

THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF SIDNEY EDWARD COX

Epistle to the Hebrews – Chapter 1

Editorial Note: This is a lecture by Sidney Cox that was part of a series of lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews that he taught while on the theological teaching faculty at the Toccoa Falls Bible Institute during the early part of 1962. He was 75 years of age at the time.

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.” Toccoa Falls Bible Institute was closely affiliated with the CMA, provided support to the Institute and the Institute sent many of its graduates into ministry within CMA churches. CMA and The Salvation Army, in which Sidney Cox served as an officer for 30 years previously in his life, share a similar theology and emphasis in Christian outreach.

From 1956 – 1960, Sidney and Violet Cox lived in Miami, Florida where Sidney was on the theological teaching faculty of the Miami Bible Institute, another CMA supported institution. They moved to Toccoa Falls, Georgia in 1960, where he served on the staff at the Toccoa Falls Bible Institute from 1960 – 1962.

As a lecture, he was obviously assuming that his students had prepared for class by reading and studying the pertinent scripture and other class material. Thus, his comments were not like a sermon, but lectures to enhance the students’ theological understanding. He emphasized a detailed study of the scripture and incorporated analysis that he gained from his study of Bible commentaries and books on the related subject matter. These lectures are remarkably free of any personal opinions, personal illustrations or “sermonizing” of any kind. While at other times in his career he was very much the preacher and evangelist, in these late-in-life roles of Bible Professor, he was very much the educator.

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

Let’s go to the first chapter and have really a look here and see what is said, and I want you to note in your notes, if you please, certain things you will be required to memorize. Now, first of all, you have this wonderful picture of our Lord, this marvelous thing.

Now, you will remember that one of the things that we reminded each other of is that the name of the writer of this book is not given. Now, let me read something to you. I’ve intimated this before. Now, let me give you the quotation. This is a quotation: “Whenever His most excellent glory is seen, the name of the human author is not given. Whenever His most excellent glory is seen, the name of the human author is not given.” Check that please -- Genesis 1, John 1, Hebrews 1. “Whenever His most excellent glory is seen, the name of the human author is not given.”

There are moments when a human name is utterly inappropriate, which is one of the reasons why the Epistles to the Hebrews remains, as far as we are concerned, anonymous. That’s the reason.

In the face of this picture, a human name would be quite inappropriate. I think one of the blessings that comes is to see how God, in great taste, does things. Did you hear that? God, in great taste, does things. When He presents His own picture of His well-beloved Son, then all human names and everything else must fade out of the picture.

Do you remember an instance when God did that and gave us an illustration of what he thinks of His Son? There was a time when His most excellent glory was seen on a mountaintop. And there were three men who were there. And one of them said, "Let's make three tabernacles – one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." In other words, we're going to bring you right down on the level. You three folks up there are all the same. We're going to bring you right down here. The minute that that happened, God blotted out the picture. The moment it happened, the picture disappeared. The only thing that was left was a voice saying, "This is my beloved Son. Hear Him."¹

Now, you've got the same thing here. Here is this marvelous picture. So we're going to have a look at it. In the first place, let me remind you -- and this is following your notes -- there are six things in this particular chapter, Chapter 1. I'm going to give them to you and I would suggest that you follow them and memorize them as you go along.

First, Verse 1, the fact of God. You can just follow it there in your notes -- the fact of God. Two, the fact that God has spoken. Three, He hath now spoken in His Son. Four, the description of the Son. Five, the first comparisons - He is better than angels. You will find this list of comparisons all the way along. He is better than angels.

And then the first mention of the subject of Chapter 2 in the last verse of Chapter 1. 'Salvation' is the last word in Chapter 1. That is the subject of Chapter 2. You will remember how we have reminded each other on more than one occasion that frequently you find the subject of one chapter mentioned at the end of the previous chapter. You find it over and over again. It seems to be a pattern. I don't know that we need to make too much about it. It's nice to observe it. Perhaps it's of interest to us, but there is the pattern.

