

Living Hope!

The New Birth Part 3

1 Peter 1:3 4-7-2012 & 4-8-2012

Summary: How would a half billion dollar inheritance affect the way you feel, think, act, etc? We have been given a far greater inheritance than that via new birth. Result of the new birth: a living hope. It comes through the resurrection (making it certain, giving us a living King, and securing victory over death). The Author of the new birth: the true God, who is merciful. The Response: Praise! (The main point.)

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1 Peter 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Introduction: How Would a \$400 Million Inheritance Affect You?

I got an email from Brett Forbes from Afghanistan last week. He said a buddy of his just got word that he is inheriting 20% of an estate. The estate is worth 2 *billion* dollars. So 20% comes out to \$400 million. What kind of impact would it make on your emotions right now if you got word that you just inherited \$400 million? What impact would it have on your thoughts – would you be a little preoccupied? No matter how hard you tried to focus on what is going on here at church, how could you keep from being preoccupied with thoughts like, Lord, what do You want me to do with all that money? After you bought whatever house you want and whatever cars you want and went on whatever vacations you want – that would not even touch the fringes of that much money. Even if you just invested it, and never touched a dime of the \$400 million, if you got a 10% return on your investment

and just lived off that, that would be over \$110,000 per day that you would have to spend just to spend the interest. That is \$3.3 million a month. I am guessing, if you got news like that right when the service started, you would be a little distracted during the sermon.

Our Inheritance

Look down at verse 4. Do you see that word, **inheritance**? Peter is going to give us news of an inheritance that we really are going to get, that is greater than that \$2 billion estate. It is greater in *every* way. It is more valuable, more satisfying, more joy-giving, longer-lasting, better in every way. Most of it comes when we get to heaven, but even in this life we get huge dividends from it. Not everyone receives this inheritance, but if you are one of the few who does receive it, the benefits you get even in this life are massive. For one thing you get nothing less than the Holy Spirit, who guides you, teaches you, comforts you, strengthens you, sanctifies you, keeps you company, unlocks the treasure house of the Holy Scriptures through enlightenment, and gives you joy. On top of that you get cleansing and forgiveness of sins. This inheritance includes spiritual gifts and a high calling in His glorious kingdom.

And in the next life – untold glories. Every pleasure in this life is a sample. If you get this inheritance, then after the resurrection, you will have a new, glorified, imperishable, physical body, and you will live on a new earth – a new, redeemed, improved version of this earth. It will be a physical place with sights and sounds and tastes and sensations. All the best recreation in this world is enjoyable only because it is a sample of what that world will be like. This world’s version of football games and whitewater rafting and skiing and hiking and hunting and fishing and marital pleasures and watching movies and Christmas morning and family get-togethers and extra spending money and really cool cars and great achievements and secluded, pristine beaches – all pale in comparison to the new versions of those things in the new earth. And best of all, in the new earth those things will never be in competition with enjoyment of God like they are here. In this world, we are constantly tempted to turn those things into idols and enjoy them instead of enjoying God. And it is hard work to learn how to enjoy them as part of our enjoyment of Him. But in the new earth that will not be a problem. There will be no such thing as enjoyment of anything that is not part of our worship and enjoyment of God, which means everything we ever do will increase our love for God. Every day all day forever, every pleasure we indulge in will do nothing but increase our love for God and improve our worship.

So how do you get that inheritance? It is just like any inheritance – you get it by being born into the right family. It is something you are born into.

3 ... In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope ...4 and into an inheritance

We have been born again into two things – a living hope and this eternal inheritance. That new birth is the central topic of all that Peter wants to say in this massive opening sentence, which starts in verse 3 and goes all the way through verse 9. It is all about the new birth – or if you want the seminary term – regeneration. Your first birth was when you came out of your mother’s womb into this world. But when a person becomes a Christian there is a second birth that takes place. You are born into another world.

The Result of the New Birth: a Living Hope

Look how Peter describes this new world in verse 3.

