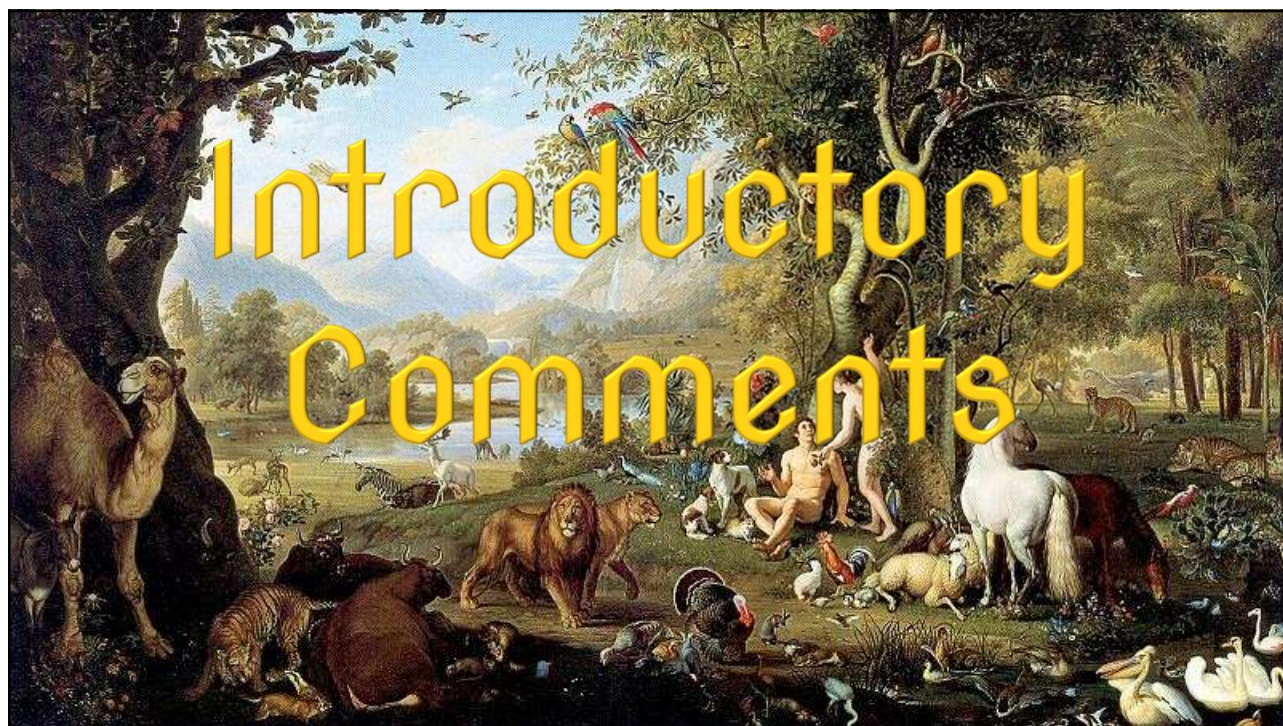




∞ Genesis 2:15 ∞

"Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden to tend and keep it."



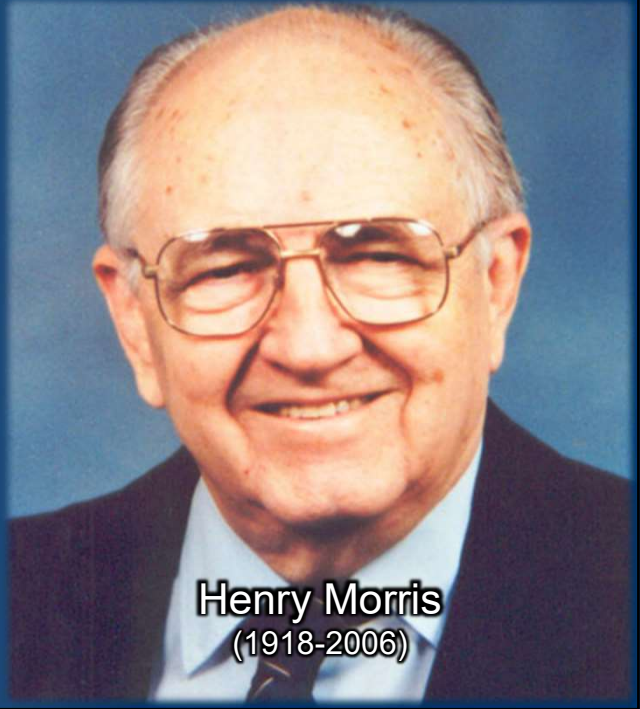
☞ **Westminster Larger Catechism** ☞
1647

"The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created, was the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him the liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth ..."