Now, let's look, if you please, and take each of these six things step by step because some of them will demand some time to consider. First of all, you will notice this: That, in this book, there is no salutation. When God's name is mentioned first, there is no necessity for a salutation. If Paul's name or anybody else was named first, there would immediately follow the usual salutation. Here, there is no salutation. It doesn't begin in that way.

Notice again, the fact of God is stated. It is not argued at all. The Bible never argues the fact of God's existence. It simply states this without any argument. It affirms it, but it does not seek to prove it.

Now, again, you can go back in your thinking to understand why that is. Because the fact of God is so obvious, it is so tremendous, that it needs no proof. What kind of a God would we have if His existence needed to be proved? What? The very thought of it brings Him down to our level. We need to prove things. When we get up into the realm where God is, we do not need to prove things at all, not so far as He is concerned.

¹ Mark 9:7

Now, the second great fact is that God hath spoken. Now, that in itself, is the greatest fact in the universe because out of it comes everything else. God hath spoken. You will remember how the distinction is made here to give us some understanding of the kind of speech that God makes in the days that are now being recorded before us -- in times past, in sundry ways, in divers' manners, by different people; but now, in these last days, finally, forever, conclusively, in His son.

Now, you will remember that one of the things that we have noticed is that in these last books of the New Testament great streams of truth are gathered into them; things that have been flowing on down all through the Old Testament and so on as they reach the junction, if you like, or the "Grand Central Stations" of these final books of the New Testament. They all seem to run into them.

The prophets? – the prophets had no final message. Each prophet said what God wanted him to say. It was a little here and a little there; here a bit and there a bit and so on. And each prophet added his own particular word. There was no prophet that gave God's final word. He said what God wanted said at that time to that people. Now, that was the voice of the prophet, and you find it all the way through -- the word of the Lord, the burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. And you will find it all the way through. The prophet spoke to the people to whom his message was directed as God wanted him to speak.

But it was a fragmentary thing. It didn't pretend to be God's complete and final revelation of Himself. God spoke in many ways; ways that He does not speak in anymore. There's no necessity for it. God spoke to these people by visions and by miracles and by experiences and so on. All the way through you will find supernatural evidences - God breaking through the natural into the supernatural to get at our intelligence and then our thought. And so visions came and so on.

You will remember at the beginning of the prophecy of Isaiah these words: "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem;"² The visions, and all the way through the book of the Prophet Isaiah, it's the record of the things that God allowed him to see supernaturally. He could see these things. It's a book of visions. We don't need any visions in these days. You've got the Lord, Jesus Christ. Why do we need anything else? What could a vision give us of any kind that we do not find here?

When we have His completion, we do not need anymore the lesser things. If we were back in the days of man's twilight of understanding, we would need these flashes of supernatural illumination. We don't need them now. If you've got Jesus, you have everything. When we have Him, we do not need anything else. Do we? Or, do we? We don't need anything else.

He spoke unto the fathers, spoke by the prophets, at various times, in various meetings and kept it up for 3,500 years. And then for 400 years and the 400 years that we speak of as 'the silent years,' no audible voice of God, at least was recorded at any rate; whether it was heard or not, that's another matter. But now, in His son, God hath spoken.

Now, we want to see the necessity for that. Why is it necessary that if God wants to communicate with us, He must do it through His Son? But you say – and that's rightly – that God has other means of communication. I can stand on a mountaintop and I can hear the voice of God in the rolling thunder.

² Isaiah 1:1

There was a time, my dear, when you were a sinner. How much thunder would it have needed to have brought you the comforting message of God's salvation? You needed more than thunder, and so did I. I needed a voice, a voice that was not far off as thunder is; a voice close to our hearts. We needed a voice. We needed God to say -- not the loud voices unintelligible of the thunders. We need God close enough to us to say, "Come unto Me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."³ That's what you needed, and so did I. And you couldn't find it in the thunder; not at all. You don't see that in the lightening. You don't see that in the movement of the great starry orbs that are up there in the illimitable blue. You don't see it. You may find a little evidence of the existence of someone, but he's a long way away from you, my dear. And in order that He might come close to us, He becomes incarnate and one with us. And in Jesus Christ, God's voice becomes man's voice.

