

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

**Editorial Note:** This is one lesson of a 14-lesson weekly series of Bible studies that Sidney Cox delivered to the congregation of the Eastlake Alliance Church in Birmingham, Alabama in late 1972 and early 1973.



This is a 2011 picture of what was the Eastlake Alliance Church in 1972. It is located at the intersection of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North and 85<sup>th</sup> Street in Birmingham and is the current home of the 46<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church.

In 1972, at age 84, Sidney Cox had moved from Detroit, Michigan to Birmingham, Alabama to be near my parents, John and Jean Cox. Still remarkably healthy and independent, he lived in a small efficiency apartment on Birmingham's south side. His beloved wife, Violet had earlier passed away in 1967 while they were residing in Detroit.

From the time of their commissioning in Toronto, Canada in 1910/1912 to 1944, Sidney and Violet Cox had a well-chronicled career as Salvation Army officers – a journey that took them across the breadth of Canada and ultimately to Atlanta, Georgia in 1928 to be part of the founding of The Salvation Army's Southern Territory.

However, during the latter part of his life, Sidney Cox had developed a close relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (“CMA”). CMA operates as a vast network of churches, similar to a “denomination.” During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Sidney had served as Professor of New Testament at two Bible institutes – The Miami Bible Institute and The Toccoa Falls Bible Institute (Toccoa, Georgia). These two institutes were principally supported by CMA and graduates often entered pastorates at CMA churches.

**During this era of his life, Sidney Cox remained in great demand as a preacher, evangelist and Bible teacher both in Salvation Army and CMA venues. The Eastlake Alliance Church was a CMA church and they took advantage of his residency in Birmingham by engaging him to teach this series. The pastor of the church was Glen Tingley, Jr.**

**John Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. December 29, 2008.**

**Gospel of John  
Part 5**

**Differences:**

- 1)The “I Ams”
- 2)“Verily, Verily” – the “Double Verilys”
- 3)Graphing the movements of Jesus

**January 7, 1973**

*Sunday School at, East Lake Alliance Church Birmingham, Alabama. Lesson Number 010773.*

*This is Glen Tingley, Jr. welcoming you to this Sunday School Class. Our teacher, Dr. Sidney Cox, is continuing his study in the Gospel of John.*

*The chalkboard contains the following information:*

*On the first line are the words, “The Gospel of John.”*

*On the second line is the word, “Different.”*

*On the third line are the words, “I AM” (Symbols)*

*On the fourth line are the two words, “Verily Verily.”*

*And on the fifth line is the word, “Location.”*

*Elsewhere on the board are the two groups of words, “Time – People – Purpose” and “Men – Method – Message – Material.”*

*Now let us listen to this study with Dr. Cox.*

Let’s go on a little bit with our pathway of learning, shall I say, in the distinctions and differences of the Gospel of John.

The Distinctions: We have covered quite a number of them and all I’m going to do this morning is just mention them. We started out by saying that the Gospel of John was written at a different time, to a

different people, and for a different purpose. And the moment I say it, that starts “wheels” running in our minds. And I’m not going to say anymore about it, just those three things. That’s where we started.

Then we moved from there to these things: We said in the Gospel of John, there were different men - people that you meet. There was a different teaching method. Instead of the great addresses to great congregations - the greatest things our Lord says as recorded in the Gospel of John, He said to individuals. And one of the things we reminded ourselves of is there are 15 private conversations in the Gospel of John where our Lord is talking to one person. And we suggested to each other that whenever you find that, that is a moment of great importance. Whenever the Lord takes timeout from running the universe to talk to one person, that must be a moment of tremendous importance. It was a moment of tremendous importance when the Lord took time out to talk to *me* sixty-three years ago and I remember the sound of his voice that came, and it was wonderful. And I’m so grateful that He found time in the midst of all God’s “busyness” to just talk to me. And whenever you find that in the Gospel of John, stop and take notice and listen with both ears because, my dear, it is a matter of tremendous importance - our Lord talking with one person.

Now, we spent a little time on that and we found that the message of the Gospel of John has to do with things connected with “The Family of God”. Now, God in these days, through the Holy Spirit, by the Word, as the result of Calvary, God is gathering together a “family circle.” We are the Children of God and you find family terms all the way through. “Fatherhood” mentioned as no other book in the scripture mentions it; “children,” “relationship,” the word, “birth,” and “born again” occur more frequently than in any other book in the Scripture. And, as a matter of fact, it is almost the only place, in the writings of John, where you will find this thought of a family beginning with birth. That’s where a family begins and birth indicates the transference of life from father to children, and they have the same common life. Now, that’s a family. And you’ll find that that’s the message all the way through of the Gospel of John. Not only the fact that we become children of God, by the impartation of the new life, “In Him was life and the life was the light of men.”<sup>1</sup> Not only the fact that God’s life, by the process we speak of as “the new birth” is passed on from God the Father through to us, the same life that is in God the Father and is in God the Son, his life, by the Holy Spirit, by the impartation of the Word, the dropping of the seed of the Word into the heart and a new life is produced.

