

THE SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SONGS OF SIDNEY EDWARD COX

Revelation – Chapter 16
Great Things

Editorial Note: This is a lecture by Sidney Cox that was part of a series of lectures on the Book of the Revelation 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.

Lastly, it might be helpful to at least comment on the historical context in which these lectures were delivered. Many biblical scholars of that day associated some of what is found in the Book of Revelation with the Catholic Church – symbols of paganism, the movement of Satan/antichrist to establish one world church, etc. Many people viewed the Catholic Church with much skepticism and fear. Further, John F. Kennedy had just been elected the first Catholic president of the United States in 1960. His election was quite controversial and many non-Catholics were concerned about Kennedy’s catholic background. Elements of these concerns and mindset are found in these lectures. In 2008, many of these fears have been discredited and some would find them to be offensive and intolerant, but they were quite prevalent and not at all unusual in 1962.

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

Chapter 16 –We’re now continuing that which we began in Chapter 15. Let me remind you of some of the things that we looked at in Chapter 15.

A sign in Heaven. And we reminded ourselves that signs in the scripture usually occur in series of threes. And we gave a number of illustrations of that: three signs to Moses, three signs to Gideon, to Saul, to Elijah, three signs in Revelation 12:1, 12:3, 15:1. A sign in Heaven. And we are now watching the wrath of God completely filled up.

Now, in addition to that, we heard the singers and their victory, their song, the victory over the beast, the victory over his image, the victory over his mark, the victory over his number. All of these things are mentioned – God adds his faithfulness to their faithfulness, and there is a song of rejoicing. We had caught sight of them, or we had heard the sound of them before. Now we see them, so that we both see and hear the singers and their victory.

Now, the sea of glass once more appears. We notice certain distinctions and differences about it. Not differences about it fundamentally, but things that we see. For instance, we see a strange glow in it this time that we did not see before. Before it was a sea of glass, it was the established word of God, as God had said it would be, established in Heaven. And here it was, this picture of the old labor that became the sea of the temple, the brazen sea. Now we find it pictured in Heaven. And we find it in the fourth chapter and again we find it here, and the strange glow as a fire being reflected in it, which reminds us that it is now catching both the severity as well as the goodness of God. And we reminded ourselves, this is the characteristic of the word of God. In it you see His goodness. In it you see His severity. In that strange thing that was said to John at the end of Chapter 10, “Eat it.” You find two things resulting – it is sweet and bitter. And here we find this suggestion of the wrath of God that is being reflected in this, the symbol of the word of God. And we find saints standing on it. They stood on it, now they stand on it.

And we found this as well – we noticed the song that they sang. The Song of Moses and the lamb. We noticed that the Song of Moses came from Deuteronomy 32, and that it was a song about the lamb. Now that’s not the only interpretation of those two phrases, but Moses’ song was primarily about the lamb, about the one that was coming, and we gave verses I believe for that – Christ’s perfections in Verse 4, the salvation in Verse 15, the life giving one in Verse 18, Israel’s rock in Verse 31, God’s purpose for Israel - I’m just repeating these so that you can check it if you wish. God’s purpose for Israel in Verse 8, Israel dispersed and remembered in Verse 26 & 27, Israel’s restoration and blessing to the nations in Verse 43, and you find the Lord Jesus standing all the way through this magnificent thing that we speak of as the Song of Moses.

There is a general opinion, I don’t know how general it is, but there is an opinion that is worth considering and that is that Moses was the author of the book of Job. There seems to be a good deal of foundation for that thought. And if that be true, then Moses was the first great poet that we know anything about. For the book of Job is, and I’m quoting here, “the greatest prose poem that was ever written” – the book of Job. Now, if we want ground for considering Moses as a great poet, as well as a great historian, etc, a great law giver, all we have to do is to read the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy, and it is very questionable if there is a finer poem that has ever been put to words than this. You can find magnificence all the way through, and I merely mention that just to remind

myself as well as you that in this book of God, we've got some exceedingly precious things. And this is one of them.

