I. A Basis Chronology Set the Stage of Understanding the Message of Ezra.

A. Ezra returns to Jerusalem 80 years after Zerubbabel’s first group of exiles.

B. The temple has been rebuilt and life has carried on in Jerusalem.

1. Ezra’s role as prophet is one of foretelling vs. forth telling.

a. God’s people need both aspects of the prophetic voice.

II. Significant Dates to Remember:

A. 722 B.C. – Assyrians overtook the Northern 10 tribes.

B. 586 B.C. – Babylonians sack Jerusalem and destroy the temple.

C. 538 B.C.—Book of Ezra opens—48 yrs. after Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem.

D. 538 B.C. – King Cyrus begins reign after Babylon overtaken in 539.

E. 536 B.C. – Work on Temple began under Zerubbabel

F. 530-520 B.C. – Work on Temple stopped.

G. 516 B.C. – Temple Finished (Note: 586 -- 516 = 70 yrs.)

H. 458 B.C. -- Ezra departs Babylon and arrives in Jerusalem.

III. The Book of Ezra tells us what it takes for God’s people to prosper in adversity.

A. During the period of 530-520 the rebooting of faith came through the prophets.

1. Haggai and Zechariah

B. Zechariah’s foretelling and forth telling epitomize the prophetic voice.

1. Zechariah’s night visions create the eyes of faith.

a. Horses and Horns – a man among the myrtle trees.

2. Chapters 1-3 foretell Calvary – note 3:9

a. The Branch is the name for Messiah.

3. Chapter 4 – The Theology of Strength is taught to Zerubbabel

4. Haggai reminds us that guilt has its place in spiritual motivation.

a. 1:4 – you live in paneled houses and God’s house is in ruins.

b. We follow the line of least resistance.

(1) It’s easier to build our kingdoms than His.

IV. Ezra kicks into the prophetic voice evaluating the behaviors of the people in Chap. 9-10

A. Foretelling of the letters to the churches in Revelation can be heard here.

B. “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” always applies.

V. The bottom line of the prophetic voice is threefold.

A. God’s Presence

B. God’s Promises

C. God’s Power