

**THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF  
SIDNEY EDWARD COX**

Home Bible Class #1  
Gospel of John  
Introduction: Differences & Distinctions

**Editorial Note: This series is an example of how Sidney Cox attempted to use the tape recorder to help him reach groups with his sermons and Bible lessons. He had purchased a reel-to-reel tape recorder and used it extensively in this effort.**

**The origins of his interest in this technology and technique trace to the health and condition of his beloved wife, Violet. Violet was a victim of severe rheumatoid arthritis, and was an invalid for several years leading up to her death in 1967. During the latter years of her life, Sidney was her sole caregiver. She was never institutionalized.**

**As a result of his dedication to her, Sidney had to curtail his travels and preaching, although he remained in great demand by The Salvation Army and the Christian and Missionary Alliance churches to preach and teach. Unable to travel, he responded to invitations by recording his sermons and Bible lessons in the quietness of his apartment and mailed the audio tape to the various groups for their use.**

**On other occasions when he was able to appear in person, he would record his delivered sermons and lessons for future distribution to other groups who had an interest.**

**This series was recorded in his apartment and distributed to a small home Bible study group for their use. I am unsure of the exact date at which they were recorded, and the group to whom they were sent.**

**J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney and Violet Cox. August 5, 2010**

I would like to welcome you to our Bible study class and to express the hope that this may be a few minutes of real blessing and inspiration to us as we quietly gather around the Word of God. I would suggest, first of all, that you make yourselves quite comfortable. Do that as far as possible. Get your Bibles open to the Gospel of John, and be sure you have a little scrap of paper somewhere. You can take a note if you wish.

Because one of the nice things about a class that is conducted in this fashion – I almost said it was conducted by the tape recorder, but that would be hardly correct, would it? - but a class of this kind, we can stop it at any time you like, turn the tape back, listen to something all over again. If you want to make a note of something we can give you time to do it. The class is ours and we can do as we please here. And I'm hoping that the fact that there isn't a personality talking with you, but rather a voice that's coming from this tape recorder will not detract at all from whatever the Lord might have to say to us through His Word.

I'm suggesting that in this class that we study together a little bit from the Gospel of John, and I'm not proposing at all that we follow what is the usual pathway of teaching in connection with this book - that is to consider it chapter by chapter, and perhaps verse by verse. We have another thought in mind all together. We would like to consider the Gospel of John from the standpoint of its difference, its distinction, from the other three gospels.

Sometimes we wonder why it was necessary to have four gospels, why should a fourth one ever have been written at all? Did not the Holy Spirit say all that was necessary in Matthew and Mark and Luke? And obviously, there was some reason for it, or it would not have been written at all. And we are seeking to find out why a fourth gospel was written and why it was necessary. And when you turn to the Gospel of John, you find that you are looking at an entirely different book to Matthew and Mark and Luke. It is not in any sense a repetition of the three previous gospels. This is something that's quite different.

If I had a blackboard here I would write on the top of it just the one word, "Different" and then from that starting point we can consider the differences, the distinctions of the Gospel of John. You can divide these into two sections. One, there is the general differences that you see, that we shall mention in just a moment. And then there are distinctions and differences that are more specific and we shall take care of those as we go along with our study.

First of all, let me give you three general distinctions between the Gospel of John and the other three gospels. One, it was written at the different time. Two, it was written to a different people. And three, it was written for a different purpose. Time, people, and purpose. Now, you will notice that I said that slowly and distinctly. Have you made a note of those three things? - a different time, to a different people, for a different purpose. Now there will be other distinctions as we go along.

But first of all, let's stop a moment and consider that first item that we mentioned - the difference in the time. It's well for us to remember that the Gospel of John is one of the last books of the scripture to be written. It is more than likely that it may be even the last, although that is a point upon which we are not too certain, and that is not important. What we do know is this: that the Holy Spirit had been for 1600 years, gathering together the material for what we call, the Word of God, the completed revelation of God. And now the time has come when the final words must be written, and it was John, the Apostle, whom the Holy Spirit used to write these final words of the scripture. Just where he wrote these books, we do not know. It is more than likely that he wrote some of them on the Island of Patmos, some probably in Ephesus, but he wrote the final words of the scripture, and they were all written around about the same time. The Book of the Revelation, the Gospel of John, and the three little letters that bear his name. We speak of them as First, Second and Third John.

