

EQUIVALENT MATTERS

BY: Eddie Gilpin

The Bible employs a grammatical tool called parallelism on several occasions. Although Hebrews writers were most noted for it, it is used in the New Testament as well. A quick example of parallelism can be found in Psalm 119:105. The Psalmist said, ***“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”*** Both of these express the same thought, but use different words in doing so.

In the New Testament there is an interesting and quite informative use of this grammatical device found in I Peter 1:22 and 23. In the former verse the Bible states: ***“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.”*** The latter reads: ***Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”*** Of these two passages, the latter explains or expounds upon the former. Notice the parallel statements:

- 1) ***“Obey the truth”*** (verse 22) is equivalent to ***“being born again”*** (verse 23).
- 2) ***“Through the spirit”*** (verse 22) is equivalent to ***“being the word of God”*** (verse 23).

From these it is really seen:

1) When one “obeys the truth” (cf. Romans 6:17, 18, 3-4: etc.) he is “born again.” Thus, the “new birth” described to Nicodemus by Jesus (John 3:1-13) is simply obedience to what God has commanded concerning salvation. As Peter stated in this verse (22), the soul is “purified” in “obeying the truth.” This being the case, can the soul be “purified” without “obeying the truth?” The answer, of course, is **“No”** (cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:8.)

2) When one is directed by “the word of God,” he is being directed “by the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit operates through the word, and only through the word.

If you write in your Bible, you might want to draw an arrow from the phrase ***“obeying the truth”*** (verse 22) to ***“Being born again”*** (verse 23). This might assist you in remembering that these parallel passages and equivalent thoughts.