

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

Revelation - Chapter 17. Part I.

Explanation of the Effect of the Judgments on Religion, Politics/Gov't and Commerce
The Woman on the Beast – Symbol of False Religious Systems

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.

...Remember that in Chapter 16, we watched the outpouring of the final judgments of God upon the earth. We had noticed the judgments of God in three series- the judgments of the seals, the judgments of the trumpets and the judgments of the vials, or the bowls of God's wrath.

Now, we notice two things about these last judgments, because here is the pouring out of them. In Chapter 17 and 18 you get explanations, answers to questions that naturally arise, which is the pattern of the book all the way through - a great statement, great situation, and then a period of parenthesis and explanation. Now, we're in Chapter 17 and 18 and we get explanations of certain questions that may have arisen with regard to these pouring out judgments of God that are called the vial, or the bowl judgments.

We notice for instance, this- that the judgments were upon earth and people. Now we've been saying that all the way along. But just as soon as we watched the seven angels who were commissioned to pour out the final judgments of God upon the earth; and as we watched one being poured out, and then another and then another, we find the same old pattern again - upon the earth and upon the peoples that are upon the earth.

Then we noticed this, that while previous judgments had dealt with certain sections of the earth - for example, one third of the earth, one third of the sea, one third of the rivers - now we see in this final judgment as we would expect, that the judgments now fall upon the entire scene, not part of the earth, all of the earth. Not part of the sea, all of the sea. And we notice this development in the outpouring of God's judgments upon the earth. And we can see now the completion of God's plan to clear the earth of that which could not be allowed to go into a millennial kingdom - the curse upon the earth, and the unchangeably, antagonistic people who are upon the earth. The only way to deal with them now, in judgment and justice as well, is to clear them out of the way. All of God's efforts at mercy and warning, have all failed as far as they are concerned.

Now, when you get into Chapters 17 and 18, you find certain other things. Again, answers to questions. For example, here are these judgments falling upon the entire earth. And, is that the only thing that is happening, the thing that we mentioned a moment ago? Just the clearing away of certain things in the earth itself, and certain people in the earth, or are there concentrations in the earth, say of power, and of religion? And of commerce? Are these things general things in the earth, or do you see some particular judgment on not only the peoples of the earth, but the concentration of antagonism against God in the governments of the earth? In the religion of the earth? And in the commerce of the earth?

Now, in Chapter 17 and 18, and in 19 at the beginning of it for that matter, you find the answer to that question. Not just general judgments, as we saw in Chapter 16, but what these general judgments do with those three critical areas - religion, politics, or government, and commerce. These three things.

Now in Chapter 17, you will see the destruction of two things: concentrated religion and concentrated politics, or government. Now you will find the destruction and the explanation centered particularly in those things. Now, why do those two things go together? Religion that has become world-wide and fixed in its antagonism against God. No changing it anymore, this is apostasy in capital letters. It will never be anything else. Now we find along side of it, government

that is antagonistic to God. The government of somebody who is organizing the peoples of the world for a last stand against the Christ who is just around the corner. For Chapter 19 isn't very far away from Chapter 17. He's just around the corner. This is the last frantic effort that you see to organize the world against this oncoming One.

Now, come back to the question we asked a moment ago - why do you see religion and politics side by side? Because here you see them in this chapter, and you watch the judgments of God falling finally on them. Now why are they side by side? The answer to that my dear is just this - that whenever religion takes control, it always controls politics as well as everything else. If you have any doubt about that, you ask any missionary from South America, and you will find that he faces not only a religion in control, but a religion that is controlling politics as well. It's controlling government, and religion when it comes into its final zenith of power always seeks to control politics as well as everything else. Now that's the reason why you see the two together, because in this period that we have been watching, we have not only been watching the emergence of a world religion, where all religions come together under one great central, or in one great central place, and under one great dominating personality.

We have not only seen that, but we have seen governments rising, nations coming together. We have seen one who came out of the midst of the sea of the nations taking control of the nations. And now in this chapter you find religion taking control of politics. What you see in this chapter - I'm just going to mention it now, because we're going to talk about both these things in just a minute - but you find a woman riding on the beast. Now do you see what that means? Because the woman is a type, a symbol, a portrait of unchangeable antagonism towards God in the matter of religion.