Now, let's stop a moment and consider the importance of what we have just said. For all these centuries, the Word of God was being gathered together and the Holy Spirit was inspiring this one and that one to write as they were moved by the Spirit of God. Then there came the time for gathering together these books in what we call, the canon of the scripture. But this could not go on forever. There had to come a time when the last word would be written; the last sentence would be constructed; the last period placed at the end of the last paragraph. Now, it was John who did this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

I want us to stop just a minute and think of how important that is. What a tremendous moment that must have been. I sometimes wonder, you know, whether the angels in heaven were not watching as a man somewhere or other, perhaps on the Island of Patmos, perhaps in Ephesus, wrote the final words of the scripture; when a man lay down his pen or his stylus, and the Word was completed. I have sometimes wondered if the angels didn't hold their breath at that moment.

In the book of the Revelation, you know, we read several times there was silence in heaven. I'm deeply convinced that there was silence in heaven many a time and surely one of the moments when there must have been silence in heaven was that moment when a man somewhere or other, a man quite commonplace, not any different than the rest of us, a man wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the final words of the scripture. Now, that is the thought that I want us to ponder for just a moment - the fact that it is the last word of the scripture, or among the last words of the scripture. Let us put it that way.

Now, think again. Last words are always important words. If any of us have listened to the last words of somebody who was very dear to us, we do not forget those last words. Here are the last words of the scripture; the very fact that they are the last words ought to impress upon us their importance - this unique feature, the last words of the scripture. Now, remember if you please, that before John wrote the Book of the Revelation and the Gospel of John and the three little letters, most of the other books of the New Testament had already been written and were being circulated. Then there was a period of probably thirty years when there was no book written at all, and then at the end of that time, this wonderful thing happened. And John, now an old man, ninety-three years old, writes the final words of the scripture.

I have sometimes wondered, again, how could he do that? Remember if you please, that as you read the Gospel of John you have the most marvelous record of events that happened and words that were spoken that you can find anywhere. For instance, there is no record of that which happened in the upper room, for instance, to compare to that which is given in the Gospel of John. And yet, these words were written sixty years after they were spoken in that upper room. The very thought of it brings to mind that we are facing a miracle. John, of himself, could not have written those words; could not have remembered them; could not have written them down in the absolute accuracy with which we find them.

Now, let us pause a moment and ask this question: How could he do that sixty years after the words were spoken? We know quite well that we couldn't record words that we heard sixty years ago or fifty or forty or thirty. It's difficult to remember words that were spoken sixty minutes ago. But here was a man who writes down in absolute accuracy words that he heard sixty years before. And at that time, he had no indication that sixty years from that date, he would be required to write down the words to which he was listening. There is only one explanation of this, and that is that the Holy Spirit did in the life of the Apostle John that which the Lord Jesus said He would do in that upper room.

You will remember that in the fourteenth chapter of John, that one of the things that the Lord said about the coming of the Holy Spirit was, "He will bring things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said

unto you.”<sup>1</sup> And this is literally, exactly what did happen. For the Holy Spirit touched the strings of the memory of this man, common, ordinary man, and brought back to his remembrance that which he had heard sixty years before, and not only that, but enabled him to write down in absolute accuracy, and with amazing beauty, the things that he had heard sixty years before. Now, that's the first thing that we notice. It was written at a different time.

