

Story of the Garden of Eden

Situation out of which it arose:

The Yahwist's uses a Palestinian setting in which he works the Garden of Eden myth (180) derived from a different source. In the original form of the myth there was only one tree, but the Yahwist shapes the myth so as to present two contrasted trees with their different properties (180).

Those who deny the myth and try to take the story literally lose thereby all the significance of the divine language of symbol (180)

Document in which it is placed:

J's story

When it was composed:

10th Cent., B.C. (175), "may have been committed to writing about the 10th cent. B.C." However it is not to this "hypothetical document" of the 10th Cent., but to a prophetic individual of the 7th cent., B.C., that we owe this *Story (178)*

Purpose of the composition:

In the period in which the Yahwist wrote, the knowledge of God and obedience was the condition of life (180)

Forbidden knowledge belonged to God alone, and in symbolic language the Yahwist used the ancient myths to teach how man marred what God had made and lost his immortality. The myth was a vehicle of truths that lie deeper than that which may be described as an historical truth (181). The Yahwist made skillful use of old myths concerning the guile of the serpent and the god's jealousy of man.

The Yahwist had to tell how man marred what God had made; to show how and why the Heilsgeschichte began. (181)