And the other is the one who came out of the sea, we watched him. We saw he had horns and we saw he had eyes, and we saw he had power that had been given him by the beast. And we saw this one and the various things about him, and in Chapter 13 we watched his emergence. Now you can see religion controlling politics, and it always does. It always does.

And the people of the United States will find it out sooner or later. Eight years is a long time, but a lot of things can happen in eight years. It sure can. And while it looks right now as if the control of an apostate religious system is quite some time, distance away from us, a lot can happen in eight years.¹ Now, you know what I mean by eight years, because there's a young man who is just starting on his first four years, he'll have his next four years without a slightest doubt about that. His brother will have the next one, and his son or a brother will have the next one. And it'll go on. And you watch, and the people of the United States had better keep their ears open and their eyes open to this kind of thing and to remember that this stuff that you hear about, an apostate religious system that believes in the separation of church and state, and has no desire to control government - that my dear is what Blackwells would call "hogwash." It sure is. And there hasn't been a nation on earth that's played around with that sort of thing, but they found it out. Every last one of them has found it out sooner or later. Now, that isn't a political speech, I'm teaching the seventeenth chapter of the

¹ This series on Revelation being recorded in early 1962, he is referring to John F. Kennedy, elected the first Catholic president of the U. S. in November 1960 and who took office in January, 1961. Kennedy's younger brother, Robert served as Attorney General during John Kennedy's administration. Many other members of the Kennedy family served in various political offices before 1960, and the family has been described at various times and viewed as a "political dynasty."

Book of Revelation, that's all. If these things happen to get in my way, well that's too bad. That's all we think about that.

Now, let's look again. In this chapter you find then the destruction of a great religious empire. Now, I want you to notice certain things about it, because in a moment or two we're coming back and follow the track, the pathway of your notes. But for the moment, let me give you one or two things here that sort of lead into your notes. And when we come to the notes, then we can sort of summarize these things.

Notice this, that first of all, the appearance of this great religious system is in the figure of a woman. Now don't forget that wherever you find a woman appearing in this fashion, she is always a picture of evil, no matter where you find her. Where a woman is pictured as taking control, she is always a type of evil, always. Wherever you find the symbol of the woman, you look for the evil there. And you will always find it, all the way through. Whether you find it in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, as you do, and you find a woman there that is taking the symbol of evil - that's always the symbol of evil, never anything else in the scripture. You can't find a single sign of it in the scripture to be anything but evil - where she takes the leaven and hides it in the meal of God's Word and where it gradually spreads through until it adulterates the whole thing, and all you've got to do is take one eye - never mind about two - and look around in the world today and find out that we've just about got to the place where the leaven has just about leavened the whole lump. Just about. There isn't a place anywhere, except a few isolated places where you can find the real truth of God's Word being taught. There's very few places in this whole world...getting worse....(tape cuts out a minute)

I read an article yesterday called, *Why Bible Institutes?* in which this writer, and it was a very clever thing, in which this writer points out the fact that the Bible institutes are one of the last means that God has raised up to keep back this incoming tide of evil - false doctrine, no matter where you find it.

Now, you find a woman here, and you find her with a name or names, and I don't need to remind you of the names at all. You can use either one of them, I don't care at all which one you use. I don't want to use either one. I don't mind whether you call her the harlot or you call her the whore, I don't mind at all. I'm not going to use either one. But that's what the scripture says about it just the same. And remember the description of our activity is described as, 'fornication.' And fornication is always an illegal connection with something. And you find this woman with her illegal connection with the governments of the world - where she is riding upon the beast. And you find her there, and you find her with all the outward decorations that always comes with a false thing. For a false thing, my dear, has to appeal to the flesh. It can never appeal to the spirit. And remember there are two words that are used in connection with decorations. One is 'decked.' D-E-C-K-E-D. You'll find it right in that chapter. She is decked in gorgeous raiments. Wait a little while, my dear, and you will find a bride, not decked in garments to meet her bridegroom, but 'adorned.' Whenever Satan clothed anything, it is 'decked.' Whenever God clothes anything, it is 'adorned.' Let's remember.

Now, you find this. Here is this woman - this symbol of an apostate religious system. Here she is decked in all the garments of earthly glory, clothed in pearls, clothed in purple and in scarlet. And

you can see any one of these things, if you care to look for it. They are still the symbols of an apostate religious system. They are still the outward decorations of it.