3 ... he has given us new birth into a living hope

Hope – Present Enjoyment of Future Good

When the Bible uses the word “hope” it does not mean the same thing we normally mean by that word in our culture. In our culture, we use the word “hope” to describe a wish. I hope it doesn’t rain, I hope my team makes the playoffs, I hope I get a promotion, I hope I don’t get sick, I hope my wife makes me flank steak and cheese potatoes for dinner – those are all things that may or may not happen, and when we say “I hope they happen” we are really just expressing a wish. Jay Adams calls that “hope so” hope. When Scripture uses the word hope, it does not mean that. The Biblical concept of hope is this: It is a feeling of happiness you have right now because of some good thing you know for sure is coming. If you are in a good mood right now because tonight you are going to your favorite restaurant, that good mood is hope. If you are leaving on your dream vacation as soon as you get off work Friday, and so you are in good spirits all day at work, and you are not bothered much by things that go wrong – that mood you are in is hope. That is what hope is. Hope is present enjoyment of future delights.

It is an amazing thing if you think about it. If you are still at work, why would you be happy? You are not experiencing any of the wonderful things about this vacation yet. There is no beach sand between your toes, no great food in your mouth, no relaxing in a beautiful place, none of the fun things you have planned are actually happening right now. You are not experiencing any of it right now – all you are experiencing is the same things you always experience at work. And yet you feel happy because of anticipation. God has designed us to be able to experience future joy ahead of time. He made us to be able to actually enjoy future pleasures before they even happen.

Everyone has some hope. We all look forward to something, and that keeps us going. When a person has no hope at all – no future enjoyment leaking into the present, that is what depression is. The stream of happiness from future pleasure gets choked off for one reason or another, and the result is a horrible condition that is commonly called depression. But the norm in life is to have at least some degree of hope.

Living Hope

We all have hope, but when you are born a second time, you are born into a life that is a different kind of hope. Peter calls it **a living hope**. What is a living hope? It is the opposite of a dying hope. People who have only been born once exist on dying hopes.

Proverbs 10:28 The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing.

If you are in a good mood because you are going to your favorite restaurant tonight, then when you eat the meal – maybe it meets all your expectations, maybe it doesn’t, but either way, once you eat the meal, the hope – all the joy of anticipation is gone. It dies. Now you have to turn your attention away from that and scan the future to see if there is some other delightful thing coming up that you can set your hope on. And that hope will eventually die too. That is how the world lives – just moving from one dying hope to the next.

But the day a person first places his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he or she is born into a living hope for an eternal inheritance. And that hope is different from any earthly hope. The more of it you experience, the more the hope increases, because there is always a greater experience of it coming in the future. When I am stressed out and frazzled and I am at wit’s end because of all the things that are happening to me, and I have an experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit that takes away all my anxiety and gives me a sense of rest and comfort and refuge and strength, that gift from God always comes with a little note attached that says, “There’s a lot more where that came from.”

So we have an ever-expanding, growing, increasing, living hope. And that changes everything in the way we live. It is one of the most fundamental differences between the way we live and the way unbelievers live. It changes the way we act in our marriages. In chapter 3 when Peter is instructing

wives on how to live in submission to their unbelieving husbands, and how to make themselves beautiful, and he says this:

1 Peter 3:5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful.

Peter calls wives to some things that very hard – things a woman who has been born only once could never do. He calls them to do things that women who are living on dying hopes could never do. But they are possible for Christian women because of this living hope.

It makes us live in such a radically different way that if you live that way, people in the world will come up to you and demand an explanation.

1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

How it works

Here is how it works: Imagine you and your family are heading off tomorrow for an inexpensive vacation. You really had to scrimp and save to even be able to go at all, and it is really a stretch financially just to pay for the travel, so once you are there you really can't spend any extra money. The first day you are there the hotel desk gives you a message, letting you know you have just inherited \$400 million. Let me ask you, what difference would that make in the way you act on this vacation? It would have several effects. One thing would be this - all the pressure is now off for you to enjoy this vacation. You know how sometimes you go on vacation, and your hopes are up, and you have spent a lot of money, and so it is just really important to you that things go well? That is why a lot of times people are more irritable when they are on vacation than they are any other time. They are easily irritated when things go wrong, because it is ruining their one shot at real happiness for the year. When people have the goal of enjoying themselves – that is always when they are the most irritable, the most easily angered, the most selfish, and ironically, the most unhappy.