Now, you’ll find that in the Gospel of John - the explanation of it was given more fully to Nicodemus than to anybody else; but you’ll find that in the Gospel of John more clearly, in fact, almost exclusively in the Gospel of John. It is evidently the Gospel of the Family, to the Family, for the Family, and that’s why we say there is a different message in it. There is a different message because a family not only has common life and not only lives in a common home, but it has common standards of behavior. A family behaves together, if it’s a family at all. That’s the basis of it, and you’ll find more about the beginning of God’s family and God’s hope in the family, and whose going to be the head of the family, and whose

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<sup>1</sup> John 1:4.

life has been transmitted and how it's done, and what the Holy Spirit does when He plants the seed of the Word in somebody's heart, and how we ought to behave ourselves and what God's ultimate purpose is in creating a family circle that has His life in it. Now you won't find that anywhere else in the Scripture.

This is the first emergence of it because when you turn back into the Old Testament, you will find two very distinct groups. You will find a "people" and the people were, at the beginning, were not very successful in pleasing God, were they? "There is none that doeth righteous, there is none that please God, none."<sup>2</sup> And that people appeared and God was disappointed. And then, in His sovereignty, He brings into view another family, the family of Israel. And if you turn in your Bible, you will find that the family of Israel wasn't much of a success either, was it? It wasn't. You follow it through and they are "backslidden" much more frequently than they are in fellowship with God; and the things that Israel does in spite of all that God did for them; and so the people of Israel were not a success. It's quite true that God's going to do something with them as He promised to Abraham and make them a channel of blessing to all the world. "In thee shall all the peoples of the world be blessed,"<sup>3</sup> but He hasn't done it yet. That's something that's in the future. He hasn't done it yet; the world hasn't been blessed by Israel, not at all.

And now, is a new group appearing, a new group of family circle in which God will find His eternal delight; and he can say of us as He did not say of the people of Israel, or the people that came from the Adamic source, He can say, "You are mine. You are my very own," and say it because He has imparted to us in a way He did not impart to others, His own particular, peculiar life. That's what makes us Christians. That's the genius of this and John says more about it than anybody else.

Now, there is different material in the Gospel of John. The things you find in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, you do not find in John, with the exception of three or four things. Let me mention some of them to you.

You will remember the incident of Peter walking on the water. Now, you will find that in the Gospel of John. You will find in also in the other gospels.

You will remember the supper at Bethany where our Lord's feet were washed with tears and an alabaster box of ointment was broken. You remember? Now you'll find that in the Gospel of John, that supper at Bethany, and you'll find it in other gospels.

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<sup>2</sup> Psalm 14:1, paraphrased.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 12:3.

You will find the feeding of the five thousand in John's Gospel, Chapter 6, and you will find it in the other gospels as well.

And you will find, of course, details connected with our Lord's Passion and Death.

But, apart from that, everything else in the Gospel of John is new, different. It isn't a repetition of Matthew and Mark and Luke. Now, we've mentioned three or four things and the general details of our Lord's Passion, His Crucifixion, His Resurrection that you find in every Gospel, but apart from that, John's Gospel is entirely new. That's the reason why we dared to put on the board there that the Gospel of John is different. And so it is. And you can keep in mind those two or three things, that's not important; it's just a matter of we know what we're talking about. The supper at Bethany, and Peter walking on the water, and the feeding of the five thousand, and the details of His Passion and Death, but apart from that, the Gospel of John is new and different material.

Now, you see what we're trying to do? We're trying to justify the statement that the Gospel of John is different. And we've got a half a dozen different points about it now.

Now, I want to mention one or two others that are incidental because we are coming now to one of the most important things that you can find either in the Gospel of John or anywhere else. I think perhaps the thing that is just around the corner for us, and I'm only going to mention it in that way, but I think it's the most important thing that we can find anywhere in the New Testament, and it lies just around the corner and it has to do with these distinctions and differences of the Gospel of John.