Now I want you to notice a word that is used regarding her, which is only used regarding things that are religious, and false religions too. It's the word 'mystery.' A mystery, my dear, is never used of anything except something that has a religious implication. Never. Now, sometimes a mystery is used in the scriptures to show something that God has produced and how beautiful it is. Not to show that it is something that is hidden, but something that is now revealed. And you find it. The mystery as it is used in the book of Ephesians, for example. But here you find something else. This is an apostate religious system, and consequently it is described as a mystery.

Now, the reason why it is described as a mystery is that this religious system from the very beginning of it, and it began a long, long time ago. It began long before the Emperor Constantine went upon the throne of Rome, for example. It began long before that. And included in it are all the things that are spoken of as 'mysterious.' Everything connected with it is mysterious. For example, is there anything mysterious about a false and devilish notion that a wafer and wine can be actually changed into the body and blood of Christ? And there have been millions of people and will be millions of people still, down through the years - it happened all the time, and they stand or sit in an atmosphere of mystery while something's going on up there that they believe is the actual changing of a bit of a wafer and a little bit of wine into the actual body and blood of Christ. And they have sat and watched with their hearts beating and their eyes fixed upon this thing.

If you have any doubt about it, you go and watch anytime you like. There's nothing in the law that says you shan't go to a Roman Catholic mass if you want to. I've been to it many and many and many a time. Many a time, and sat in there and felt the atmosphere of Satan all the way around. Sure. You can't avoid it. You can't avoid it. You go into the door and here is a bowl of water. And if you dip your fingers into the bowl of water and make a sign that is a pagan sign upon yourself with this thing, some mysterious thing is suppose to happen to you. And every step you take in it is clothed in that sort of thing. Now, here is the name of the woman that symbolizes all of this. And she is spoken of as, 'Mystery.'

Now, let's remember one or two other things. A religious system is always centered in some place. It isn't a general thing that is spread all over everywhere. It does spread all over everywhere, but it's like an octopus. Its long tentacles are reaching everywhere, but if you follow the tentacles down to the center, you'll find it's in some one place. Now, in this chapter you've got, not only the picture of this thing spreading all over the world, and in its power is controlling even governments that are under the control of anti-christ. But you find it centered in some one place. There is a great central place. Now you can easily illustrate that, and we will in just a moment. But the great central place is spoken of here as Babylon. Now remember beloved, that Babylon is a word that can be used and is used of a system and a city. It can be used of a system and a city.

Now let's illustrate it. Let's come back and talk about Rome again. Rome is both a system and a city. And if you went to South America and any other, almost any place on earth, for this is true now of almost any place on earth, you would stand and say, "My isn't Rome enlarging herself all around here?" Now when you say that, you would be speaking of a system. But if you went to that city of seven hills and stood in an actual city named Rome, you would not necessarily be speaking of

a system, you would be speaking of a city. It's quite true that the system has its center there, but the city is one thing and the system is another, although they become so enmeshed, one with the other, that it's difficult to separate them. But, Babylon can refer to an actual place, or it can refer to a city, or to a system - and it does. And you need to keep in mind as you are watching the word, are we talking about a geographical location that we call a city, or are we talking about a system that has spread like the tentacles of an octopus into every corner of the world, and is rapidly gripping this world in its unholy grip.

Now, we've got the picture of both here. We see a city, and we see a system. And you can see both of them there, but each will retain its identity. We don't lose sight of the fact that the city is a geographical place, and we say, "It's a system only" - it isn't a system only. It's a city and a system.

Let me give you simply illustration again. Washington and government are almost synonymous in this land of ours, and rightly so. Washington and government are almost synonymous. You could almost speak of the government of the United States as Washington, as a matter of fact we do all the time. We say, "What's going on in Washington?" We're not talking about somebody selling groceries in a corner store. We're talking about what's going on on Capital Hill. And we speak of Washington as synonymous with government. "I wonder what Washington's going to do about that?" Or, "What's going to be the reaction of Washington to this?" And so on. And we say that. And you can see it, it can be used almost synonymously. And yet, you can live in Washington and have nothing to do with government. Lots of folks who live in Washington are not connected at all with government. Just lots of folks. Washington is a city. And Washington is a government. Although the two of them are so closely linked together that it's very difficult to separate them.

