

THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF SIDNEY EDWARD COX

CD 85 contains two Messages
Themes From Acts of the Apostles Chapters 1-2

Editorial Note: From 1956 - 1960, Sidney and Violet Cox lived in Miami, Florida. Sidney was on the teaching faculty of the Miami Bible Institute, teaching courses on the New Testament while serving as Professor of New Testament at the institute.

While in Miami, Sidney further developed a relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, who sponsored and supported the Miami Bible Institute. The Christian and Missionary Alliance operates a vast network of churches and is similar to a denomination. Miami Bible Institute trained ministers to enter pastorates in CMA churches. This series of messages or Bible lessons was delivered at the Miami Gospel Tabernacle, a local CMA church with a membership of 300-400 people. It is also believed that Sidney and Violet were members of this congregation at that time.

Other references in this series would date them to October 1959 at which time Sidney was 72 years of age.

He describes that this series was to last for six months; however, we have only found the first four installments of the series that cover the first four chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney and Violet Cox. February 2009.

Tracks 1-5. Themes from Acts of the Apostles Chapter 1. “Proof – Promise - Power - Pathway”

Introduction from the live deliverance of this message to The Gospel Tabernacle in Miami, Florida¹
...you can't do that in half the time and we have less than that right now so that what we shall do will be to go along as far as we can and then regardless of what next Sunday's lesson may be, we're going to pick it up right where we stop this morning; because one of the nice things that faces us for the next while is that we can spend not one quarter, but six months in the Acts of the Apostles. Now that gives us some real opportunity to study a book. When you touch a book with one lesson period, well you can't do very much about it then. But when you have an opportunity like we have now facing us – we have six months, all of this quarter to the end of the year and then the first quarter of next year. And it could well be, I don't know, that there might even be more than that. But, we've got six months at any rate.

I'd like us to thank God for that and to be grateful for it because it gives us a chance to read the book over and over and over and over again. And if you do not do that, you will miss 9/10s of the blessing. If all you do is just come and listen to me, and you get a little fragment here and there, a crumb or two maybe, but you will miss the main thing unless you for yourself read the book of the Acts of the Apostles. In six months, we ought to read it every week all the way through, and that wouldn't be any particular burden on

¹ This was extracted from a cassette tape that I have not saved for posterity since it was a duplicate of the message contained on CD-85.

any of us.

Another thing I think we ought to thank God for, and we very seldom do, is the fact that we have a text book, not merely the Acts of the Apostles, I'm not referring to that, but we have lesson helps that are superb. I don't know whether we really realize just how fine these lesson helps are. I have been amazed as I've been going through them week after week there, and turning back to the masthead and noticing the name of the man and the people that are responsible for them. I don't know anything about Harold Frailey who is the one who writes most of these things for the Adult Department at any rate. I don't know anything about him. All I know is he writes these things. But we shall be thanking God for him forever. I don't know whether any of you know who he is or where he comes from of anything about him. I presume he's right in the heart throb of the Christian and Missionary Alliance movement or he wouldn't be doing this, but we have something to thank God for; and I thought this morning you wouldn't mind if I just mentioned that because there's a deep sense of gratitude in my own heart for this that lies before us today and how greatly privileged we are.

Introduction used for other distributions by Sidney Cox of this audio message

We would like to welcome you to this, the first of our classes on the Acts of the Apostles, that very important book that connects the gospels on the one side with the epistles on the other. Now, let me remind you of one or two preliminary things that we shall keep in mind. First, each of our lessons will be approximately 30 minutes in length, and in each case, the scripture that we are considering will be read; generally speaking, we shall read it together. Now, I'm quite sure you will understand that some of the material that we are using was given in other classes in other places, and because of that there may be an occasional local reference. I may refer to somebody who's in the class or a place or something of the kind. You will understand this.

I want us to make up our minds at the beginning that we will do three things in this course. One: read through it. Think through it. Pray through it. Let's keep in mind, if you please, that the only teacher who can bring out the real hidden depths of meaning is the Holy Spirit, Himself. Let us trust Him, each one of us, personally, to guide us and to bring to our thought that which is in His thought, so that we may know just what he wants us to know. He is the only one who can change common sense into scriptural sense. And so we will rely upon the Holy Spirit and we will be faithful in our attendance. Let's go on step by step and we shall be amazed, I'm quite sure, and blessed as we discover what God has to say to us through our study together of the Acts of the Apostles.

Beginning of Sermon

We're going to study together the Acts of the Apostles, and while we shall not read this morning all of the scripture portion that's given in our leaflets, I do want us to read the opening verses of the Acts of the Apostles. And I want you to notice them, if you please. Here we have a book that is very wonderful in many, many ways.

“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach,”²

Who was Theophilus? Will somebody tell me, please? Who was Theophilus?