You'll remember what somebody said about the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy, "It is a synopsis of all prophecy that follows throughout the word of God." You can find it in some kind of form, embryo form possibly, but you can find the suggestion of every single prophecy that follows, all the way through in this marvelous thing that we call the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy.

We hear them singing the Song of Moses and of the lamb. If we should get to Heaven and hear the sound of singing somewhere or other, and we wonder what the song they are singing, it would be The Song of Moses and the lamb. I would suggest that we become acquainted with it before we get to Heaven so that it will save us the embarrassment of inquiring what song is being sung, and it will save some angel telling us, you should have had sense enough to have learned it while you were down there on earth. It'd have saved you time up here. There it is at any rate, this thing.

And we see seven angels. Here they are again. There is a difference in their appearance – the seven angels that came blowing trumpets for example. We do not know just what they looked like - they were seven angels that were given this high and exalted commission to sound the trumpets of God's judgment. Now we see something of their appearance, and they have upon them a priestly appearance, coming out from the temple dressed in priestly garments. This is a judgment because God is offended with the people of the world, religiously. Now you will find later on, God is offended with the people of the world, commercially. He's offended with the people of the world, governmentally. But here, he is offended with the people of the world, religiously. He has given all of the loveliness of his heart in teaching and helping men to find a way into fellowship with himself, a way that was broken in the fall. And we find, even at the end of it, there is very little sign of it left. And an offended God brings seven angels of judgment out of the center from which religious revelation came, symbolized in the temple, and we find them here. Their appearance is described, their work is indicated in Chapter 16 that we shall see in just a moment – the seven golden vials, the seven last plagues. And we find these judgments so strangely like those old judgments upon the land of Egypt in the long, long ago. We find them so strangely alike. And these are the things that we have been finding in Chapter 15. When you get over into Chapter 16, you will find again a continuation of this.

One of the things we need to keep on reminding ourselves of is this – that the judgments of God are falling not only upon people, but upon the earth itself. And keep in mind what is in view in this – a changed earth upon which a changed man can reside. That is God's purpose. It was in the first place, it is now. That a man changed should dwell upon an earth changed. The earth can never be over-flowed or covered with the righteousness of God unless this fundamental change in the earth itself is seen.

Now, in Chapter 16, as we get into it, you will see a concentration of this. I believe you have these things in your notes. If you do not, I'll just read them to you and then if there's any necessity for copying them we will do so. But here are the judgments in this chapter on the earth itself. First upon the earth generally – verse 2; upon the sea – verse 3. You be checking to see whether you've got this in your notes will you? Upon the sea – verse 3; upon the rivers – verse 4; upon men, the heat of the sun – verse 8; upon the government of the beast – verse 10; upon the river Euphrates, its

dried up now – verse 12; upon Jerusalem and Babylon and Armageddon. And by the way, in this chapter Armageddon is mentioned for the first and last time. It's only mentioned once. The general thought of it is mentioned over and over again. The name of it appears but once, and here it is.

Now, have you got those things? Would you like me to read them again, just to check them there? Or do you have them in your notes? If you have.....on page 31 of your notes these appear, so that there wouldn't be any need for me to go over it again.

I want you to notice if you please, that we are coming into a pattern of final things in this respect: when we get into the next chapter, we shall see the complete judgment of God on religion and organized world government. That's the next thing we find. Then in Chapter 18 we see judgment on world commerce. And in 19 and 20 we see judgment on the satanic trinity.

I want you to remember, if you will, that I gave you a suggestion that in this day that we're talking about there will be the appearance of three cities, cities that will in all probability have to be rebuilt. But we don't need to strain too much about that. But there will be three great centers of satanic activity upon the earth. One is Rome, the governmental center. The other is Babylon, the commercial center. The other will be Jerusalem, the religious center. Now it is more than likely that Jerusalem, as a religious center has already been rebuilt, and undoubtedly Babylon itself had to be rebuilt to become the Babylon that we see here.