Now, the incidental things: First, you'll find in the Gospel of John, as you will not find anywhere else, the concentration of those statements that begin with the words, "I Am," and then followed by a symbol, a picture. Now you'll not find that to the same degree at all in the other Gospels. You'll come across an occasional moment when He's saying, "I Am, something." But in the Gospel of John, you meet it at every turn of the road. For instance, and notice the symbol that's connected with it, you be thinking along with me here, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "I am the good shepherd." "I am the true vine and my Father is the husband man." "I am the light of the world." "I am the bread of life." And you see, with every affirmation, there's a picture and we've been looking to the wonderful things in that moment in time.

We've spent just a few seconds almost together, and yet what have we seen? We've seen a roadway and somebody says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." We've looked at a shepherd and somebody says, "I am the good shepherd." And we looked at a vine and somebody says, "I am the true vine," - not just the vine, I am the *true* vine and my Father is the husband man. And we've looked at a light that suddenly blazed and we hear, "I am the light of the world." Not just the light of somebody's backyard, but the light of the world. We've looked at a loaf of bread that's big enough and can be multiplied to feed every living soul on earth. And we've been looking at it. "I am the bread of life." And you can go on and on and on. I've only mentioned a few of them and that's all I wanted to do. If you've got some special one that we haven't said, you say it for us now. Was there one that I didn't say? Say it out loud.

*Woman in congregation: "I am the door."*

"I am the door," that's right. That's for sure, and you've got the picture again, you see? It's not only a statement, but it's a statement that leads to a symbol and don't forget that the reality is always greater and more important than the symbol. He's bigger than the pathway. He IS the bread. He IS the light. "I am the way, the truth, and the life."<sup>4</sup> He doesn't just give life, He IS life. And the wonder of it, it's almost overwhelming, isn't it, as we start lining up in the quietness of a room like this to take a look and something that is so familiar and so beautiful. Oh, my dear, we've got a wonderful savior. Isn't He wonderful? As we look at it, isn't He wonderful? He certainly is. He certainly is.

Now, another of the things that you can observe in the Gospel of John, a casual thing probably, is this: that here you find the "double verily's" are concentrated. Now, you'll find, "Verily, I say unto you," a good many times, but when you get into the Gospel of John, you suddenly become aware that things are being said that are so important that "verily" has to be repeated, and you find Him saying as you will not find anywhere else, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." You see, this is the last gospel. When Matthew was written, and something was said about "verily," it could be repeated in Mark, it could be repeated, and was in Luke, but there isn't any other gospel in which this could be repeated, it's either or else, you see? And so every time you find the words, "Verily, verily," every time you find them, we ought to be aware of the fact that something is being said for the last time and isn't going to be said anymore. This is it! "Verily, verily, I say unto you." And as we think about it, you can say, and I'm sure you are, saying over to yourself some of the blessed "double verily's." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come unto judgment but is passed from death unto life."<sup>5</sup> "Verily, verily, I say unto you." And every time you find it, you will find yourself looking at something that is tremendous in it's importance and isn't going to be said again. This is it, the last time you hear things like that.

Now, that's another of the things we look for as we are traveling the familiar pathway of the Gospel of John, we find the "double verily's" are there.

Now, I want to mention one other thing that is quite interesting and it all helps in one of the basic things that we are all hoping for in this class: We are hoping that the dear folks in this class will by the constant repetition of things in the Gospel John, so expose yourself to it, that we shall be able, without difficulty, to think our way through the Gospel of John from the beginning to the ending; that the pathway of it will become increasingly clear to us and we'll be able to think our way through the Gospel of John.

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<sup>4</sup> John 14:6.

<sup>5</sup> John 5:24.

Do you ever have any trouble sleeping at night? Now, that may sound like a strange remark to come at this particular time, because you are looking at an old fellow who does! I have considerable difficulty at times, but I've discovered this, and I'll tell you about something that's got "Somenex" backed off the map: If you start at the beginning of the Gospel of John in that troublesome, tiresome hour, and you start and think your way through, catch sight of Him there, right at the beginning, and you follow Him through until he suddenly appears on the edge of a crowd and you hear John the Baptist say, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."<sup>6</sup> You follow Him up there into Cana of Galilee and back again to Jerusalem and stop a minute, take a look at Him there in Samaria and by the Pool of Bethesda and watch Him doing this and that, I'll tell you something, by the time you get through, you'll be sleeping like a baby. Now, you try it. You try it. It's one of the most wonderful things that will ever happen to you, but it can only happen to folks who become so aware of the Gospel of John that you can think your way through from beginning to end. Now, anything that helps us to do that is worthwhile, isn't it? And especially if you can pass the suggestion on to somebody else.