Now, you find exactly the same thing here. Sometimes you'll find the word Babylon meaning a system. And sometimes you'll find the word Babylon meaning a city. And you will always find when the city is in view, it is described. There's always an indication of it that will show you how the city retains its identity, and when it means a system there.

Now, in this chapter you've got the way in which God destroys a great religious system that became so great and so powerful that it exercised its authority over the governments of the world, even the governments controlled by anti-christ. For here is a woman riding the beast. Now this is the picture that you've got before us. Now you can see what happens and it's a rather strange thing. It doesn't mean that some special judgment of God comes down upon this woman and destroys her. Not at all. But the strange thing about it is that God allows the destruction of the woman to take place by means of something that's already down here on the earth. Now, you watch as you read through that chapter and you will find it is the beast himself, who eventually throws off this incubus of this woman with her false religions and her terrible grip upon governments - throws her off and destroys her himself. It wasn't a special judgment from God coming down like a hailstone or flames or something of the kind coming down, not at all. This wasn't it at all. It was the allowing of the thing that would come almost inevitably - that when a government finds religion is exercising control over its activities, it is very likely that the government will throw off the incubus of it. This old man of the sea, and throw it off. And that's exactly what happens. Because you can see this - here are two things bound for the same end. What was it that the beast - call him anti-christ if you will, and I think you're right about that - but what was it that he wanted more than anything else. He wanted people to worship. Exactly so.

Now, what is the heart of a false religion? What? It is a desire for worship and diverting worship from the true God centers worship in some false channel, and every last one of them have got that. They are all desiring to control worship. So that whether it's religion on the one side, or whether it's the anti-Christ on the other, you'll find they are both after the same thing. Now, if you've got two irresistible forces, or almost irresistible, that are both after the same thing, there's going to be a terrible smash when they collide. And that's what you see in the seventeenth chapter - you can see the collision between what look like an irresistible system of false religion and an equally irresistible system of anti-God government; and these two work together for a while and anti-christ allows the woman to ride the beast until it is quite obvious that the time has come to decide who's going to control worship. And when that time comes, then's the moment when the beast rids himself of this woman riding upon him.

Now, these are some of the things that you see. You notice it if you please here as we go along, there are three main characters in this. First of all, let me suggest this to you. I don't think you've got this in your notes. You may have - check it and see if you will. Now we come a little closer to our notes here. We shall say a few other things about it. But notice this: that this chapter can be divided into two sections, very simple sections. You check and see whether you have this. Verses one through six is what the angel showed John. Now you notice that right at the beginning, here is this angel taking John on a personally conducted tour and showing things to him. You can see it there right at the beginning. It occupies Verses one through six. Then, not only does the angel show John things, but the rest of the chapter is taken up with the angelic explanation of those things.

Yes ____.

(Student asks question): "When it says that he was taken away in the Spirit again, was that something similar to the first..."

Yes, I think it is. I think it is. I think you can put the same interpretation of it, is that he's taken up into a realm where he sees things that are a long way ahead of him. I don't think in this case that you can talk about 'in the Spirit' in the same way that you could in the first one, and say he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. He's in the Spirit here, and they're showing him things - most of them of course have not happened yet at all, but they will.

Now, let's look again and see. You get those two main divisions, because that helps in getting the jest of this chapter. Verses one through six - what the angels showed John. Verses seven through eighteen - the angelic explanation of it.

Now, notice certain things about the beast. Now again, you will find identifications that are given here. Remember that one of the things that was said about him again in the thirteenth chapter was this rather strange thing: he was, and then was not, and then became again. Now that isn't exactly the word that is there, but that's what it means. Here you find him, now he's gone, now he's raised again. Now, in this chapter you find exactly the same word regarding the beast, so that you know who you're talking about. You're talking about the one that you saw in the thirteenth chapter, who was and then disappeared and then rises again.

Now, I want you to notice if you please that this city with which this thing is identified is spoken of as a city with mountains or hills in it. And it looks very much, and you will notice how I said that - it looks very much as if the city of Rome built upon hills is in view here. Now, you don't have to stretch your imagination very far to find a city thus build upon hills - you don't have to stretch it very far to find, or to come to some conclusion as to what city we are talking about. Now, if that be true, whether it's the actual city of Rome, or whether it's the Roman Empire, it isn't very difficult to find that this description fits it exactly.