THE GENESIS RECORD

A scientific & devotional
commentary on the
book of beginnings

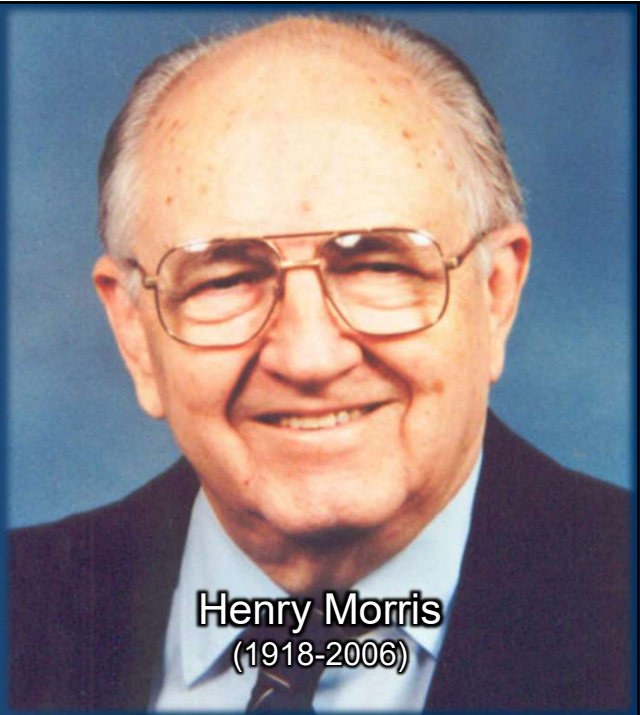
HENRY M. MORRIS



Henry Morris
(1918-2006)

"At this point, Adam was instructed merely to till the ground in the garden of Eden, to dress it and keep it. Even though there were as yet no noxious weeds, the ground was so fertile and the plant cover so luxuriant that its growth needed to be channeled and controlled."

[Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 92]

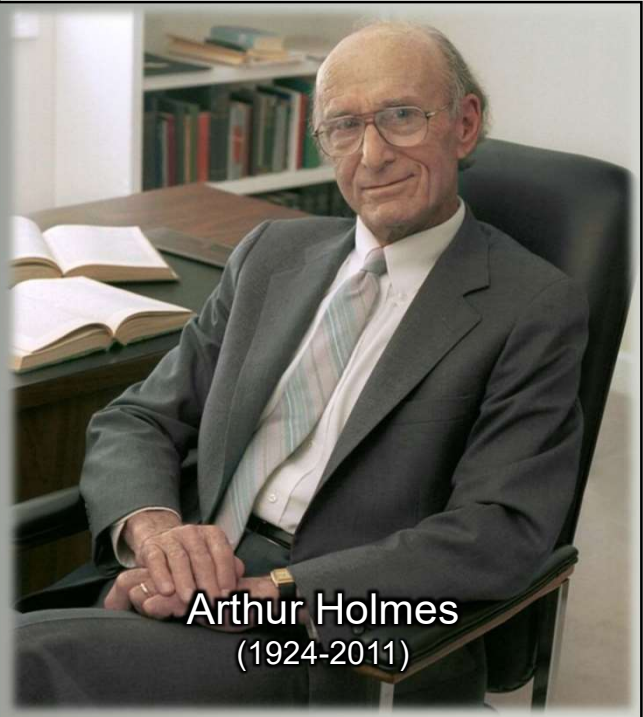
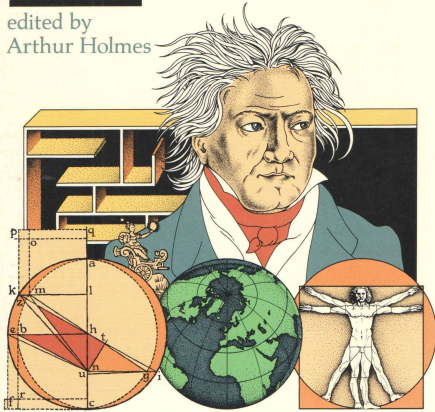


Henry Morris
(1918-2006)