Now, the last word that we have on the board here is, "Location." Now, one of the distinctions of the Gospel of John is that you find this gospel with its movement that is almost overpowering at times - is centered largely, almost exclusively, in Judea rather than in Galilee. Now when you are in Matthew and Mark and Luke, you will find that most of the movement, most of the incidents, most of the cities are the Galilean places. And you will find Capernaum and places like that are very, very important and our Lord is spending so much of his time in Galilee and so little of His time in Jerusalem and in Judea. Now when you get into the Gospel of John, you find that is exactly reversed. Most of the movement in the Gospel of John is centered in Judea rather than in Galilee.

Now my dear, I want to make a suggestion to you. I want you to go to a store that you are quite familiar with, buy a sheet of that graph paper and draw the lines straight down - 21 of them. You see what I mean? One for each chapter in the Gospel of John and then number them and do it carefully because you'll be starting on something that has value. You draw the lines down, 21 of them, and then draw two lines across and that will separate Galilee in the north, Samaria in the center, and Judea in the south. Now, you see what we have in mind? Now, when you've got that, your lines drawn down, your lines separating Galilee in the north, Samaria, and Judea, now you turn to your Gospel of John and you follow the movement of our Lord and you graph it and see for yourself how little time He spends in Galilee and how much time He spends in Judea. You visualize your sheet of paper. You've got it? Are you looking at it? Because sometimes we can see things that we haven't got much clearer than the things we have. Now, here's the sheet of paper and we're going to start at Chapter 1 and we'll locate Jesus and then we'll follow Him step by step for one chapter and we're not only discovering something of interest, we're fastening the Gospel of John in our minds so that in that hour when we need something or another, we can think our way through the gospel. Do you see what I mean?

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<sup>6</sup> John 1:29.

Now, when you find Jesus in Chapter 1, where is He? Now, I'm not talking about the eternal Christ, I'm talking about the one who is the Word made flesh and dwelling among us. Where does He first appear as the human Jesus? Now, we're going to follow His footsteps all the way through the book. In the first chapter of John, where does He first appear? And just to remind you, dear, I've already told you this morning. We've already mentioned this. You'll remember that we suggested that He appeared on the edge of a crowd and that John the Baptist spoke of Him as, "Behold the Lamb of God." There you've got another of these beautiful symbols. You won't find them anywhere else. "Behold the Lamb of God." And that was so important that it had to be repeated twice. John says that twice. Now, when John points his finger at the Lord Jesus, the first appearance of the human Christ in the Gospel of John, where was He? Where was John baptizing? Where was John preaching? Where was this located? Was it in Galilee? Was it in Samaria? It was in Judea my dear, because the place where John baptized was by the fords of Jordan, where the River Jordan came into a flowing area that lent itself to a service like this. And there by the side of the Jordan was this pool-like section of it, where baptizing could take place, John was preaching and folks came from everywhere to hear him. Now naturally "everywhere" would be centered in a big city. If he'd been preaching in some little old out of the way places, there wouldn't have been too many people, but here they came, groves of them, and they came from Jerusalem to this place to hear the man who preached with a voice like "ten thousand thunders" and whose appearance was so unusual; this tall, gaunt man living on locust and wild honey and wearing such an unusual garment. And this man, with that tremendous voice and those fires burning in his eyes, he's preaching there, and suddenly, he stops and says, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

You know, we've got some tremendously important and interesting pictures in the Scripture, but I doubt if there is one more important than that moment when John the Baptist, with the great crowd around him and the water of the Jordan a little way away, he points to somebody who now appears and he says, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."

I don't know very much about what we call "sacred art." It may be that some great artist has pictured that, but if so, I don't know of one. There are artistic representations of so many of the incidents in the life of Christ, I may be wrong about this and probably I am, but I don't know of one picture in any art gallery that shows John the Baptist and the crowd there and the River Jordan and Jerusalem off in the far distance, and somebody who is obviously different to anybody else suddenly appearing and John, stopping in the middle of his discourse and saying, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." It happened in Judea, right in the south.

Now my dear, there's where you start; you put a little dot there on that first down stroke – Number 1 – that's where you find Him. Now, get your pencil ready because by the time you get through with the first chapter of John, you'll find our Lord is moving north, so that by the time you get to Chapter 2, He's not in Judea. Where is He? Tell me. And what's He doing in the beginning of the second chapter? Don't you see? We're thinking our way through the Gospel of John. Where is He and what's He doing in the beginning of the second chapter of the Gospel of John? He's where?

