

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

Psalm 29  
The Psalm of the Thunderstorm  
Version 1  
(Audio is poor, but audible)

**Editorial Note: It is my belief that this series on Psalms was recorded while Sidney and Violet Cox resided in retirement at The Eventide residence in Detroit, Michigan. This was during the period 1962 through 1972. Sidney Cox was 75 years of age in 1962.**

**At various points in the recordings, he states that he is meeting with this group weekly to lead this series; however, when listening to the recordings, there does not seem to be a live congregation. At another spot in the series, he explains that he has also been taping these messages for further distribution.**

**During this period in his life, Sidney Cox often preached and taught in various churches around the Detroit area, but for a variety of reasons, including the declining health of his beloved wife, Violet, he was increasingly unable to travel extensively. As a result, he began to experiment with tape-recording his messages and lessons in order to send them to interested groups.**

**Thus, it is impossible to know if he delivered this series in person to a church group, or whether he recorded the series for them to listen to in their Sunday School or other meetings. It was likely both.**

**The order in which he presented the weekly series was: Psalm 24, Psalm 40, Psalm 46, Psalm 91 and Psalm 117. In addition, there are two recordings made in two different settings of Psalm 29, which do not seem to be part of the formal series.**

**The audio quality of these recordings varies a great deal. Some are quite good while others are poor.**

**J. Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. July 30, 2010.**

It's so very nice to see you all again and to have the privilege once more of traveling the pleasant pathways of the Word of God with you. We have spent a good many hours, happy hours I'm quite sure, along this pathway of adventure into the Word of God. And in particular we have shared several very interesting hours in the book of the Psalms. We have traveled from one psalm to another. We started at Psalm 22 and moved to Psalm 24. And from there to Psalm 14 and to 46. And we went to Psalm 91, and from there to Psalm 117. And several other places. And I'm sure it's been a pathway of delight as we have listened to the music of the ancient psalms and particularly the music of the voice of the one who was writing them.

One of the things that we have interested ourselves in, and I think justly so, is to see if possible the

geographical or physical or perhaps circumstantial evidence and background from which the psalm emerged. If we could just see what the writer of the psalm was thinking about. Under what circumstances was he writing? What was the physical surrounding as he wrote some of the psalms? Of course, there are psalms where this thought immediately becomes evident to us, and quite plain to our thinking.

When we read the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm it is not difficult to imagine the hillsides and the shepherd and the sheep and the green pastures and the still waters, and perhaps the sign of danger here or there. But it's not difficult at all for us to see the pleasant surroundings that seem to be as a framework for a song like Psalm 23. Now, we have endeavored to look at the background of a number of other psalms. We tried to imagine why it was, and we don't have to imagine too difficult, because we know some of the facts at any rate.

Why it was that David wrote the 24<sup>th</sup> Psalm, when he said, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in."<sup>1</sup> We know something of the background of it. When we turn to the 8<sup>th</sup> Psalm and we hear David saying "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth."<sup>2</sup> We do not have to wonder under what circumstance David learned how very excellent that name was, for one day David faced a giant, nine feet six tall, with a spear like a weaver's beam and he, but a stripling of a lad, with a sling and five little stones and he said to this giant, "You come against me with a sword and a spear, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts."<sup>3</sup> And David knew from practical experience how excellent that name was.

It was very wonderful to notice that when Moses wrote the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm he was thinking of the journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness. And everything in that beautiful thing we call the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm finds it's background in this loveliness and significance of the journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness. And so you can go on and on and on.

But this particular time, I want us to think about another psalm, a psalm that we do not usually turn to as one of our familiar ones. We turn to a good many others by instinct. But this is one psalm that we do not usually turn to except on certain occasions, and this may prove to be one of them, and I hope it will. I'm referring to the 29<sup>th</sup> Psalm.

And the thing that I would like us to do would be to see if we can visualize both the physical background from which this psalm emerges, and also to see in it something of the reason why we find seven times in this psalm the phrase "the voice of God". Here is the voice of God appearing seven times in this particular psalm. Now it has to do with the physical background. Because quite frequently you will find that God's voice and some physical circumstance are linked together.

For instance, when you read that God answered Job out of the whirlwind and that God spoke to Elijah, not in the flame of fire or in the wind or the earthquake, but in the still, small voice. A physical happening. Something that was tangible. Something that we could understand. And over and over again, you will find that the sound of a physical circumstance is interpreted for our spiritual

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1 Psalm 24:7

2 Psalm 8:1

3 I Samuel 17:45

understanding by the words, the voice, of God. The voice of God spoke in this way, and in that way, and in another. And so we find it all the way through.

Now, how did the voice of God speak in this 29<sup>th</sup> Psalm in such a way that it is mentioned seven times in the few verses that make up this remarkable thing? First of all, supposing we read it together. Here is Psalm 29, and you will notice the constant repetition of the words “the voice of the Lord”. Here it is.

“Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto he Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thundereth; the Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory. The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever. The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.”<sup>4</sup>

Now, we've just heard the words of the 29<sup>th</sup> Psalm. And I'm wondering as we were reading them together and thinking, I trust, did you detect that there was something physical in that psalm? Did you hear something when we came to such words as “the Lord is upon the waters”, “the Lord upon many waters”, “the God of glory thundereth”, “he breaketh the cedars”, “he maketh them also to skip like a calf”, “the voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire”, “the voice of the LORD shaking the wilderness”, “the voice of the LORD making the hinds to calve”, “the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh”. Did you detect something while we were reading that? Could you hear in it the sound of a storm?

Because this psalm has been spoken of as the Psalm of the Thunderstorm. And the physical background of it from which the teaching of the beauty emerges is that of a physical happening that we speak of as a thunderstorm. And if you will notice carefully, you can find where the thunderstorm begins, in which direction it moves, what happens when this cyclonic thing strikes into the forest in the northern part of Palestine in the cedars of Lebanon. How it moves southward again until it becomes evident in the wilderness section of the country, and moves on south until it finally vanishes at the most southern point of Palestine, Kadesh. The place where the children of Israel arrived, when their journey through the wilderness, when they came to Kadesh (?) and there turned away in disobedience. And God shut them up in the wilderness for forty years and then allowed them finally to go into the Promised Land. The most southerly point in Palestine.

And we've got this picture before us. Now, just to get it clearly in our minds, supposing we turn to the psalm again and watch, if you please, and see where the storm begins. If you turn to verse 3 you will find these words. “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. The Lord is upon many waters.” Now, there was a great water that washed the western shore of the land of Palestine. It was called the Great Sea. We speak of it, of course, as the Mediterranean Sea. And here you can see a storm beginning, way off there in the Mediterranean Sea.

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4 Psalms 29:1-11

Up above the storm clouds all is bright and beautiful. But beneath these dark and fearsome storm clouds there is a terrible storm brewing in the sea and making its way with all its fury toward the coast of Palestine. And it strikes in at the northern part of the country in that area where the great cedars of Lebanon grow. And here we can see the effect of the storm in that area that is called Lebanon where the cedars grow. And here these enormous trees are broken down by the fury of it and smashed up into little pieces until the storm is tossing them around in such a way that the phrase is used, "They skip like a calf." And the greatness of the cedars of Lebanon is completely overcome by the fury and power of the storm.

Then you will see that the storm moved southward again. And while it does, thunder and lightning accompany it. For there's the flame of the fire, where the voice of the Lord is heard. And finally, down into the wilderness section that we speak of as the wilderness of Kadesh. And then, out into the land that lies beyond, the storm moves and loses itself in the areas of wilderness far to the south of Palestine. And so we've got a storm here. And as you look at it and try to visualize it, it is not any wonder that this psalm is spoken of as the Psalm of the Thunderstorm. The Psalm of the Thunderstorm.

One of the things that you notice that is rather pathetic is that even the animals were affected by the fury of the storm. The terror that must have gripped the animals. For some of these animals, pregnant with their young, lost their young prematurely during the fury and in the fear of the storm. Notice the words that are there. "The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve." And some of these animals prematurely lost their, or gave birth to their, young before the right time owing to the fury of the storm that was all the way around them. And so you've got a picture of a thunderstorm. And it's a very interesting one indeed.

As we wonder, why should a psalmist use a background like that? But when you turn to the end of it, you find that it is quite obvious what was in his mind, for he was thinking not only of a storm then, but of a storm that may be in your life, my dear. And in mine also. A storm that may come upon us, and doubtless will at some time or other. But in the midst of it all he gives this comforting thought, and we'd better take it to heart. The Lord will give strength under his people. And the final word of the psalm is not storm, but the opposite word of peace.

And perhaps this speaks a sound to us, a lesson to us, for life, my dear, is made up of one storm after another. But when our eyes can see beyond the storm to the golden glow of his face in kindness turned toward us, there comes peace in our heart that can never come any other way. And remember that God still speaks. He spoke in times past, in sundry times, and divers manners (?), but now in these days he speaks to us in his son. And what a wonder it is that in the very Bible that you are holding in your hand, if you turn it to your ears you can hear the voice of him who says unto us "Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest."<sup>5</sup> And let me remind you, my dear, he means exactly what he says.

And so we've got another psalm, the psalm that we speak of as Psalm 29 and we can mark it in our Bibles. And it would be a good thing to do this. Mark at the head of the 29<sup>th</sup> Psalm in that Bible of yours The Psalm of the Thunderstorm. And out of the midst of it take a good look at Jesus and

remember he's the one who bringeth peace in the midst.....

(Message ends and some strange organ music begins. All but the first 40 seconds of track 5 are this organ music. Track 6 is empty except for a little more of this organ music.)