For instance, there was a time when Rome became the last of the great four world empires that appeared in Daniel's vision. We don't have to be wondering about that. And it went on in world power until the beginning of the fifth century. That is a mere historical fact. Then, from that point on you find Rome as a world power disappearing all together until even now. You do not find Rome or Italy as one of the great powers of the world. Not for the moment. It is a great power, but it isn't one of the outstanding ones at all. But the coming time will be when this will be rising again. When, if it be true that the old Roman Empire, that seems to be coming together even now, that if this is true; and you see it in so many ways - the cry for a great dictator who can hold the west against the east. That's the cry everywhere. And people are wondering, is there a man coming who's going to be big enough to hold this thing together?

Then, you've got this strange thing that we've talked about before that we speak of as the European Common Market, in which you find nations coming together who've never come together before on a commercial basis. And you find these things that, while you don't seek to put stress upon them that is unwarranted, you can't close your eyes to the fact that things are going on all the way around. And when you hear such men as Winston Churchill saying that the greatest desire of his heart before he goes away into the wherever he's going, when he goes, before he goes, his greatest desire is to see a United States of Europe. That's the thing that he's been working for all the way along.

Well, now you can't ignore these things, it's all the way around you. This tendency toward union of nations, and the strange thing about it is that these nations that are coming together in this union commercially right now, governmentally they hope later on, are all the nations that were connected with the original Roman Empire. There are lots of nations on the other side. The nations on the other side of the Iron Curtain were never in the Roman Empire, never. I'm only mentioning these not because we want to get off balance and become fanatical in that sort of thing at all, but what we need to do is to look at things that are quite obvious before our eyes. And things are going on.

Now, in the last days it is quite obvious again there is going to be a revival of this. And if there's going to be a revival of it, there is bound to be a revival of the importance of the City of Rome. Now it's a tremendous city now in which religion is centered, but there's coming a time when it was just as great, because if there's going to be a United States of Europe, there's got to be some center for it, of course there will. Of course. And the center seems to be, according to the scripture, and the fore gleam that you get of it there, it could be the City of Rome.

Alright, now let's have a look at this woman to see some of the details regarding her. Remember if you please, that we are looking at something that I don't believe we have mentioned before in our study of the Book of Revelation. We have mentioned something like this: that the great purpose of the Holy Spirit in the day of grace was to gather out a people for his name - a bride for Christ. Now,

when the bride is completed, she will be translated to meet her bridegroom. Now, remember that's the bride on one side, and remember, she is adorned. She's not decked. She's adorned. You'll see her in a little while. She's going to appear again, and you will see her with her bridegroom, adorned.

Now, if it be true that Satan has imitated everything that God has done, and he has, even to an imitation Christ, does it not follow that Satan has been preparing a bride for anti-christ? Now, who will be the bride of anti-christ? Who? Well, if the bride of Christ is the true church, then the bride of anti-christ will be the false church. And here you've got the picture of the false church.

Now, watch and see something about this woman here. Notice what is said about her - her terrible name. Notice again, her location, 'in the midst of many waters.' She appears in the midst of the nations of the world, controlling them, exercising influence over them. We have seen that sign, that word many times, that this dressless nations of the world are always seen under the symbol of the sea, or many waters. Now, look at her again. Look at her iniquity and you can see that her iniquity is spoken of in two ways - one, by the dreadful word 'fornication,' and the other, by the equally dreadful word, 'slaughter.' She is drunk with blood.

Now, you don't have to look very far historically, apart from anything else to find out what religious system has been drinking of the blood of people all the way along. All the way along.

I read somewhere or other that Rome had been responsible for the deliberate murder of fifty millions of people. Now, I simply repeat it, that's all. End quote. I don't know, but we do know this - it has been responsible for the murder of folks who would not bow down to their particular idols, all the way along. And the end is not yet. The end is not yet.

Now, we see her iniquity there, this woman who is guilty of the thing that is spoken of as, 'fornication' and 'slaughter,' and remember this - that wherever you find a religious system that demands worship, it will slaughter those who refuse it, always. Now one of the differences between a false religion and the false system that we all have in mind, even though I don't name it particularly; but, the false system that we have in mind demands worship. Protestantism doesn't - it encourages worship, aid you see the difference between the two? Wherever you find worship demanded, you'll always find slaughter on the side of it there.

Alright children, thank you very much.