So if you are on vacation, and your happiness is riding on this vacation going well (the vacation is your hope), then you will behave one way. But then when you get news about the huge inheritance, now the pressure is off. Suddenly it does not matter all that much if this vacation goes according to plan or it flops. So you finish out the vacation, and you enjoy what there is to enjoy, and you do not sweat the things that go wrong. If something goes wrong, and it starts to affect your mood, you just turn your attention away from that thing and think about the inheritance instead. You do not need this vacation to go well in order to be happy, so now you are free to spend your time just trying to make it delightful to those around you. It frees you up to be generous.

That is similar to our situation in this world. Your whole life in this world is like that vacation. And the \$400 million is like the inheritance you have now been born into. And this life of hope that is so different from the way everyone else lives, is made possible because of the resurrection.

Through the Resurrection

3 In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

1) Makes the Inheritance Certain

The way we enjoy this living hope is through Jesus' resurrection, because it is Jesus' resurrection from the dead that makes the inheritance certain. A lot of religious leaders can come along and promise all kinds of pie in the sky, but if you do not know for sure that it is true, you cannot live in hope. If it is not 100% for sure, then you are back to that "hope so" kind of hope. And that does not bring any joy at all. I am hoping the Denver Nuggets will play some defense against the Lakers this Friday, but that hope is not bringing me any joy whatsoever, because not only is it not certain, but it is

not even all that likely. Anticipating a future delight does not put you into a good mood now unless you are sure it is going to happen. And the resurrection is the guarantee of our inheritance. We know for sure these things are true because of the historical fact of the resurrection. (The most well attested event in all of ancient history.)

2) Gives us a Living King

But that is not the only way the resurrection helps us live lives of hope. We can live with ongoing, continuing, growing, increasing hope because our hope is not in an event or in a sum of money – it is in a person. If you are in a good mood right now because of a meal you are looking forward to, then your hope dies as soon as you eat the meal. But if you are in a good mood right now because tomorrow you are getting married, and your joy is tied not to an event but to a person, then the joy of hope lasts as long as your good relationship with that person lasts. (Assuming the person does not change.) This living hope that we have been born into – the joy of it comes from a Person – the Lord Jesus Christ. And that Person is alive!

Most religions are based upon a dead founder. Islam revolves around Mohammad, who is dead. Gautama Buddha – dead. Confucius, Zoroaster, Joseph Smith – all dead. What happens when you follow a dead man? Whatever you have from that man now is all you will ever have. He cannot continue to give greater and greater blessing – whatever he gave is all he will ever give. But because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, we follow Someone whose mercies are new every morning. He is alive. He did not just give us a religious system and then die and go away. He did die, but right before He died He said this to His Disciples:

John 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Matthew 28:20 surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Jesus Christ was there with you last year when you walked through that really rough time. He has been with you every day since then including right now. The last time you experienced delight in Him, that was His doing, and it was just a taste of greater things He has in store. When you disobey, He responds with just what you need. When you obey, he responds to that. It is an ongoing, personal, relational interaction. He IS your inheritance. He is right there with you personalizing His grace to your needs in an ongoing interaction with you like a Father raising a son. A child gets to his fifth birthday, and it is the best birthday he has ever had, but when it is over he does not have to despair, as though nothing good remains in the future. That one party might now be a dead hope, but the father who made it a great party is alive and well and there is plenty more where that came from. That is a living hope.

