

Teach - Ins Series 2. Commencing Monday, September 24th 1990 and fortnightly thereafter. 8pm at 19 Lammas Road, Watton at Stone, Herts. Subject for this series: Growing Up into Maturity. May only have lasted for 3 sessions, which are contained in this document.

Teach-in Series 2 Growing Up into Maturity

Session 1: Introduction and What's Next.

You will no doubt recall that at the beginning of the last series we looked at God's Prophetic Word. In it we looked at the coming of Christ and His Kingdom and how it was prophesied in the Old Testament by the Prophets of old. We saw how we were called and to be chosen to bring in His Kingdom in our own generation.

There were five aspects that we considered:

1. Revelation - The unveiling.
2. Vision - The seeing.
3. Strategy - The entry.
4. Faith - The vehicle.
5. Fruit - The rewards of obedience.

We considered a number of scriptures and something of the lifestyle leadership of Jesus, the Word of God.

Psalm 110 verse 1-4

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies." 3 Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; in holy array, from the womb of the dawn, your youth are to You as the dew. 4 The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

Isaiah 9 verse 1-7

But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. 2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. 3 You shall multiply the nation, you shall increase their gladness; they will be glad in Your presence as with the gladness of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. 4 For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian. 5 For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult, and cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire. 6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His

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name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Daniel 9 verse 24-27

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. 25 So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26 Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. 27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Revelation 19 verse 7-10

*Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he *said to me, "These are true words of God." 10 Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*

The scriptures above from **Psalms 110, Isaiah 9, Daniel 9 and Revelation 19** gave us an overview of God's plan and purpose. Today we shall examine the way that we can apply God's Word to our everyday lives. I believe that if we are to grow up then we have to look at a number of areas in our lives.

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1. Desire

Do we have a heart to be changed into the image of God?

Romans 8 verse 29-30

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

2. Discipline

Are we prepared to be discipled or disciplined for the task?

3. Faith

Living out of our emotions and strong feelings can quench the Holy Spirit, how can this change?

Session 2. The Fear of the Lord.

In our last session we looked at the areas that we should pay attention to if we are to grow into the kind of person that God is pleased with. In being *born again* we have repented of our sins, received forgiveness from Jesus and been baptised in water and received the Holy Spirit and now stand before the Lord, a clean and righteous vessel. Now we are to continue to live righteously in the fear of the Lord, we will look at a number of scriptures that explain what the fear of the Lord is and what great blessings righteousness brings to the one who lives to please the Lord.

Proverbs 1 verse 7

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 8 verse 13

The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth, I hate.

Proverbs 9 verse 10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Proverbs 10 verse 16

The wages of the righteous is life, the income of the wicked, punishment.

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Proverbs 10 verse 24-25

What the wicked fears will come upon him, but the desire of the righteous will be granted.

25 When the whirlwind passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous has an everlasting foundation.

So where do we go from here? What You and I will discover is that we do not always follow the ways of the Lord, even though we mean to. Paul spells out the difficulty in the letter to the Romans.

Romans 7 verse 14-25

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. 16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. 17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Paul explains the conflict that exists in his person, the conflict between the old nature and the new nature. The only way that we can win this battle is when we embody those three things that we see from the first session notes: **Desire**, **Discipline** and **Faith**. Where there is a heart and a will then there is a way forward and through our difficulties into new ground, that's how we grow. The desire for the kingdom life and the discipline of hearing and listening to His Word and doing those things that He commands will take us into a mature place.

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The promised land for us today is the same land that the people of God struggled to find in the Old Testament. We share the same promises and experience the same difficulties as they did; lets take a look at some of them which appear in the book of Ezra.

Ezra 1 verse 1-2

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying: 2 "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

First of all God speaks His word to the king of Persia, Cyrus. In verse 2 the task is simply defined.

Isaiah 44 verse 24-28

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, "I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself and spreading out the earth all alone, 25 causing the omens of boasters to fail, making fools out of diviners, causing wise men to draw back and turning their knowledge into foolishness, 26 Confirming the word of His servant and performing the purpose of His messengers. It is I who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be inhabited!' and of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be built.' And I will raise up her ruins again. 27 It is I who says to the depth of the sea, 'Be dried up!' And I will make your rivers dry. 28 It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'"

This work of restoration for Jerusalem was declared by the Prophet Isaiah 300 years before Jeremiah speaks of it and 700 years before Christ. It is a historical fact which took place and is also a mirror image of God's promise to restore a heavenly Jerusalem in the future.

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Ezra 1 verse 3-4

Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 Every survivor, at whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem."

This is a call for volunteers to carry out the task.

