

--The Psalms

In many cases we cannot know the exact historical backgrounds but in many the key is given in the superscription. I think these are part of the text or were added so early as to be a bona fide addition to the text. These notes will carry us to the historical books of the old Testament and the situations revealed there will give very explicit information on this background material. The Psalms come to much greater life when viewed from this perspective.

3. Some notes in discovering this material:

The bibliographies of Old Testament History and Old Testament Introduction are primary source areas.

Works such as Wright, ANCIENT CUSTOMS IN BIBLE LANDS, and Kitchen, THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST ITS BACKGROUND, and Pritchard, THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST, etc. are all helpful sources.

The archaeological dictionaries are useful but you need to know what you are looking for in order to find anything really useful.

Generally speaking the liberal commentaries will have more notes in this area although you will need to read them carefully. If you are working with a person, place, or event, something like ISBE will be a good help for historical information.

There is, in general, no shortage of materials...you simply have to know that there is history to be considered and then make the research into it a happy experience.

FINALLY, we have mostly been stressing Hebrew syntax, grammar, and text matters in our workbook so far. But this historical data is very important and very often the leading out of the meaning of a text cannot well be achieved without it.