

## Bridge Crossings

There are four bridges which must be crossed in all accurate Bible study. In this article we will define these bridges; and in later issues of “Window on the Word,” we will cross some of the bridges that lead us to an accurate understanding of God’s revealed truth.

### **The Language Bridge**

All sound interpretation must be in agreement with the original languages of Scripture – Hebrew and Greek. Since we speak English, we must go back to the original (Cross the language bridge) and seek to understand each word in the way it was originally intended.

### **The History Bridge**

All of God’s word has a historical setting. Jesus came to a Greek-Roman world with all the activities of Rome, politically and socially, and culturally. Paul tells us in Galatians that Jesus came in the “fullness of time.” Everything was historically perfect for the arrival of the Son of God. The Old Testament is replete with historical background. The history of Egypt, Canaan, Babylon, Assyria, Persia forms the setting for God’s revelation. In every passage we must cross the history bridge.

### **The Culture Bridge**

When expressing the care of God for His people, pastoral, agricultural, Palestinian shepherd life is the setting. If we fail to understand this setting, the meaning of Scripture is lost. The author of Song of Solomon compliments the girl he loves by saying, she is “my (his) mare...” and her hair “is like a flock of goats.” No modern girl is complimented by these remarks. As a matter of fact, they could easily be understood as an insult. If we are to understand what the young man meant, we must understand the cultural setting of his words.

### **The Geography Bridge**

Scripture narrates events of time and place. Jesus taught in Palestine, was crucified in Jerusalem, and ascended from the Mount of Olives. Abraham journeyed from Ur to Haran. The Philistines dwelt southwest of Judea. When Israel was obedient to God, she occupied what at other times was Philistine territory. The weather, the rainfall, the major rivers, the mountains, the Jordan Valley provide the physical setting for God’s revelation. We must always study Scripture with a map in hand.

From “Window on the Word”, September 2007, page 2, Word of Truth, P.O. Box 10514, Kansas City, MO 64188; Tapes and literature by Chester A. McCalley

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In terms of the language, history & culture aspects that have been presented in *How To Study The Bible* at Holly Hills Bible Church, the Geography Bridge spans aspects of history & culture. These two facets of geography that are valuable to Bible study are sometimes referred to as *historical geography* and *cultural geography*.