2 Acts 1:1

(audience answers)

He was a believer in the early church, we know one other thing about him. Now there are many things we do not know about him, but we do know one thing about him. What is that one thing that links him with this?

(audience answers)

He was a companion of Luke, yes. And you can go one step further than that.

(audience answers)

Yes, he was a convert, that's true, but there's one particular thing that links him here. It says, "The former treatise"; what former treatise? The Gospel of Luke was addressed to this man, as well as the Acts of the Apostles. Now that's the interesting thing about this man. He appears in the Gospel of Luke; he appears here as well, because don't forget that these two books were both written by the Apostle Luke, or by Luke.

Someone has designated the Acts of the Apostles as, *The Second Book of Luke*, and I think perhaps he's right. That was Dr. Leon Tucker, who did that. I have a copy somewhere or other, yes, of his little booklet here that is called, *The Second Book of Luke*, and this is one of the finest little digests of the Acts of the Apostles that can be found anywhere, as all of Dr. Leon Tucker's works were.

Listen to it again, "All that Jesus began both to do and to teach,"³

Now that word links us definitely with the Gospel of Luke. And remember, if you please, that the Gospel of Luke told us more about the earthly life of our Lord than any other gospel. Now, the Gospel of John tells us important things, but it doesn't tell us many of the details of our Lord's life. You'll remember that of the number of days of our Lord's earthly ministry, the Gospel of John only mentions twenty of those days. 1,260 days in His earthly ministry, the Gospel of John only mentions twenty of them. Now, the Gospel of Mark also omits great sections of the earthly life of our Lord, but Matthew, and Luke in particular tell us more about the earthly life of our Lord than any other book. Now, here is the continuation of it. Here in the Gospel of Luke is the story of the beginning of our Lord's teaching. Here in the Acts of the Apostles you find that teaching continue. "Jesus began both to do and to teach." Here in the Acts of the Apostles He continues to do and to teach. That's one of the keys of this book.

"Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen; To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs,"⁴

I wonder if it would be in order for me to just stop a second or two here and find a piece of chalk and put one or two words on the board as we go along. This one for instance, "many infallible proofs." That's the title of the great book on the inspiration of the scripture by Dr. A.T. Pearson. It is called, *Many Infallible Proofs*. If you happen to be wandering around a library anywhere, Miami Bible Institute for instance, it

3 Acts 1:1

4 Acts 1:2,3

wouldn't hurt to take that book down from the shelf and you'll be perfectly at liberty to do so, and glance through that. *Many Infallible Proofs* - here is the word here, that's the first one or two.

“Whom he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”⁵

Now, let's put something else on the board here, because don't forget that this early part of the Acts of the Apostles is divided into two parts – forty days here that are mentioned in the lesson there, in the reading; forty days here, and ten days here, making a total of fifty; from the resurrection here until the ascension here.

Now here is the opening section of the Acts of the Apostles. This is the thing that is covered in Chapter One, the section that we have before us this morning - these two particular parts here, forty days in which he showed himself alive by many infallible proofs. Proofs of what? Well, the answer to that is, proofs of his resurrection. That was the thing that was being proved in those forty days. The great thing that our Lord did in this forty day period was to prove his resurrection, and He did by many infallible proofs. Now, let's go on.

“Being seen of them forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And, being assembled together with them, commanded that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.”⁶

Let's put another word on the board here. It's begins with P so it's easy to remember. One is proof, the other is promise. Now, here's the pathway there. First of all, the proof of his resurrection. Second, this great promise. Now, the promise in first Acts is designated in two ways: One, it is called the promise of the Father, and the other is the general promise of his presence with his disciples, “To whom he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”⁷

How many days hence?

(audience answers)

Ten, that's right. Ten days from that time he said those words, cause he said it right here. Ten days afterwards that prophecy was fulfilled.

“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”⁸

5 Acts 1:3

6 Acts 1:3,4

7 Acts 1:3-5

8 Acts 1:6

Now I want you to notice the necessity for these people staying, these disciples, staying until they had been endowed with power from on high. In other words, until the Holy Ghost was given and He had taken control of them so that He, the Holy Spirit, could do what the Lord Jesus said He would do when He was there in that upper room, the 14th, 15th, 16th chapters of John. Now, here's the time when that is going to be done.

What did he say He would do? He said would teach them all things. He would bring all things to their remembrance. He would guide them. He would empower them. He would encourage them. all of these things. Now they were to do certain things and without the endearment of the Holy Spirit that was utterly impossible. There wasn't one of them, for instance, that knew what the gospel was, not one. And this is one of the proofs of it, there, that at the very last moment, remember that it's only just a few minutes after this that our Lord is received out of their sight by a cloud that came and carried him away, and He's gone out of their sight and yet one of the very last things they say to Him is, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Now, there was nothing wrong with their inquiring, not at all, not at all. There wasn't anything wrong with that; our Lord didn't correct them because they were thinking of His establishing the kingdom. Of course, He was going to establish the kingdom, but not at that time. He is still going to establish that kingdom.