Now, the second thing we said was this: It was written to a different people. Because, remember, that in the interim of sixty years between the time that our Lord's ministry was finished and He offered himself the sacrifice for our sins upon Calvary, and then went back to the right hand of the Father, in that time of sixty years something tremendous had happened. The Day of Pentecost had come and gone, and on that day something appeared that had not been seen in earth or heaven before. The Christian church appeared on that day and a group of believers, 120 of them, up in an upper room were welded together by the Holy Spirit into one body, baptized into the body of Christ. Now this is something that hadn't been seen before. Here was a new people. It began with 120 believers, but as we read the record, it was not very long before we begin to find hundreds and then thousands being added to this original body. And the Church of Christ, the Body of Christ, was seen to grow miraculously, all through the scripture.

Now, the other gospels had been written to a specific group. Matthew was written particularly for the Jew. Mark was written with the Roman in mind. And Luke was written with the Greek in mind. But from the Day of Pentecost, a new group appeared, a group that was neither Jew, nor Gentile, but they were all one in Christ.

When a Jewish believer and a Gentile believer came into fellowship together and were welded together as part of the Body of Christ, their differences ceased. They were all one in Christ. This was the only place in the world where Jew and Gentile could sit down together in complete unison and fellowship together. There wasn't any other place where we could ever find anything like that. Here is something new. A new people had arisen. Now, the Holy Spirit causes the Gospel of John to be written especially with this new group in mind. It was not written to Jew or to Gentile or to Roman. It was written to the family of God.

And all the way through the Gospel of John, you can see evidences that the family word is there. When one writes to one's own children, you write in a different way all together to the way in which you write to the children of other people. You may say nice things to them, but when you write to your own children, there's a new note in it. There's a difference in the tone of it. And as you read the Gospel of John, you can detect this new note, this difference in the expression, it is the heavenly Father writing an intimate gospel, an intimate note to the children who have now come into His family by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so you find a different people.

Now, it was written for a different purpose. And it was written to tell these folks, now the children of God, two great and important facts. One, how we became children of God. And second, how we ought to behave ourselves as children of the heavenly Father. And you will find in the gospel of John more is said about the way in which we become a child of God; more is said about our day by day behavior and employment, in this Gospel of John than any other book in the scripture.

---

1 John 14:26

And so we are facing a book here and we find three basic distinctions in it. One: it was written at a different time. Two: it was written to a different people. And three: it was written for a different purpose.

Now, following that general presentation of differences in the Gospel of John, we shall go on as time permits and consider some of the specific differences. For instance, again, if I had a blackboard here, I could write on it the large letter "M" and then we would form from that letter four words all beginning with the letter M.

In the Gospel of John, you find different Men, different people - people that you do not find elsewhere. In the Gospel of John, you find a different Method. I'm talking about our Lord's teaching method. It's an entirely different thing when you get into the Gospel of John. You find an entirely different Message. And then the Gospel of John is made up entirely new Material. Now, let me repeat those things.

Maybe you would like to make a note of those, and don't forget that any time you please, if you just raise your hand, we can stop this tape any time, turn it back so that you can hear any of these things over again. And if you want time to make a note, don't forget that that time is available. That's one of the nice things about attending a class where the tape recorder is bringing the voice. You can stop any time you want to, turn it back, listen to it all over again.

Did you get those four things? Different men, a different method, a different message, and different material. Now, when we meet together again, I'm suggesting that we consider these things in detail. The men that you meet in the Gospel of John, and it's amazing how many there are. The people that you meet, that you do not find anywhere else. What is the distinction between our Lord's teaching method in the Gospel of John and that which is seen and heard in the other three gospels? What is the difference in the message? What is the different emphasis that you hear from the teaching voice of the Lord Himself? And then, the amazing thing to discover, that the Gospel of John is made up, almost entirely, of new material - facts, events, teachings that have not been mentioned anywhere else.

Now, you've been listening here to this class for the last few minutes, almost for half an hour, and I want to bring it to a close now and then suggest that when we meet together again we could consider these four distinctions of men, method, message and material.

(Prayer)

Our heavenly Father, we pray that Thy blessing shall be upon this simple presentation of Thy Word. And bless the dear ones who have been in this little home Bible class. In Jesus' precious name, we pray, Amen.

(audio ends)