Babylon right now is a little bit of a one-horse place that's scarcely big enough for a dot on the map. It has never disappeared entirely; there has always been a little community called Babylon. And it isn't much bigger now, if any. But one of these days it will be, in the day we're talking about. It will be the great commercial center through which Satan will control world commercialism. Now we've seen already an indication of something that's going to happen to Babylon. We see it again in Chapter 16. Did we not hear a sound of a voice that said, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." Now, as we go along, we shall begin to see more clearly the outlines of Babylon. What kind of commercialism went on in that? Was it merely commercialism that handled wheat and grain and cotton, etc? Oh no. It was commercialism in the souls of men. Men were the product that were bartered and sold there. Whether that's an indication of actual slavery or not, I question very seriously. I think that is a picture of the utter enslavement of men during this reign of Satan as we see upon the earth.

Now, this is the way the thing is developing. We are rapidly coming, my dear, to Chapter 19, where the bells of Heaven begin to ring as the great one comes this time with his saints, not for his saints. And remember, he cannot come with his saints until he has first come for his saints. And he's coming with his saints to execute the final judgment upon the earth, and to establish a kingdom that has been promised, and will last according to this book for 1000 years and it will be the kingdom of God on earth as it is in Heaven, the very thing for which we pray constantly and so thoughtlessly.

Now you'll have to forgive me for that last remark, but that's true - the more you think about it, the more thoughtless our usual prayer for the coming of the kingdom of God on earth as it is in Heaven becomes. It is a thoughtless thing. Very few folks ever think that it will ever be answered, and if it will be answered, in what way will it be answered? What? How can there be a kingdom without a

king? The answer is: it is impossible. And a king is coming, and he's going to establish a kingdom for which we pray constantly and rightly so.

Now, let's look please and see once more - you have this in your notes. Let's see the great things that occur. The word "great" occurs 11 times in this recital of great things that we call the 16th chapter of the book of the Revelation. Verse 1 – a great voice, verse 2 – great heat.

Now you'll remember that we have seen the heat of the sun turned loose upon people upon the earth, and perhaps upon the earth itself - in this awful thing that comes when a vial of God's wrath is poured out upon the earth and the intense heat of the sun, that has been hitherto controlled and is this morning controlled, because if it wasn't, we'd be in a bad fix. But the heat of the sun has been controlled. God removes the control and the heat of the sun is allowed to come in all its awfulness upon the people of the earth.

Now, we've seen something happening to the sun before. But it's been entirely different than this. We have seen God darken the face of the sun. Now, we've seen that a good many times. We saw that long before we ever got into the book of Revelation. We saw God darken the face of the sun for three long hours while God turned his back upon his son who had become sin for us. And we saw God darken the face of the sun. We've seen that before. We've seen it here in the book of Revelation, where darkens came and clouds obscured the light of the sun. Now we find the clouds are removed and all restraints are removed, and the sun pours its intense heat down upon the earth.

Verse 9 – great heat. Verse 12 – great river. Here we find judgments that are coming now upon the earth in a way that we haven't seen before. For example, when judgment came upon the sea before, on how much of the sea did it fall? One third of it – that's right. One third of it. Now we find all the seas are affected and all the rivers are affected. And you can see, this is the climax of God's judgment. Whatever had been happening before, that was a foretaste of it. Now, this is the complete thing – the vials of God's wrath are now being poured out in all of their completeness upon the sea. The great day there in verse 14, the great voice in verse 17, the great earthquake in verse 18 – and remember the great earthquake is mentioned twice. You will probably have that in your notes that gives the difference between 10 items and a statement that the word "great" occurs 11 times. It occurs 11 times because it's twice in verse 18. The great city, the great Babylon, the great hail in verse 21, the great plague in verse 21. Why was hail poured out upon the earth? Why would that come? Remember, we are watching a judgment upon the earth for a religious reason. Now keep that in mind. Now let me ask you one other question, and then we'll come to the original one – why was hail used?