The Making of a Christian Mind

A Christian World View
& the Academic Enterprise

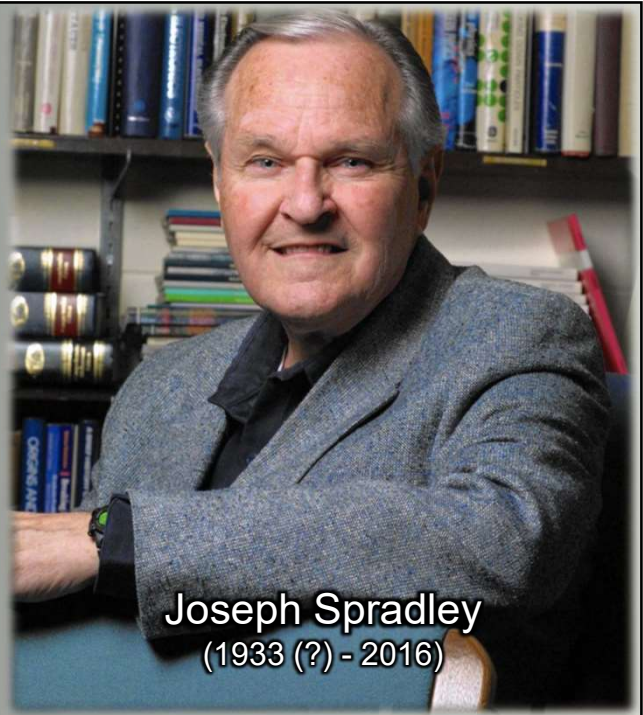
edited by
Arthur Holmes



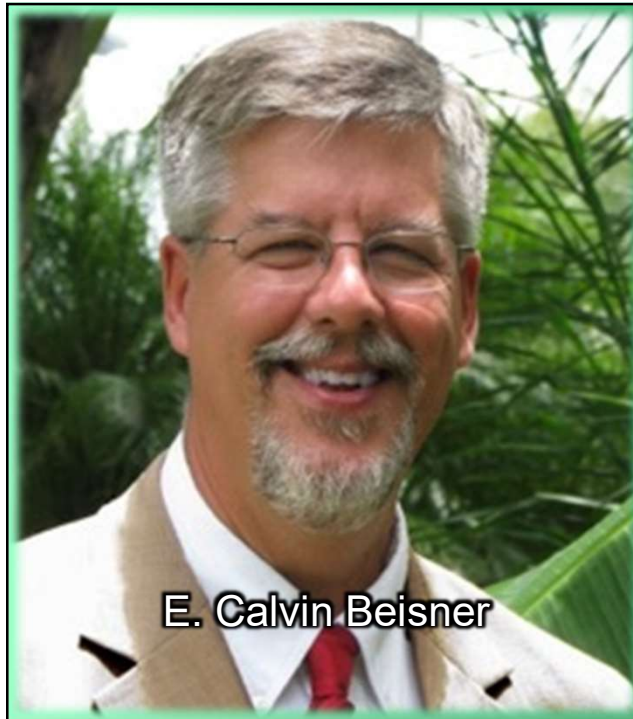
Arthur Holmes
(1924-2011)

"The doctrine of creation teaches that nature is not divine but is God's handiwork assigned to human responsibility for its care and protection [in] Gen. 2:15."

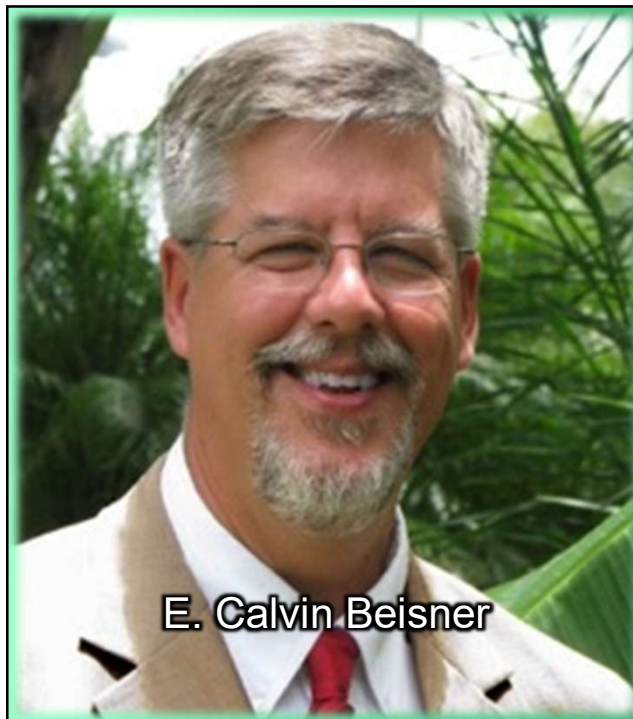
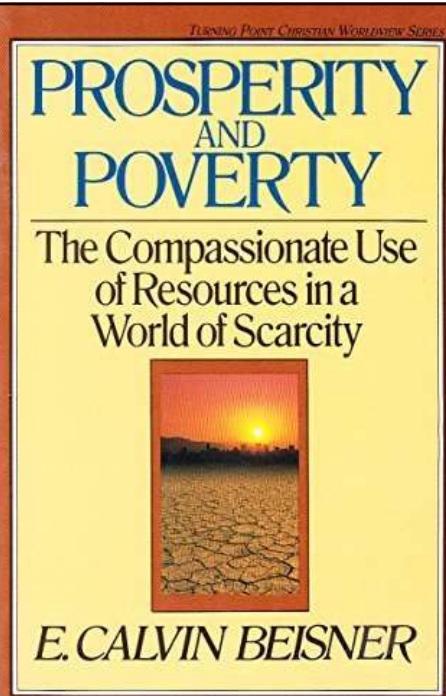
[Joseph Spradley, "A Christian View of the Physical World," in Arthur Holmes, ed., *The Making of a Christian Mind: A Christian World View and the Academic Enterprise* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1985), 67]



Joseph Spradley
(1933 (?) - 2016)