You will notice that when our Lord corrected them, it was not at the point as to whether He would establish the kingdom, but at the point of the times and seasons. What He said to them was this, "It isn't any of your business what time and season it is; that's in the hands of the Father." He's going to establish the kingdom alright, but we have no right to pry into the matter of the times and seasons." That's where He was correcting them. But you can see the area of their ignorance and how much they needed the empowerment and endearment of the Holy Spirit if they were going to carry out the work that was being given to them.

"When they therefore were come together they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."⁹

Now, let's put another word on the board there. What other word beginning with P has suddenly appeared before us there? We've got proof, and we've got promise, now what else? And ye shall receive what? Power, that's right. Let's put it down here. We've got this word too. Now we've got power, before we didn't have power. Now we've got it, and one of the things that they have to do now that power comes upon them is to go ahead into all the world with the great task of witnessing.

Now remember, and here's about the only thing we shall be able to talk about this morning, but I want to dwell for just a minute or so on this. There are two things that always accompany each other. Notice them please. One is waiting, and the other is witnessing. Now they were told to wait and then to witness. They were told to tarry, and then to testify. It wasn't turned the other way around. It didn't say, go on with your witnessing and when you're tired and don't know what to say then wait a while. Not at all. You wait and

9 Acts 1:6-8

then witness. You tarry and then testify. We all know that there is a great deal of useless witnessing because there is so little waiting. Right? There is so much fruitless testifying because there is so little tarrying. We get so busy sometimes witnessing, we've just got to be witnessing all the way along, every day to everybody. Witness, witness, witness. Wait a minute. Let's not throw any cold blanket over that. But witnessing without waiting is a fruitless task. We are not prepared to look into the face of anybody with God's message until we have first looked into the face of God Himself. We are not prepared to go to anybody with God's message until we have first tarried for ourselves, until the hush has come upon our hearts, until the stillness has come in the deeps of our spirits, until we have waited in the presence of God. We do far more if we could only learn the right order of things, that effective witnessing depends upon waiting, and effective testimony depends upon tarrying.

Now, these folks were told to go into all the world and preach the gospel, that as witnesses, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me." By the way, that word there about going into all the world and starting first in Jerusalem and then in Samaria and then to the uttermost parts of the earth, that suggests another word for us beginning with P. What word would it be? Let's put it down. It may not be quite so clear as some of the others, but let's put it this way. The "pathway" that they were to follow. Now, they were not in any doubt as to what they were to do. They were to start right at Jerusalem, and then they were to move from there to somewhere else, and then from there to the uttermost parts of the earth. That was the pathway that was marked out before them there.

Now see what we've got: we've got the proof of his resurrection, because the heart of their message just as the heart of our message, is the message of a risen Christ. "Without the resurrection we are of all men most miserable."¹⁰ We have no message either for ourselves or for anybody else. This proof that is there. Then the promise of the Father that He would send somebody. Here is the power that is coming. You can add another word there if you want to. You can add the word person, because remember that God's power isn't just something that comes, in spite of Jehovah's Witnesses. The power of God is a person, not just an influence. God doesn't send an influence to fill you, not at all. Your heart isn't an empty vessel to start with. And the Holy Ghost is not a substance to fill an empty vessel. The word 'fill' means to control; that the Holy Spirit takes control. Now that's exactly what He was going to do here. He was going to take these men and take control of them.

While they were talking about this and other matters of equal importance, our Lord was received up out of their sight - that strange thing that happened on the brow of the Mount of Olives. This strange thing, that while he was talking to them - is that the first bell, or the second? It's time for the second, alright - while He was talking with them, this thing happened. Not that a cloud, not that He went up and received into a cloud, not at all. But He went up, and as He was going up, a cloud from God came and received Him into itself and lifted Him up. This wasn't any ordinary cloud, not at all. When our Lord comes, He's not coming in any rain cloud, He's coming in the clouds of heaven, and He went back there from the Mount of Olives in the clouds of heaven. The cloud that covered the altar, the cloud that covered the mercy seat, the cloud that covered the camp of Israel, the Shekinah Glory; God came and in this personal way received His Son back to Himself again.

While these disciples were talking, remember, two visitors, not angels, men came and said to them, "This

¹⁰ I Corinthians 15:19-20, paraphrased.

same Jesus shall so come in like manner.”¹¹ Now, we spend time sometimes underscoring our scriptures, but we'd better underscore that in our hearts. The same Jesus in like manner is coming again, and that isn't any figure of speech.

Now, next week we'll just pick up the story where we leave it this morning, do a little bit more on the last part of the first chapter, because it is most important, and then go on from there. Thank you.

¹¹ Acts 1:11