Did you hear that? The only way in which God can ever speak our language is when He speaks it through someone, not something. Things don't speak our language, but someone did; and not only did, He does. Now that's the point of it here.

Now, you take the picture. You can just diagram it for yourself, if you want to. Let's put it up here on the board a little bit, and we'll put God over here, and we'll put man over here. And there isn't any way by which God can communicate with man or man with God. Because, in the Lord, Jesus Christ, we not only have God's way of communicating with us, we have our way of communicating with God. It's God talking to us, and we talk to God; but in the center, there must be the Son. And God speaks to us through the Son, and He doesn't do it any other way. That's the great reason for the incarnation, was that it brought God's voice to our ears so that we could understand and see what it was and what it was that God was saying.

Now, you'll find that, and you won't find it anywhere else. You will find in the Epistle of the Hebrews as you find it elsewhere - you will find our Lord represented in two ways. This is in your notes now. You will find Him as the Word of God and as the Lamb of God; the Word of God and the Lamb of God.

When He's the Word of God, it is God speaking to us; but, when He's the Lamb of God, that's our way of speaking to God. We cannot speak to God, except under the shelter and by virtue of the value of the shed blood of the Son of God. There is no other means of communication. Now that's one of the most difficult things for man to understand. It's one of the major points where false cults depart from the truth.

Because you will notice -- and we've said this a good number of times - you will notice that every false cult has something in addition to the Word of God. Have you noticed it? Every last one of them have something in addition. If you're going to understand it, you've got to have the Bible and science and health and key to the scriptures. If you're going to understand it, you've got to understand it by the Bible plus the visions of Mrs. E. G. White.⁴ You've got it all the way through. Every last one of them have got

³ Matthew 11:28

⁴ Ellen Gould White (November 26, 1827 – July 16, 1915), was an American Christian leader whose ministry was instrumental in founding the Sabbatarian Adventist movement that led to the rise of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Supporters of Ellen G. White regard her as a contemporary prophet, even though she never claimed this title for herself. Support for her role is usually expressed in the language that she exhibited the spiritual gift of prophecy as outlined in the New Testament. Her restorationist writings showcase the hand of God in Christian history. This cosmic conflict, referred to as the "great controversy theme", is foundational to the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology. Her involvement with other Sabbatarian Adventist leaders, such as Joseph Bates and her husband James White, would form what is now known as the Seventh-day

something in addition to that -- something, something; golden tablets or something of the kind. Every last one of them have got something. When you find anything or anybody who's got something in addition to the Bible, look a little bit beyond that person and you will see Satan standing in the background, no matter who he is. You'll find him there. He's always in the background. He's always offering something in addition to the Lord Jesus -- this. He doesn't deny Him, but he offers you something as well. "You need this. You need this. You need this. You need this." And that's the way in which you will find this first revelation of our Lord in this fashion.

He is God, speaking; the voice of God. Now, in addition to that, in Verses 2 and 3, we get the description of Him; what kind of a person is He. Because, to our minds when we ask the question: What kind of a God is God? What is God like? -- and that sort of thing. The little child asks that question inevitably, "Mother, what is God like?"

But no one has ever been able to tell the answer to that, and so God Himself gave the answer. You see, we could never have found it out, never. And so God Himself gave the answer. And the answer is God is like His only begotten Son. And when we look at the Son, then we see the Father. And in the Son, we see all that the Father wants us to see.

For instance, we find Him. He's the heir of all things. Everything centers in Him. God not only does not speak to us by any other means except the Son, God has no dealings with us in any other way, except by the Son. God has no blessings that come to us in any other way. God has no inheritance to which we may share, either now or at any other time, except that which is centered in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the heir of all things. He is the creator of all things. Now, He's going to show how He is superior to all of these -- angels, and he starts with the highest of the created beings. And so here is somebody who is not only greater than angels, but He is actually the creator of them.

And He was there, in the first place, when the audible voice of the Godhead spoke them into existence. He was there. It was His voice. Whenever God is heard, it is always the Lord Jesus who speaks -- always. That's the way the Godhead orders things. That's their arrangement. Whenever the Godhead becomes audible, it's always the Lord Jesus who speaks; whether it's the voice of creation or whatever it may be. So we find in the beginning of the Book of Genesis, in the beginning, God spake. And He said, "Let there be light." Sure. But that voice was not a sound. It was a Son. It was the Lord Jesus, the voice of the Godhead speaking things into existence.