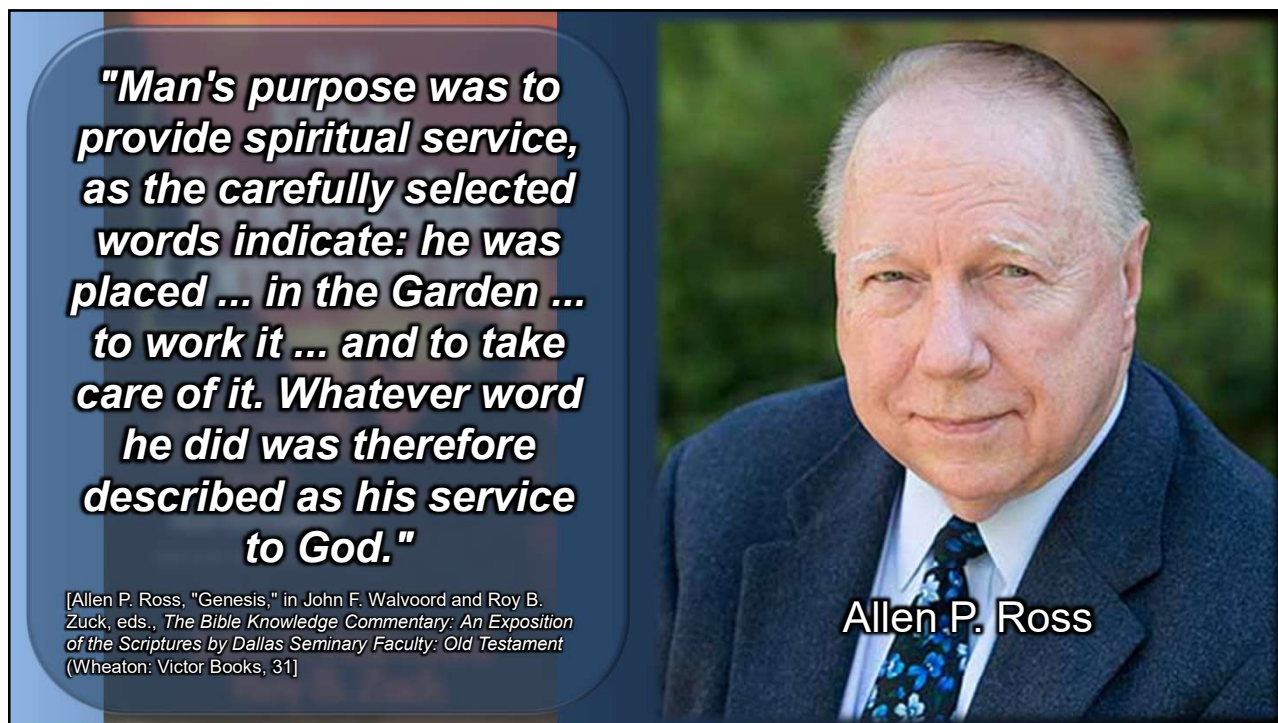
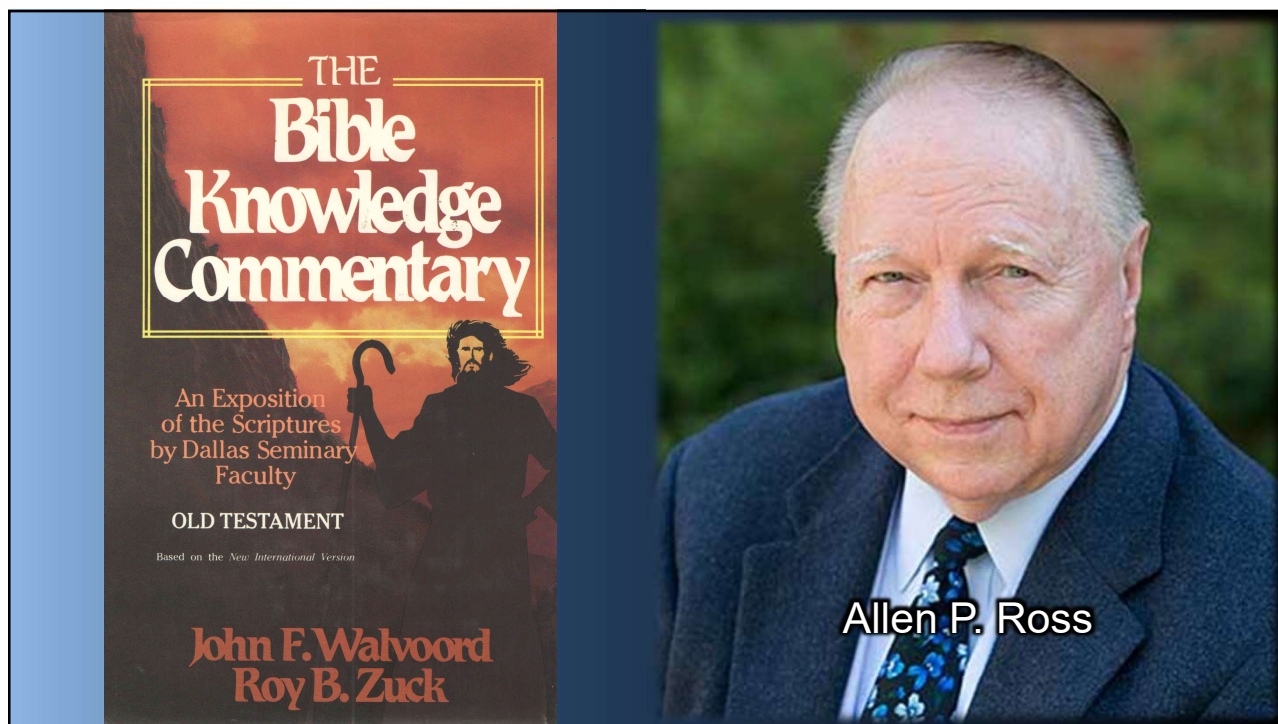
E. Calvin Beisner