Ezra 1 verse 5-11

Then the heads of fathers' households of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites arose, even everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up and rebuild the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem. 6 All those about them encouraged them with articles of silver, with gold, with goods, with cattle and with valuables, aside from all that was given as a freewill offering. 7 Also King Cyrus brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and put in the house of his gods; 8 and Cyrus, king of Persia, had them brought out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and he counted them out to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. 9 Now this was their number: 30 gold dishes, 1,000 silver dishes, 29 duplicates; 10 30 gold bowls, 410 silver bowls of a second kind and 1,000 other articles. 11 All the articles of gold and silver numbered 5,400. Sheshbazzar brought them all up with the exiles who went up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Everyone who had the desire in their hearts, having been stirred up by the word and the Spirit of God volunteered. They gave themselves and their things for the purpose of the work of restoring God's house.

Ezra 2 verse 61-63

Of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and he was called by their name. 61 Of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and he was called by their name. 62 These searched among their ancestral registration, but they could not be located; therefore they were considered unclean and excluded from the priesthood.

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63 The governor said to them that they should not eat from the most holy things until a priest stood up with Urim and Thummim.

Thousands of unnamed people gave themselves to the task, but there were some who were not accepted. Why was this?

Ezra 3 verse 1-13

Now when the seventh month came, and the sons of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem. 2 Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brothers the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brothers arose and built the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God. 3 So they set up the altar on its foundation, for they were terrified because of the peoples of the lands; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, burnt offerings morning and evening. 4 They celebrated the Feast of Booths, as it is written, and offered the fixed number of burnt offerings daily, according to the ordinance, as each day required; 5 and afterward there was a continual burnt offering, also for the new moons and for all the fixed festivals of the LORD that were consecrated, and from everyone who offered a freewill offering to the LORD. 6 From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, but the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid. 7 Then they gave money to the masons and carpenters, and food, drink and oil to the Sidonians and to the Tyrians, to bring cedar wood from Lebanon to the sea at Joppa, according to the permission they had from Cyrus king of Persia. 8 Now in the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak and the rest of their brothers the priests and the Levites, and all who came from the captivity to Jerusalem, began the work and appointed the Levites from twenty years and older to oversee the work of the house of the LORD. 9 Then Jeshua with his sons and brothers stood united with Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah and the sons of Henadad with their sons and brothers the Levites, to oversee the workmen in the temple of God.

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10 Now when the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD according to the directions of King David of Israel. 11 They sang, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, saying, "For He is good, for His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever." And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. 12 Yet many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' households, the old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, while many shouted aloud for joy, 13 so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the shout of joy from the sound of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard far away.

The preparation having been completed, the laying of the foundations can now begin. God has established principles that we must follow if we are to see growth in our personal and our corporate lives. Can you see some here?

Session 3 Laying Foundations.

Ezra 4 verse 1-5

Now when the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the people of the exile were building a temple to the LORD God of Israel, 2 they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of fathers' households, and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we, like you, seek your God; and we have been sacrificing to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us up here." 3 But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of fathers' households of Israel said to them, "You have nothing in common with us in building a house to our God; but we ourselves will together build to the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia has commanded us." 4 Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah, and frightened them from building, 5 and hired counselors against them to frustrate their counsel all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

God's plans are interfered with, there are some other people who claim to be with them, serving the same God yet they discourage and even frighten the workers.

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Does this happen today? There are many who join themselves to church who do not have either the desire or the discipline to to keep to God's master plan. We can see this in Matthew's Gospel.

Matthew 13 verse 36-40

Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, 38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. 40 So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.

Weeds or tares are sown amongst the true wheat, Jesus wants us to follow after His way, otherwise we can hinder the work of God. Can you think of some examples of these hindrances?

Ezra 4 verse 24

Then work on the house of God in Jerusalem ceased, and it was stopped until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

The work stops for sixteen years, what was missing in these people?

Ezra 5 verse 1-5

When the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them, 2 then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them supporting them. 3 At that time Tattenai, the governor of the province beyond the River, and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues came to them and spoke to them thus, "Who issued you a decree to rebuild this temple and to finish this structure?" 4 Then we told them accordingly what the names of the men were who were reconstructing this building. 5 But the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews, and they did not stop them until a report could come to Darius, and then a written reply be returned concerning it.

The work restarts, what caused the change of mind?

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Ezra 6 verse 14

And the elders of the Jews were successful in building through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they finished building according to the command of the God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

The work is completed.

The moral of all this is is that providing we stick to His plan we will succeed, we do win in the end! The point is, of course, can we be different? History, it seems repeats itself over and over again. The Church has been no different to the world, has it? We might just manage to be that generation of people who get it right. The Lord is looking for a people who will give themselves totally to His purposes and stay with His plan. You and I have been given a free choice, its the gift of God, you may enter into the process of growing or You can stay as you are; there are no other choices. Choose this day, wisely.

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