apostles could perform signs, wonders, and miracles (**2 Cor. 12:12**).
 - b. Miracles were **not** performed according to their preference. They were *limited* in what they could do, working miracles **only** when it was God’s will to do so (e.g., **2 Tim. 4:20b; Acts 9:40**).
 - 3. After Pentecost, the apostles continued to be directed and inspired by the Holy Spirit (e.g., **Acts 4:8, 31; 10:19; 13:9; 16:6-7; 20:23; 21:11**).
 - a. The revelation of Christ was given in a “piecemeal” manner: Gradually, complete or full knowledge was given (**1 Cor. 13:8-10**).
 - b. Their teaching is the foundation to the church (**Eph. 2:20**).

D. Christians Selected by God: Each given a *specific* kind of spiritual gift(s)

1. The apostles had the ability to bestow *miraculous* gifts of the Spirit to other Christians through the “laying on of their hands” (**Acts 6:5-8; 8:14-17; 19:6; Rom. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:6**).

Note: This is *not* to be confused with the laying on of hands to show honor or approval or to appoint and set apart someone for a special work (e.g., **Acts 13:3; 1 Tim 4:14b; 5:22**).

- a. As a result of the apostles laying their hands on others, “*they received the Holy Spirit*” (**Acts 8:17**).
- b. The Holy Spirit worked in each person, bestowing a miraculous gift according to **His own will** or choice (**1 Cor. 12:4-11**).
2. The apostles were restricted or limited in the “laying on of their hands” upon others: They could not impart gifts to just anyone they chose!
3. Only those **God** chose received gifts according to His will (**Heb 2:4**).
 - a. The apostles understood this and commonly prayed before “laying their hands” on someone (**Acts 6:6; 8:15; Rom. 1:10-11**).
 - b. Apostles were *vessels* used by God to impart the spiritual gifts.
4. **Only** the apostles had the ability to bestow spiritual gifts to others.
 - a. This is why a special trip had to be made by apostles to visit a church where gifts were needed (**Rom 1:10-11; cf. 1 Cor 1:7**).
 - b. This power did not originate from being baptized with the Holy Spirit (**Act 2:4**); it originated from their *apostleship* (**2 Cor 12:12**).
 - (1) Otherwise Cornelius would have had the ability! (**Ac 10**)
 - c. Ananias did not have this ability as some suppose (**Act 9:10-19**).
 - (1) The purpose of Ananias laying his hands on Saul was so he would *regain his sight* (**Acts 9:12**).
 - d. Not even the elders (presbytery) of a local church (**1 Tim. 4:14**).
 - (1) When Timothy received the spiritual gift, it was simply *accompanied* by prophecy and the approval of the elders.
 - (2) It was not the elders, but Paul who bestowed a spiritual gift to Timothy (**2 Tim. 1:6**).
 - e. This ability to bestow “gifts” *ceased* at the death of the apostles.

E. All Christians: Each one receives the gift of the Holy Spirit (*Non-miraculous*)

1. *Every* person, without exception, who obeys the gospel to become a Christian receives the gift of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:38; cf. John 7:37-39**).
 - a. This is a promise for “*as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself*” (**Acts 2:39**); a promise for *every* generation.
2. The Scriptures make it clear that the gift of Acts 2:38 refers to *the Holy Spirit Himself* who indwells the Christian (cf. **Rom. 5:5; 8:9, 11; 1 Cor. 6:19; 1 Thes. 4:8; 2 Tim. 1:14; 1 John 3:24**).
3. The Spirit provides blessings such as sonship in the family of God (**Gal. 4:6**) and an earnest for our eternal inheritance (**Eph 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:22**).
4. The Holy Spirit will dwell within us *to the extent* that we continue in the word of God (e.g., **Gal 3:2; cf. Rom 10:17; Gal 5:16, 22-23; Rom 8:5-6**).

Conclusion: The Holy Spirit is not “Measured Out” and Divided Like a Physical Thing (Jn 3:34; cf. Lk 6:38). He is a Person to be Respected and Appreciated as God!