Adventist Church. White was a controversial figure even within her own lifetime. She claimed to have received a vision soon after the Millerite Great Disappointment. In the context of many other visionaries, she was known for her conviction and fervent faith. Randall Balmer has described her as "One of the more important and colorful figures in the history of American religion". White is the most translated female non-fiction author in the history of literature, as well as the most translated American non-fiction author of either gender. Her writings covered theology, evangelism, Christian lifestyle, education and health (she also advocated vegetarianism). She was a leader who emphasized education and health, and promoted the establishment of schools and medical centers. During her lifetime she wrote more than 5,000 periodical articles and 40 books; but today, including compilations from her 50,000 pages of manuscript, more than 100 titles are available in English. Some of her more popular books include *Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *The Great Controversy*.

It doesn't take much of an argument to see that the creator is greater than the one created; even though the one created may be an angel. If He is the creator, then of course, He is the one so much greater.

(A question from the audience), yes.

He is the creator of necessity, He is greater than that which is created. Now, He is the revealer of the glory of God. Now, the glory of God, my dear, is what God is. It isn't just an illumination that may be around Him. We sometimes think of glory in that respect; the glory that shone out of somebody's face and that sort of thing, but that glory is only the reflection of something.

When you talk about the glory of God, you're speaking about the character of God, what God is. And all that God is, you can see it in the person of the Lord, Jesus Christ; all the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, all of it; the revealer of God's glory. He is the express image of His person. If you want to know what God is like, you look at Jesus. If you want to know what God sounds like, you listen to Him. If you want to know what God's hand is like, you take hold of His hand. Now that's the answer to it, the image of His person.

He not only creates all things but sustains all things, upholds them. He not only slung the stars into space, His great hand underneath them keeps them there all the way through so that they never make mistakes. The reason is, underneath all the created universe, there is the hand that created it. And all the stars and the flowers and everything else sing, "The hand that made us is divine."

Sure. And underneath, the hand. He is the redeemer; notice it. He purged us from our sin. This is the work to which He came to do. And even now, He is seated on high. Seven things -- will you please write by the side of that, "memorize." Now, in your notes, you do not have the verses where these various things appear. They all appear in Verses 2 and 3.

So that sometime or another, when you're just reading Verses 2 and 3, you mark at the side there, "Heir of all things, 2; creator of all things, 2; revealer of God's glory, 3" and so on, so that you've got it there. I don't know that you'd need that for anything else, except your own information. But be quite sure that you've got it, that you've got it,

You notice, if you please, that divine names are given. The very first thing that is done here is to show before our wondering eyes the deity of our marvelous Lord. You will notice how it is done. He is called 'the Son of God' all the way through -- Verse 2, Verse 8. And you will find a little later on, when you begin to deal with these things a little later on, there are any number of places where Christ is called 'the Son of God' all the way through, and it's a very interesting and wonderful thing indeed.

There is the divine work that He did that proves His deity. There is His work of upholding all things. There is His work of salvation; purged all things by Himself unaided, by Himself as a ransom. And He stands alone, not one of many, but He stands alone. Even Moses cannot approach unto Him. Even Elijah cannot approach unto Him, or Joshua or Aaron or anything else. Now, that's the first thing.

Now, you will remember that his first comparison -- and this takes the larger section of Chapter 1 -- is with angels, to prove His superiority over angels. Now, of course, again, this is something that would be a

particular interest to these Jewish folks to whom this epistle was sent, and it doesn't have very much – at least not the same meaning for us.

We are – and I'm just putting your thoughts into words right now - we are not too much interested in angels. Have any of you ever thought of angels this morning? Has the thought of an angel ever occurred to you this morning? If I should ask that, I don't suppose there'd be more than two or three of us who have even thought of them this morning.

But, if you were in the position that these people were, and with the background these folks had, you would be thinking of them constantly, for there was not one single step in the history of these people where angels were not singing, every single step of them.