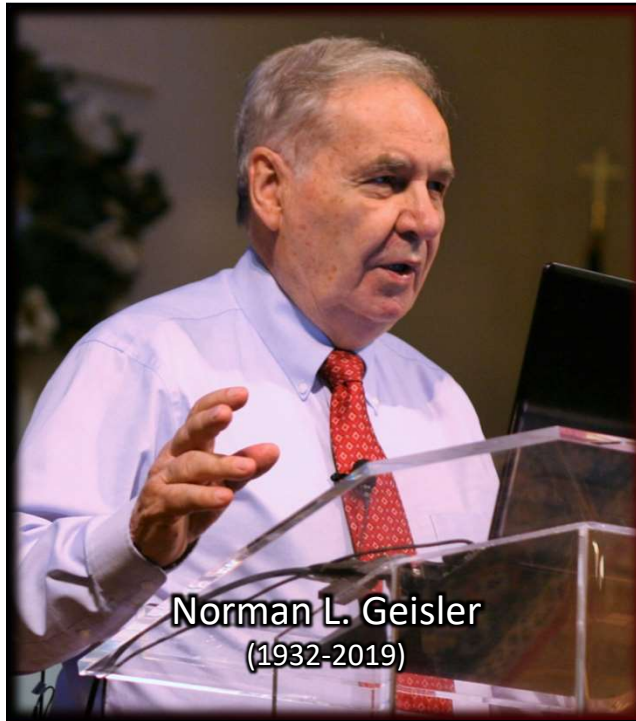


E. Calvin Beisner

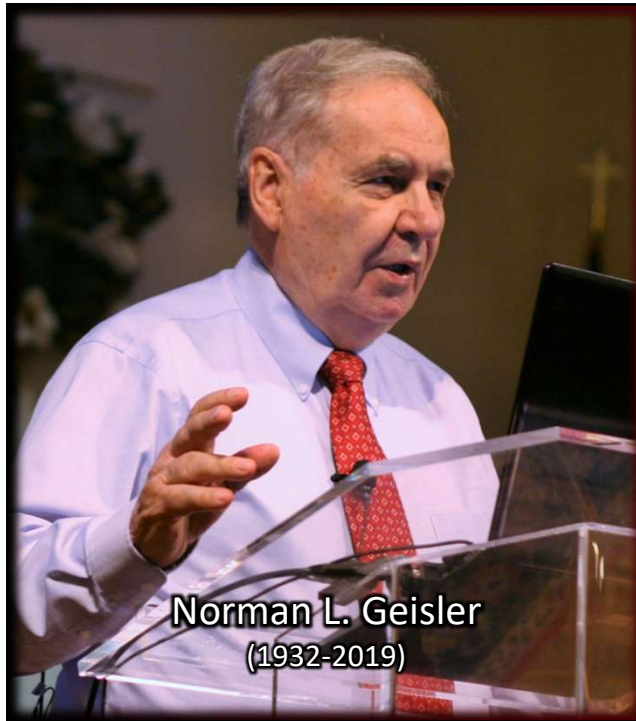
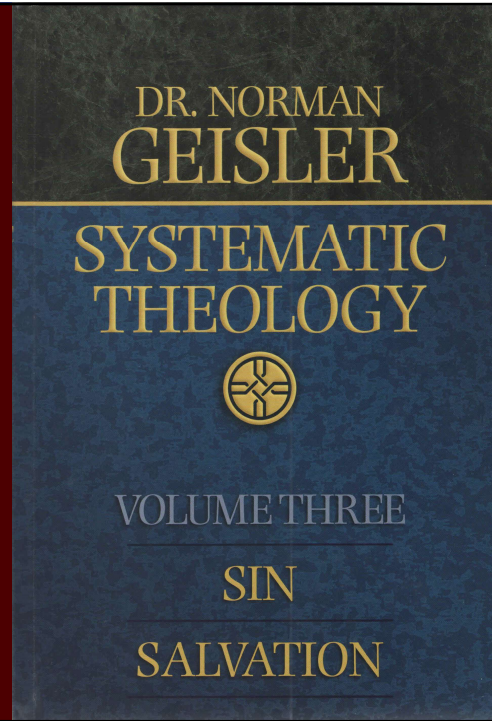
"Growth in Christian maturity then means not only increasing righteousness, holiness, and truth ... but also growth as workers fulfilling God's purpose for all mankind to cultivate and keep the earth (Genesis 2:15)."

[E. Calvin Beisner, *Prosperity and Poverty: The Compassionate Use of Resources in a World of Scarcity* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1988), 29-30]





Norman L. Geisler
(1932-2019)



Norman L. Geisler
(1932-2019)

Before the fall, Adam and Eve were told to 'subdue' the earth (Gen. 1:28); they were to 'work' and 'take care of' the Garden (2:15), not destroy it; to rule over it, not to ruin it; to cultivate it, not pollute it."

[Norman Geisler, Systematic Theology III: Sin and Salvation (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2004), 127]

I would like submit an alternative interpretation given certain grammatical, exegetical, and theological considerations to the end of arguing that Gen. 2:15 says nothing about Adam's responsibility to the garden, but rather, says something about Adam's responsibility before God.



The Hebrew word translated 'put' in Gen. 2:15 is different from the Hebrew word translated 'put' in Gen. 2:8.

☞ Gen. 2:8 ☞

"The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He **put** the man whom He had formed."