3) Secures Victory over Death

So the resurrection of Jesus Christ enables us to live lives of hope first because it makes our inheritance certain, second because we have a living Benefactor whose mercies are new every morning, and then one more: victory over death. One thing that really kills hope for people who have only been born once is the problem of death – and not just the fact that I am going to die someday, but the whole process of death. It is happening even now. I am 44 years old, and my body is already declining. I am past my prime physically. In fact, I think I missed my prime, because whenever it was, I was out of shape at the time. And now it is just all downhill from here until I die. You get older and one by one parts of your body start wearing out, mentally we slow down, memory goes, we just cannot think like we used to be able to. I don't know when I am going to die – could be today or later this week, or it could be in forty years, but one thing is for sure, if the Lord tarries I am going to die. Nothing is more certain than that. The death rate in the United States is still one each – we all die. And nothing puts a damper on hope like the reality of death. How can I be in a good mood about what is coming tomorrow when tomorrow puts me one day closer to the grave?

Proverbs 11:7 When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes; all he expected from his power comes to nothing.

Everything he was looking forward to vanishes. It all comes to nothing – in fact, worse than nothing.

Proverbs 11:23 The desire of the righteous ends only in good, but the hope of the wicked only in wrath.

They get to Judgment Day and everything they ever looked forward to is gone forever, and all they have now to look forward to is eternal wrath. Death is a massive problem for people who have only been born once – but not for us. What happens after death is not a problem, nor is the process of dying in this life. We do go through that process, and we do groan as we suffer, but it does not take away the joy of our hope – because of Jesus' resurrection.

By becoming a man and defeating death on our behalf, He removed that as a problem. Death is still a dark valley that we have to pass through, but our Elder Brother in this new family we have been born into has gone before us and has prepared the way for us on the other side. And so because of His resurrection from the dead, anyone who has been born again into His family is in a situation now where all our best years are ahead of us. Because of the risen Christ I can say with absolutely certainty something that no one in the world can say, namely: All my best years are still ahead of me. All my best years spiritually, mentally, financially – even physically, are all still in the future. Only someone who possesses a living hope for an eternal inheritance can say that.

The Author of the New Birth

The True God

So all that is the result of the new birth. We have been born again into a living hope and into an inheritance. So the result of the new birth is that we have this living hope. But that is not the main point of the passage. Before Peter even tells us anything about the result of the new birth he points us first to the Author of the new birth.

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth

The Author of the new birth is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter wants to make it crystal clear who he's talking about to make sure we get the right God. In the OT all the surrounding pagan cultures worshipped all kinds of false gods, and so when the Jews wanted to refer to the one, true, living God they would use phrases like, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," or "the God of our fathers" or "the God of Israel." It was important, back then, to make sure people understood which God they were referring to because in a culture where every group has their own set of gods, if you just say, "God" without specifying which god, it makes it sound like any god will do. And we have exactly the same situation today. If you go to an AA meeting, they talk about a higher power, but they go out of their way not to identify any one higher power in particular, because any higher power will do. It is BYOG – bring your own god. But in Scripture we learn that there is actually only one true God, and all the other gods of all the other religions are demons. We know that for sure because of all the founders of all the religions the only one God raised from the dead is Jesus.

So when you worship God it is very important to get it right which God you are worshipping, because praying to the wrong god, worshipping the wrong god, following the wrong god – is treason and idolatry and adultery against the true God and is punishable by eternal torment.

So we need to get it right. So Peter makes it clear who he's talking about, and the reference point to do that is no longer Abraham or our forefathers or Israel – the new reference point to make sure you've got the right God is Jesus Christ. That's the most sure-fire way to know if you have the right

God. If you want to know if the God you are worshipping is the one, true God or a demon, all you have to do is ask, “Am I worshipping and praying to and obeying the same God that Jesus Christ prayed to and obeyed and taught about?” It is that God who raised Jesus from the dead, and it is that God who has given us the new birth. And He did it because of one particular attribute that He has that moved Him to give us new birth.