You will remember that in the history of mankind they're seen right from the very beginning. I seem to remember that in a book it tells us of two folks who disobeyed God in a garden. And God, in justice, had to thrust them outside. And, to prevent them from ever getting back in again, how did he do that? -- an angel with a flaming sword. And right from the very first step of humanity, you can see them all the way through. But, in particular, you see them in the life and affairs of His chosen people.

These angels, how great they are, how wonderful they are, but they are not eternal. They have eternity on this side, but they did not have eternity on that side. They came into existence at a certain point of time. God said, and it was so. But there was a time when there were no angels. There are angels in eternity, here. But they're not eternal beings; for eternity must go both ways. But they're not.

Now, here is somebody who is greater than them, who is not created at all; not created. He is begotten, and the word 'begotten' simply means 'placed in a position;' that's all. It doesn't mean born somewhere; not at all. When you find the word "begotten" in the New Testament, it always indicates a position. "He hath begotten us unto a lively in hope."⁵ Of course, He hath begotten us to this or that or the other. It simply means that in the arrangement of the Godhead, in the mystery that we cannot fathom, the Lord Jesus was in this unique position and thus is spoken of in order to make Him intelligent to us; that's all. He is spoken of as, "The only begotten Son of God."

When you find us as sons of God, and you do find us as sons of God in the second chapter, "He's going to lead many sons to glory;" thank God, and I'm going to be amongst them there and so will you. But, in that, there is a vast difference between that phrase, "the sons of God" and the one that is being said now. There is no question about His unique position. He is the one there, better than angels; and the angels were of necessity be His servant. How can the created one be anything else but the servant of the creator? It is of necessity. We couldn't be anything else whether we like it or not. There is no position that we could occupy as a created being, except that of the servant. That which is lesser, serves that which is greater.

Now, this is given to us in a very wonderful way, and I want you to notice them there because you've got considerable explanation in your notes. There are Old Testament quotations that support this, and it gives the Lord Jesus, in five ways, and supports by the Old Testament quotations. Why would that be so very important in those days?

⁵ I Peter 1:3

(Answer from audience, “The Jew would understand it.”)

The Jew would understand it, yes.

And, in the main -- this may not be exactly correct; but, in the main, that was the only scripture there was. If you wanted to prove certain things about the Lord, Jesus from scripture in those days, you had to go back to the New Testament. Now, here’s the glow of this old and ancient thing coming out. And in Verse 5, we see His Sonship. And in Verse 6, we see worship is accorded to Him. In 7 and 8, His heirship; in 10 and 12, His kingship; in 13 and 14, His rulership.

Will you please mark, “memorize.” Those five things that are there, memorize the five things that are there. Now, remember if you please, these are the things that are said about our Lord, and these Old Testament quotations all support them – “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”⁶ “Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess,”⁷ and that includes angels. Here is this great argument then to prove that He is greater than angels – a position that is unique, a future of triumph.

Now, I want you to mark “memorize” or put beside a certain section that word again. At the end of this particular section, you have a summary of our Lord’s superiority over angels. And you have there the summary as given by Dr. James M. Gray of the superiority of our Lord over angels; note them if you please.

They are angels. He is the Son. They are worshipers. He is the worshipped one. They are creatures. He is the creator. They are ministers of salvation. He is the author of salvation. They are the subjects in the age to come. He is the ruler of the age to come. Now, I want you to memorize that, if you please, that summary of the superiority of our Lord over angels.

If you take it step by step, you will not have any difficulty whatever about that. Salvation then is the word we now see. And you will find that when we get into Chapter 2 -- and we shall be getting into it as we meet together again on Monday. As we get into Chapter 2, you will find this: that salvation is mentioned seven times in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and you have in your notes the seven references where this subject appears, where the word appears – 1:14, 2:3, and 10 and so on, all the way through. And you will find this is the subject.

Because now, not only are we going to take a look at His person, in the glory of His person, but we’re going to look at the equal glory -- and I say that reverently -- of what He did, and His work is the work of salvation.

(Bell rings in the background. End of audio tape.)

⁶ Hebrews 1:6

⁷ Romans 14:11