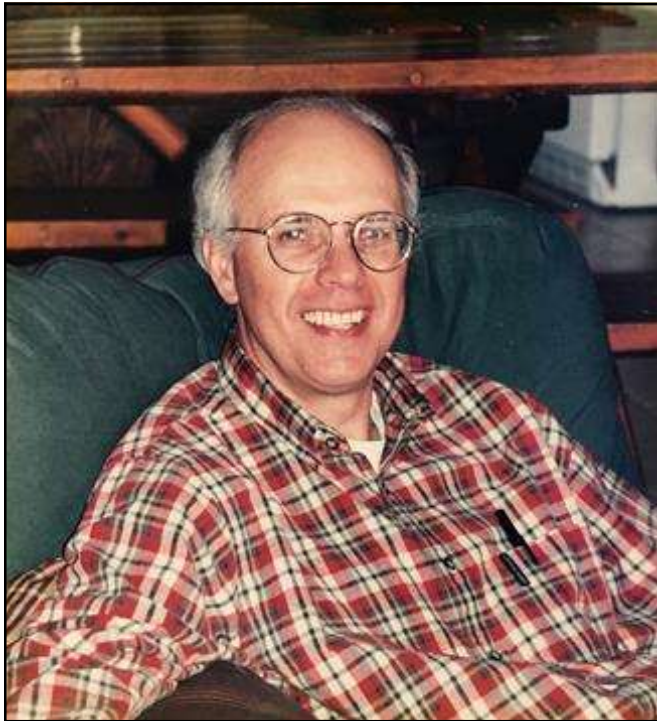
☞ Gen. 2:15 ☞

"Then the LORD God took the man and **put** him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it."

The word translated 'put' in Gen. 2:15 is the verb from which we get the noun for rest and the proper name '**Noah**'.

☞ Gen. 2:15 ☞

"Then the LORD God took the man and **put** him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it."

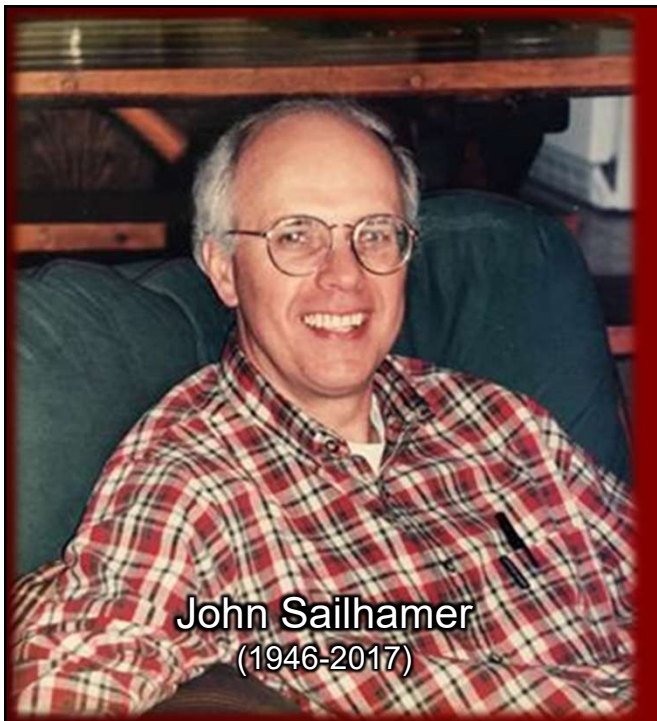


Library of Biblical Interpretation

THE
PENTATEUCH
AS
NARRATIVE

A Biblical-Theological Commentary

JOHN H.
SAILHAMER



John Sailhamer
(1946-2017)

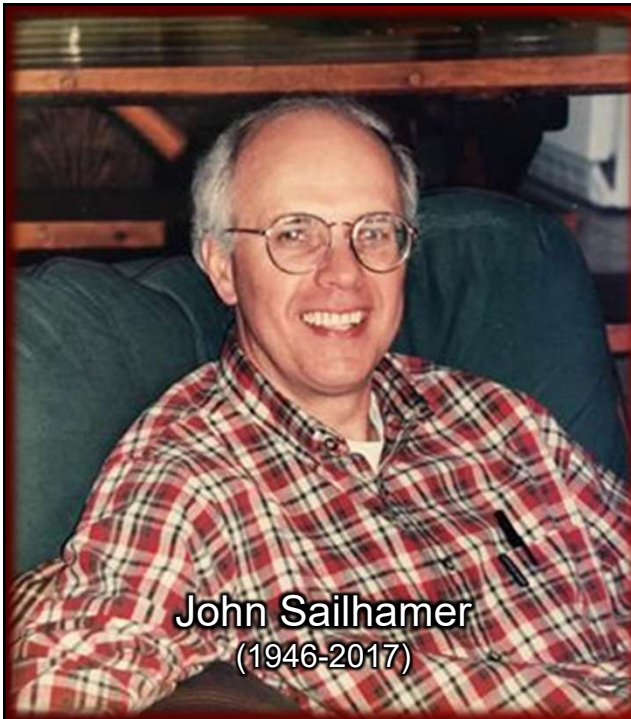
"The author ... uses a term that he elsewhere has reserved for two special uses: God's 'rest' or 'safety' which he gave to human beings in the land ..."

☞ Deut. 3:20a ☞

"until the LORD has given **rest** to your brethren as to you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them beyond the Jordan. ..."