*Woman in the class: Galilee.*

Galilee, exactly. He's in Cana of Galilee and He's attending a wedding, and we find that He has moved. Now you see what you'll do? You start from that dot down there that represented the first appearance of Jesus in Judea, move upward and there you are in Cana of Galilee. Now there's where He stops for just a little while, in Galilee. But, before you get through with Chapter 2, about halfway down, you'll will find He has moved from Galilee and He's back again in Jerusalem again, and He's down there in the area of the Temple doing what we call the "cleansing of the Temple." And He's moved all the way down again. Now, here comes your pen and your pencil and you follow it down and you find yourself back again. Before you get to Chapter 3, you'll find yourself in Jerusalem again because that's where the Temple was and you'll notice you're down in Judea. Now, you move from Chapter 2 to Chapter 3 and you find you are still in Judea. To whom is he speaking in the beginning of Chapter 3? What's his name? Say it out loud.

*Class: Nicodemus.*

He's talking to Nicodemus and Nicodemus is a ruler of the Jews. He is THE teacher in Israel. Now, where would THE teacher in Israel be located? He wouldn't be up there in some little obscure Galilean village. His work was in the Temple. Nicodemus was THE teacher. In the original language, you will find the definite articles there, he's not A teacher in Israel, he's THE teacher in Israel. If anybody wanted to know any of the intricacies of Judean law or procedure or anything else, all they had to do was to refer to Nicodemus. He had the answers. He was THE teacher in Israel. There was another great teacher similar to him who appeared a little later on and men like Saul of Tarsus sat at his feet. What was his name? Say it out loud.

*Class: Gemaliel*

Gemaliel, exactly so. Now, these were the men. Now, naturally, you'd be - as long as Nicodemus is in view - you'll find you're down there in Jerusalem and in Judea. Now again, you notice by the time you get through Chapter 3, He's leaving again and moving north and you follow Him and by the time you get into Chapter 4, you'll have listened to the words, "He must needs go through Samaria."<sup>7</sup> Now, here you are in Samaria, and by the time you get through with that interview with the Woman of Samaria, in Samaria, He touches lightly there in Galilee again, but only for a very brief time. By the time you get through and into Chapter 5, He's down in Judea again. He's talking with a man by the Pool of Bethesda - the man who had been ill for thirty and eight years; and here He is right down in Judea again.

You see what you're doing? You are following that interesting pathway. and I'll tell you something my dear, if we can be simple enough to occasionally be children in this class and do a simple little thing like that, you will be amazed at how interesting it is and what a valuable piece of paper you will have by the

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<sup>7</sup> John 4:4.

time you get through, if you do it conscientiously, carefully. Do it so that when you get through, you're proud of it. It's been a long time since we did anything like that just for the joy of being proud of it. And if we can do that, just to be proud of it and you can follow, and I'll tell you what you will find - you'll find that 1/3 of the Gospel of John is given over to the events of one day. One third of the gospel, given over to the events of one day and that day began with the arrival of the Lord Jesus into the City of Jerusalem. And 1/3 of it, the last 1/3 of it, with the exception of a brief visit to Galilee where He talks with a fisherman and says to Peter, "Feed my lambs" and so on, just that little touch, He's down in Jerusalem all the time. One third of the gospel, given over to the events of one day and this is in Jerusalem.

Now, that's an important thing and I hope you won't mind if I sort of underscored it, maybe stressed it, because I'd like you to have the sheer delight of possessing a piece of paper that you have done and that you are proud of because it will not only do something to you, but you will be able to give it to your grandchildren and say, "This is the kind of work we did in our Sunday School Class." And you know, that granddaughter of yours or grandson will look at you and say, "Oh yeah?" You know? But it's something you can be proud of, and if you're proud of it, I think that somebody else who delights to find us doing simple little childlike things, I think He's pleased when we do that.

Now my dear, I'm just going to mention, and not in any sense attempt to deal with it, because this is something now that will occupy our time for quite awhile, but one of the things that is most important about the Gospel of John and you do not find it elsewhere is: that in every chapter, you find a distinct beautiful picture of our Lord. And I said a little while ago, I think it's one of the most important things that you'll find in the Scripture so that when we meet together again, you'll find on the board, not these things, they've been on the board long enough. Verily, verily, there they are! But you'll find on the board the words, "The Pathway of the Pictures", and we'll follow that with great delight. That's it for this morning.

Thank you, Lord, for the privilege. In Jesus name, Amen.