Mercy

1 Peter 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth

God’s mercy is a characteristic that He has that moves Him to help those who are in trouble. Like when the Good Samaritan helped the man who had been robbed and beaten and left for dead – that is mercy. And our new birth happened only because God loves showing mercy. And that is huge, because if He helped us for some other reason, we might not have a living hope. If God helped us because there were some rule that He had to abide by, then any time our need fell outside the bounds of the rule, we would be out of luck. But He helped us because of something that is a part of His very nature. That means the mercy we need will be available as long as God exists, which is forever. So when you look at who gave us this new birth, and you understand His nature, that gives you hope for the future any time you will ever need mercy.

God’s mercy is a priceless treasure to us, because we understand that if you are without mercy, you have no hope. Spurgeon said, “No other attribute could have helped us had mercy refused.” Unless God decides to show mercy, no one can be reconciled to Him. All the evil in the world is from man’s sin, and all the good in the world is from God’s mercy. So we love the mercy of God, and we love the God of mercy.

So the result of the new birth is wonderful, but it is not the main point. More important than the result of the new birth is the Author of the new birth. This amazing God who gave us life! But that is not the main point either.

The Response to the New Birth - Praise

Before talking about the new birth He talks about God and His mercy. But there is something that comes even before that, and that is the main point. If you want to know the purpose of this passage, and the goal of this sermon, all you have to do is look at the first word.

Praise (or Blessed)

Literally it is **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**. To bless God means to recognize His worthiness to receive praise. When you see the phrase “Bless the Lord” or “Bless God” in Scripture, it is an emotional exclamation calling upon everyone to acknowledge and rejoice in some wonderful aspect of what God is like, and to give Him honor and glory and praise in response to that attribute.

Peter begins his letter with an emotional outburst. The writing of his opening sentence is a worship event for Peter. He is very different from most people in our day who teach on the new birth. Usually when people teach about regeneration it is decidedly non-emotional. And Peter could have done it that way. He could have just stated the facts, like he does throughout the rest of his letter. But instead he puts the emotion of his heart on paper in the very first word before he says anything because that response is his main point. His main point is not that we have been born again. It is not that we have a living hope. It is not that Jesus rose from the dead. It is not that God has great mercy. It is not that we have an eternal, secure inheritance. Peter’s main point in this opening sentence is the exclamation of his heart: “Bless God for all that!”

This is yet another example of the principle we learned in our study of worship – the purpose of theology is doxology. Doxology is worship; theology is doctrine. All true worship is a response to doctrine, and the purpose of all doctrine is worship.

Live in Hope

So how do you respond to a passage like this? How do you put it into practice? What are the implications for how we should live? One implication is we should live lives of hope. We have been born again into a living hope, but that does not automatically mean we will experience that hope. In fact, we will find out as we go that it is a major effort.

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, having prepared your minds for action ... set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

In order to live in hope, it requires that you really roll up the sleeves of your mind and work hard. It does not come naturally, because it requires faith. It requires that you live according to things that you cannot see with your eyes. So one way we should respond to the truth of this passage is by living lives of hope. We are responsible to do that, because that brings God glory – when people live in a good mood for no other reason than their expectation of the future goodness of God. That honors Him, and so we must do it.

How do you do that? More time spent thinking about the inheritance, and less time focusing on the details of this chintzy little vacation we are on. The inheritance – the Holy Spirit and His guidance, teaching, comfort, strengthening, sanctification, companionship, enlightenment, joy, cleansing, forgiveness of sins, spiritual gifts, your calling – everything that comes from the Spirit. And in the next life – glories not even worth comparing to what goes on in this life. Glories that make even the most horrific suffering in this life seem light and momentary in comparison. The glorified, eternal version of all the delights of this world, and the unhindered delight in God that will result. Somehow we need to manage to turn more of our attention to all that.

Focus on Mercy

Respond to this passage by living a life of hope. Second, respond to this passage by fixing your attention on God and His mercy and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is where the joy will come from. Deepen your understanding of His attributes, and increase the frequency that you think about them and seek to experience them.

Bless God!

So those are two good ways to respond to this passage. But the most important way to respond is to obey the one command in the passage – praise! That is the only direct call to action. Bless God for all this. Keep thinking about these things until praise boils up out of your heart.