☞ Deut. 12:10 ☞

"But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you **rest** from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety,"



John Sailhamer
(1946-2017)

"The author ... uses a term that he elsewhere has reserved for two special uses: God's 'rest' or 'safety' which he gave to human beings in the land ... and the 'dedication' of something before the presence of the Lord ..."

[John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 100

☞ Ex. 16:33 ☞

"And Moses said to Aaron, 'Take a pot and **put** an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.' "

☞ Num. 17:4 ☞

"Then you shall **place** them in the tabernacle of meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you."

How Has Adam's
Purpose in the Garden
Been Traditionally
Understood?

**HOLY
BIBLE**

Wycliffe Bible
(1382-1395)

"that he schulde
worche and kepe it."

**HOLY
BIBLE**

Matthew's Bible
(1537)

"to dresse it & to
kepe it."

**HOLY
BIBLE**

Geneva Bible
(1560)

"that he might
dresse it and
kepe it."

**HOLY
BIBLE**

Douay-Rheims Bible
(1610)

"to dress it, and
to keep it."

**HOLY
BIBLE**

King James
(1611)

"to dress it and to
keep it."

**HOLY
BIBLE**

American Standard
(1901)

"to dress it and to
keep it."

**HOLY
BIBLE**

Revised Standard
(1946)

"to till it and keep it."

**HOLY
BIBLE**

**New American
Standard**
(1963)

"to cultivate it and
keep it."

**HOLY
BIBLE**

New International
(1978)

"to work it and take
care of it."

**HOLY
BIBLE**

New King James
(1982)

"to tend and keep it."

**HOLY
BIBLE**

**New Revised
Standard**
(1989)

"to till it and keep it."

**HOLY
BIBLE**

English Standard
(2001)

"to work it and
keep it."

What Is the Problem with These Translations?

Genesis 2:15

*"Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the **garden** to tend and keep **it**."*

Two Options

- Either this instance here constitutes an exception to the general rule that pronouns have to agree in gender with their antecedents.
- Or the seeming inconsistency of the genders indicates that the verbs are not referring to the garden and that something else is meant by the grammar.

masculine

feminine

The word 'tend' translates the Hebrew word 'abad' and is most often translated elsewhere as 'serve' and 'worship(ers).'

☞ **Deut. 6:13** ☞

"You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name."

☞ **2 Kings 10:19b** ☞

" ... But Jehu acted deceptively, with the intent of destroying the worshipers of Baal."

The word 'keep' translates the Hebrew word 'shamar' and is elsewhere translated 'keep' in the sense of obeying or keeping a command.

☞ **Gen. 17:9** ☞

"And God said to Abraham: 'As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.' "

☞ **Gen. 18:19a** ☞

For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, ... "

In some passages, the words are used together as 'serve' and 'keep' as in serving the Lord and obeying His commands.

☞ Deut. 10:12-13 ☞

"And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, {13} and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?"

There was no reason that Adam needed to tend and keep the garden before the fall.

1. All of his food was already provided for him by God.

☞ Gen. 1:29 ☞

"And God said, 'See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.' "

☞ Gen. 2:9a ☞

"And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. ..."

There was no reason that Adam needed to tend and keep the garden before the fall.

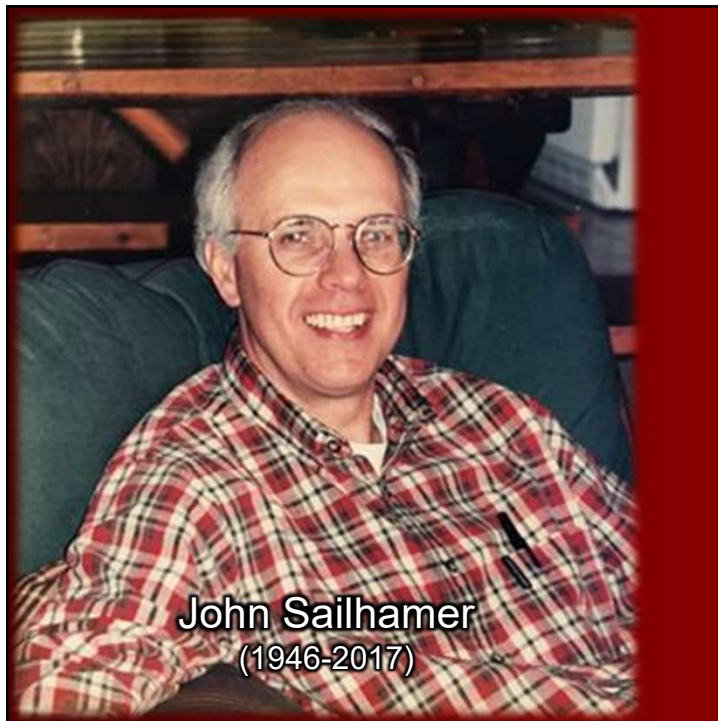
2. Working the ground in order to provide for himself was a curse and judgment that was a result of the fall. (3:17-19)

🌀 Gen. 3:17-19 🌀

"Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat of it:" Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. {18} Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. {19} In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.' "

What Was Adam's
Purpose in the
Garden?

The significance of resting the man in the garden is not to demonstrate man's relationship to the garden, but rather to provide a setting for the story to demonstrate man's relationship and responsibility to God.