What is the heart of religious rebellion against God? We give it a name? Blasphemy, that's right. The great blasphemy – now that's the heart of religious rebellion against God. Now let's go back into the days when Israel was a nation upon the earth carrying on their affairs in their way. Let me ask you this, what was the punishment of Israel upon blasphemy? It was stoning. Exactly. It was stoning. That was the punishment of Israel – that was their legal way of disposing of a blasphemer. That was the reason why Steven was stoned to death, because that was the law. Now here is God doing exactly the same thing. Only, he is doing it with heavenly stones, instead of earthly ones. And you can see the pattern of it all, why it is. Here is God doing this thing.

Now, notice if you please some of these things that with which we are already familiar, the voice of the cherubim that bids this judgment now to take place. In the previous time when we heard a commission being given it was in the nature of a command – come. Now it is in the nature of – go. “Come” in Chapter 6 and “Go” in Chapter 16. Here is God’s last judgment. Notice how some of them remind us of the plagues of Egypt upon the earth and the men and the sores that are coming upon them. The sixth plague was it not? I think you’ll find that that was the characteristic of the sixth plague of Egypt. Perhaps you could check that sometime. I believe that is correct however, that in the sixth plague, it was the sores that came upon men. A sore is a word that describes a skin disease that was quite prevalent in those days, and the horror of it can be seen when we find a friend of ours facing the awfulness of it. Who was that friend by the way? Job. Exactly so. Now you just take a look at it. Find the situation that came upon Job, the awfulness of it, and here is this picture of the sores coming upon the people on the earth.

Notice upon the sea, it all becomes as blood. Doesn’t say it becomes blood, but it becomes like blood, and there we’ve got once more the picture of the old plague upon the rivers of Egypt there. Upon the rivers of Egypt, the first of them there. Upon the sun, upon Satan’s throne, and the darkness that comes upon the Euphrates. This time, and by the way we’ve met that place before, haven’t we? You remember we caught a glimpse of it there, where in the strangeness of the imagery of this book we found a great dividing line between east and the middle-east and the west, and it was the river Euphrates. And we found that in some way, in the economy of God, these hordes on the other side of the Euphrates had been held back. The imagery of course is angels had been holding them back. Now they are to be released. Now we can find why, because it’s a related thing. We can now find why a horde of 200 million coming from the east can cross the river Euphrates, which is a considerable river. When you talk about the river Jordan, that’s one thing. But when you talk about the river Euphrates, you are talking about something else entirely different. This is an enormous waterway that divides east from middle-east and then the west.

Now we see why a great army, most of them horsemen, chariots coming with that strange appearance that they had, that we do not understand. All we can do is to just look at it. How is it that they can come without interruption and without hindrance across the Euphrates like that? You remember what happened when the chariots of Egypt drove into the Red Sea? They got into considerable trouble, didn’t they? They sure did. And now we find a judgment that comes, that makes it possible for them to come across. The Euphrates is dried up; and they are able to come across on the dry bed of this great river and come to the place where God is allowing them to come – to that gathering place, where the forces of the earth will be gathered in their final rebellion against God. That word, that place that we speak of as Armageddon; and when you remember that Armageddon is only mentioned once in the scripture, then it just reminds us that we don’t need to go falling over backwards in saying a lot about something about which God does not say very much at all. What we do know he says is this, that the forces of the earth in rebellion against God are going to be brought together in one great center, and the name of it is Armageddon. And to this great center, the forces of heaven will come and there will be the last destruction of rebellious men upon the earth.

Now we know that, that’s the general teaching all the way through, but I wouldn’t suggest that any of us, and you may not agree with me about this, but I wouldn’t suggest that you preach too many sermons on the Battle of Armageddon. Take it easy. Go moderately about that, will you. Oh, you

can get a bunch of glassy-eyed folks that'll come and listen to you and they'll listen to you very much more readily if you talk about the Battle of Armageddon than if you talk about the cross of Christ. They'll listen to you much more readily. There are more folks that are interested in the anti-Christ than there are interested in Christ. Some day or other, when you've got your church, you test that out some day. If you haven't got any folks coming to hear you talk about Jesus, you talk about anti-Christ and you'll find the place will be packed to the doors. But that's the way it goes. I don't think we need to fall over backwards about these things, not at all. Let's just remember what it means. There's going to be a great gathering place and to this gathering place that is already under the all-seeing eye of God, to this place will come an avenging Christ. Now he comes in a lot of other ways, but now he comes as the severity of God in its ultimate form. And, my dear, we'll be with Him.