What kind of God requires this of His people? What kind of religion have you ever heard of where the main requirement imposed on the people is to tap in to transcendent joy, and live that way? All we have to do is live lives of hope! And we say, “But God – how can I do that?” And God says, “Here, let Me help,” and He gives us an inheritance that is beyond anything we can even imagine. He unleashes His mercy and gives us new birth into a life of hope in that inheritance, and then just calls us to enjoy it. He gets the glory, and we get the joy. And we say with the psalmist:

Psalms 52:9 I will praise you forever for what you have done; in your name I will hope, for your name is good. I will praise you in the presence of your saints.

Benediction: Ro.15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Application Questions:

- 1) What hinders your response of praise over the new birth? What could you do to change that?
- 2) Can you see areas in your life where your mood is different from the world's because of living hope in your inheritance? Can you see areas that should be different but that are not? What could you add to your daily routine that would turn your attention more toward your inheritance?

Appendix: Summary of the New Testament Teaching on the New Birth

Required for Entry into the Kingdom

In John 3 there was a respected religious leader in Israel who came to Jesus and said, "We know that you are from God." And instead of saying, "Well, thank you. It's so kind of you to notice," Jesus said this to the man:

John 3:3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

So Jesus just skips the small talk and gets right to the point.

4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" 5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

So the first birth is physical, the second is spiritual. And it is described with the metaphor of birth because when it happens you become a whole new person with a new nature – new abilities and new desires and appetite that you did not have before. Another metaphor Scripture uses to describe it is by saying when this happens you become a new creation. God actually brings into being a part of you that was not there before. A third way it is described is it is like a resurrection. The spiritual part of you – the part of you that is capable of seeing God's glory as delightful and desirable – was dead, and when you are born again that part comes alive. So it is being created from nothing, it is like being raised from the dead, and it is like being born a second time. So God uses the most extreme metaphors possible to describe the radical degree of change that takes place when this happens.

Radical Change

Everything changes. Your first birth determined your ethnic identity, your citizenship, your socioeconomic class, your family relationships – everything about you. And in your second birth, it all changes. It changes your relationship with everything in the universe. And most importantly it changes your relationship with God.

It is a Washing

You go from being ugly and detestable in God's sight because of the contamination of sin, to being clean and pure and delightful in God's sight.

Titus 3:5 He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit

So it is a cleansing that changes the way God looks at you. And your relationship with Him goes from being His enemy to being adopted into His family as a son or daughter. So clearly it is not our doing – it is God’s doing. Creation, spiritual birth, resurrection – that is stuff only God can do. How does He do it? He uses His Word.

James 1:18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth

Someone proclaims the gospel to us, and God uses that to bring about the new birth in us. “Does that mean it just happens out of the blue? We aren’t involved in any way?” Some people have assumed that. They look at those metaphors and conclude that we must be passive in the whole process. But that conclusion pushes the metaphors farther than they were intended. There is a response on our side.

John 1:12 to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God¹

This experience of being born again is available to anyone. All you have to do is entrust your life to Jesus Christ. That means trusting Him more than you trust yourself, so when He says, “This is the way to go,” but to you the other way seems better, you will trust His judgment over your own and follow Him no matter what the cost. That is faith. And the moment you have that kind of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, at that moment you are born again. So that is a rundown on what the New Testament teaches about new birth, but today we want to zero in on what Peter wants to teach us about the new birth.

¹ There are some who teach that every part of salvation is by faith except for being born again. They say forgiveness, justification, sanctification – it all comes as a result of faith – except for regeneration. They say that first you are born again – apart from faith – and then as a result of being born again, now you have new life and so now you are capable of believing. And so you believe, and then it is through that believing that you are saved. That is another one of those views that comes through human reasoning. They figure, “Mankind is so depraved that there’s no way we could believe until after we have been born again.” So those people who say, “To all who have been born again God granted faith.” But John says the opposite: “To all who believe, He gave the right to become children of God.” Being born again into the family of God is just like every other aspect of salvation – it is by faith.