

--Items of archaeological/geographical/social significance should be carefully noted.

Probably not a lot need be said on this but it is always a good idea to have a commentary or text help that gives the data in these areas. This is one of the reasons that two or three commentaries are better than one...not to give us ideas about the text, but to help us grip more fully items that are related to it.

Now if these seem to be obvious, you will find that they are often the very things overlooked.

2. Some examples of the role of the historical background:

--2 Chronicles 7:14 (in context, of course)

I am not saying it cannot be used as it is so often used today but the context, background, and application are generally very different from what one would expect. It is not a general invitation to all men everywhere but an historical response by God to a series of conditions given by Solomon. I am sure the eternal principles will apply in every age..as we read in Acts 10:34 ff...but to lift the passage from context and understanding is to violate the text in historical understanding.

--2 Chronicles 19

The background of rebuke to Jehoshaphat by Jehu the prophet takes on a very unique character if seen in the light of the circumstances and the prophetic history of Jehu's father and his encounter with Jehoshaphat's father.

--Zechariah 7-8

The understanding of the historical background explains the anguish faced by those who wish to continue something that is good but not necessary and not prescribed. The significance of the passage is immediately clarified and its ideas made increasingly forceful by the study of the immediate and applicable history.

--Habakkuk

So many sermons are preached to this end in this book that I am reluctant to go into any detail but the background makes the difference in understanding it or not. For an example of application without the benefit of the historical data, see the notes in F.F.Bruce: BIBLICAL EXEGESIS IN QUMRAN.