

## Questions On Galatians 3:2

Written by Ben Winslett

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I received these questions via email...below are my answers.

*I was hoping you could impart your thoughts to me on Galatians 3:2 -*

**1) In what sense is Paul talking about receiving the Spirit?**

**2) What is meant by the "hearing of faith"?**

**3) And does this verse at all correlate with Romans 10:17**

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First, remember some fundamentals. In regeneration, the Spirit acts by God's decree, not by our will (John 3, Titus 3). Also, according to Galatians, faith is the fruit of the Spirit.

So, on to your questions.

**1) In what sense is Paul talking about receiving the Spirit?**

**Answer:** In the sense of a special Comforter.

*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; [Even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. John 14:16-17*

The Apostles had already been performing miracles through the Spirit of God. And, as Christ said, the Spirit already dwelt with them. This speaks of the Spirit dwelling in them in the sense of a present comforter at Christ's personal absence.

It also had a special reference to receiving the gifts of the Spirit that were present in the 1st century. Notice with the account of Cornelius in Acts 10. Cornelius had already been "cleansed" according to Peter's vision. He also was a man that feared God, indicating that he was born again because an unregenerate has no fear of God before his eyes (Acts 10:2, Romans 3:18). Yet, between verse 44 and 48 Cornelius "received the Holy Ghost." This did not have reference to the new birth, but the special presence of the Holy Ghost manifested by these extraordinary gifts.

So, "receiving the Spirit" has reference to these two phenomenons.

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### **2) What is meant by the "hearing of faith"?**

**Answer:** By faith, we hear the gospel message (Romans 1:17). This is the "ear" by which God's children hear the preached word (Mth 11:15). By faith, these brethren heard the preached word and at their hearing, they "received the Spirit."

### **3) And does this verse at all correlate with Romans 10:17?**

**Answer:** I interpret Romans 10:17 to be a hypothetical argument Paul introduces into Romans 10 to combat his expressed position. Let me explain.

Romans is written in a "dialectical" style of writing. This means that Paul writes as if he is debating an opponent in his letter. For examples of this, note how Paul will often write "but I say," or "thou wilt say." Romans 3:5 is a good illustration of Paul presenting an idea contrary to his own idea just to counter his objector.

Paul says "so then faith cometh by hearing." This is to be understood as the position of Paul's detractor. Paul has said that Israel will face judgement from God over their seeking to justify themselves by the law. He then brings up the argument against his position in verse 14, by saying in essence, "how shall they repent of this without hearing the preached word?" In other words, according to Paul's detractor, they cannot exercise faith without hearing a minister, and since they have not all heard a minister it is unfair for God to judge them. Paul addresses this opinion with verse 18, by saying "BUT I SAY, have they not heard, YES verily..." He then quotes Psalm 19 which report that the Heavens declare the glory of God.

So in summary, he presents the argument against his position (that God would be unfair to judge them for a lack of faith because they have not all heard the preached word) only to express the thought that they have all indeed heard, because the Heavens themselves declare a gospel message, leaving them without excuse.

In Galatians 3, Paul affirms that hearing comes by faith. Paul's objector in Romans 10 argues that faith comes by hearing.