Now I don't know whether we anticipate that or not. I'm not sure that it's a matter of anticipation, although it'll be wonderful to be with Him no matter what He is doing. It sure will, because then we will understand the reason for it. That's the thing.

And so we find this is going on, and it's a very interesting thing indeed – the earthquakes that are coming and the hail etc. and you will find the same old thing obtaining. How much repentance do we see because of this? None at all. None at all. All of which reminds us that the people of the earth have now reached the place where hardness of heart has become incurable.

Yes. Question from the audience - inaudible. Well, the Holy Spirit is not there to convict them, of course they won't repent. But the Holy Spirit is doing something in this. He isn't doing the same thing that he's doing in this age. The Holy Spirit causes repentance in a different way altogether there. But wherever repentance is found, you do find some repentance down there during the tribulation. There are a lot of folks who heard the message of the kingdom, and repented and become acceptable there. But the time of repentance is gone. And of course, there's a great deal in what Arlene reminds us, that repentance is something that is produced by the Holy Spirit. Repentance is not something that we can work up. We don't say to a person that if you're intelligent, you ought to go repent, because no person repents unless the Holy Spirit is at work, because you repent when you see sin in all of its sinfulness. Not a little messy thing that happens. You don't repent against that. You may regret it, but repentance is the work of the Holy Spirit within the heart. He is not now operating upon these people on the earth. They've had their opportunity, they had it in the day of grace, they've had it over and over again. They had it when they heard the sound of the great everlasting gospel that was proclaimed by an angel. All of these efforts of God to bring them to some place of realization, because that's what repentance is. It's the realization that we are wrong and God is right. Now if you want a definition of repentance, there it is. A man repents when he says, "I am wrong and God is right". Now it's easy for us to say, "I'm wrong", but it isn't so easy to say, "God is right". But, repentance takes both. A man says, "I am wrong". And then he says, "God is right", and that's repentance.

Now you don't find it here at all. The day has gone for that. Now, Babylon – we begin to see more signs of it. We shall see it again in all of its detail as we get into the next chapter – Babylon rebuilt, The Armageddon that is appearing before us, the judgment that's coming upon Babylon in detail physically and spiritually, and we begin to see these last things coming and how very, very interesting these things are.

Now, this is about as far as we need to go because I don't want to get over into the next chapter for the moment. Is there any point there, now here's something I don't usually do. But is there any point there in that 16th chapter that you'd like to spend a moment or two talking further about?

Question from the audience – inaudible. Because the Euphrates in particular was in the plan of God as this barrier there, that's the reason for it. Whenever you find some particular thing in the plan of God, then it is frequently separated from the general things that are happen, a general judgment on the rivers. But the river Euphrates was being used for a special purpose. It comes in the plan of God, it is the great dividing line between east and west. That's the only explanation of that, otherwise the Euphrates would be just exactly the same as the others. But even if judgment did fall upon the Euphrates, it would still be possible for God to dry it up so as to make the way over it. You see what I mean?

Now, is there anything else there, any other point?

Yes. Question from the audience – inaudible. Well now, neither do I. So let's both break down (laughter). That's one point Arlene, where we are in perfect agreement (laughter). I don't know too much about those frogs either. I never did care for frogs, did you? (laughter). Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Providing they're the right size, and providing that you gig them right, then I can become very much interested in them (laughter). But I don't understand very much about that either.

Are there any other things that we'd like to just find out what we don't know about them?

Question from the audience – inaudible. I don't know that either. I don't know that, but there are quite a lot there and there are men, and there are some commentators who will give you the answer to that. Now, whether they're right or not, I don't know. But, it has been a point there that I have never felt that we needed to bother just exactly how many pounds and ounces those hailstones weighed. They weighed enough there to do what God wanted them to do – bring death for blasphemy. We do know that.

All right, children. Thank you very much indeed, and you'll go down quietly, will you? Of course, we're a little ahead of time.