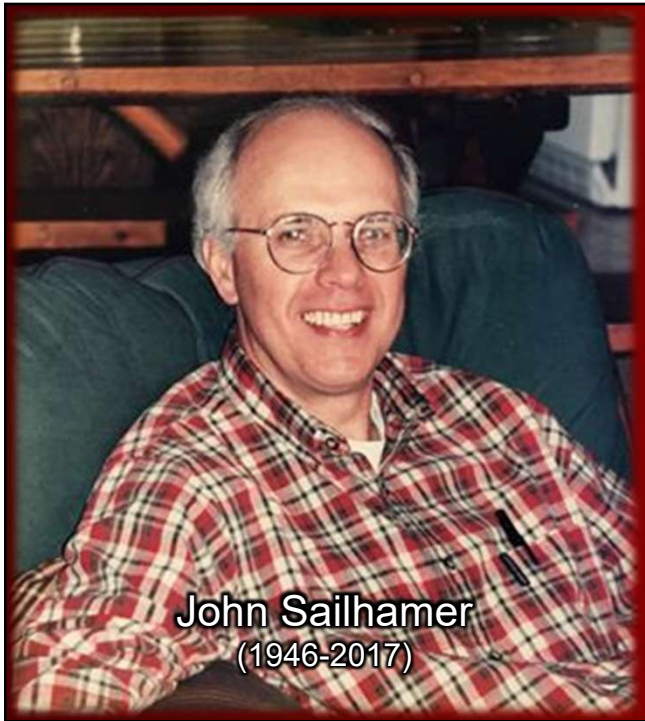
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(1946-2017)

"The man was 'put' into the Garden where he could 'rest' and be 'safe,' and the man was 'put' into the Garden 'in God's presence' where he could have fellowship with God (3:8)"

[Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 100]

☞ Gen 2:18-22 ☜

"And the LORD God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.' {19} Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. {20} So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. {21} And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. {22} Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man."

☞ Gen 2:21a ☞

"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept ..."

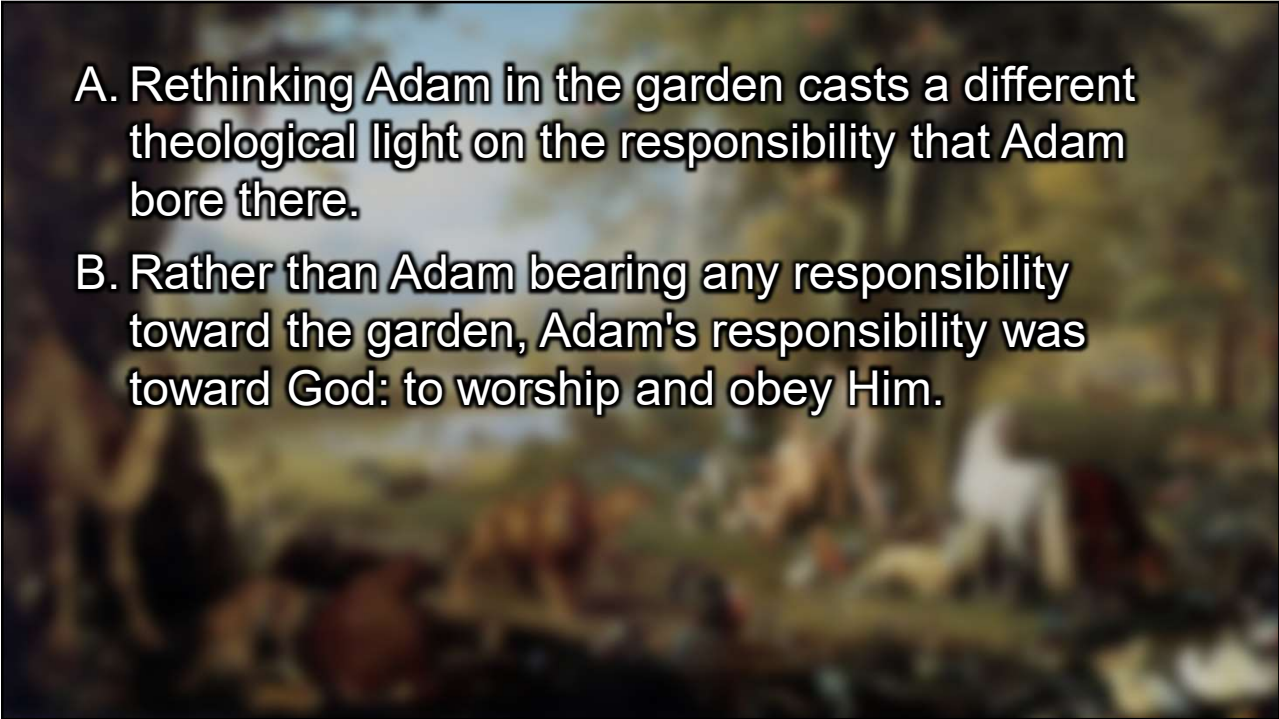
☞ Gen 15:12 ☞

"Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram;"

☞ Rom. 4:4-5 ☞

"Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. {5} But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness ..."





A. Rethinking Adam in the garden casts a different theological light on the responsibility that Adam bore there.

B. Rather than Adam bearing any responsibility toward the garden, Adam's responsibility was toward God: to worship and obey Him.

C. Further, the significance of the change of direction of Adam's attention before and after the fall is retained.

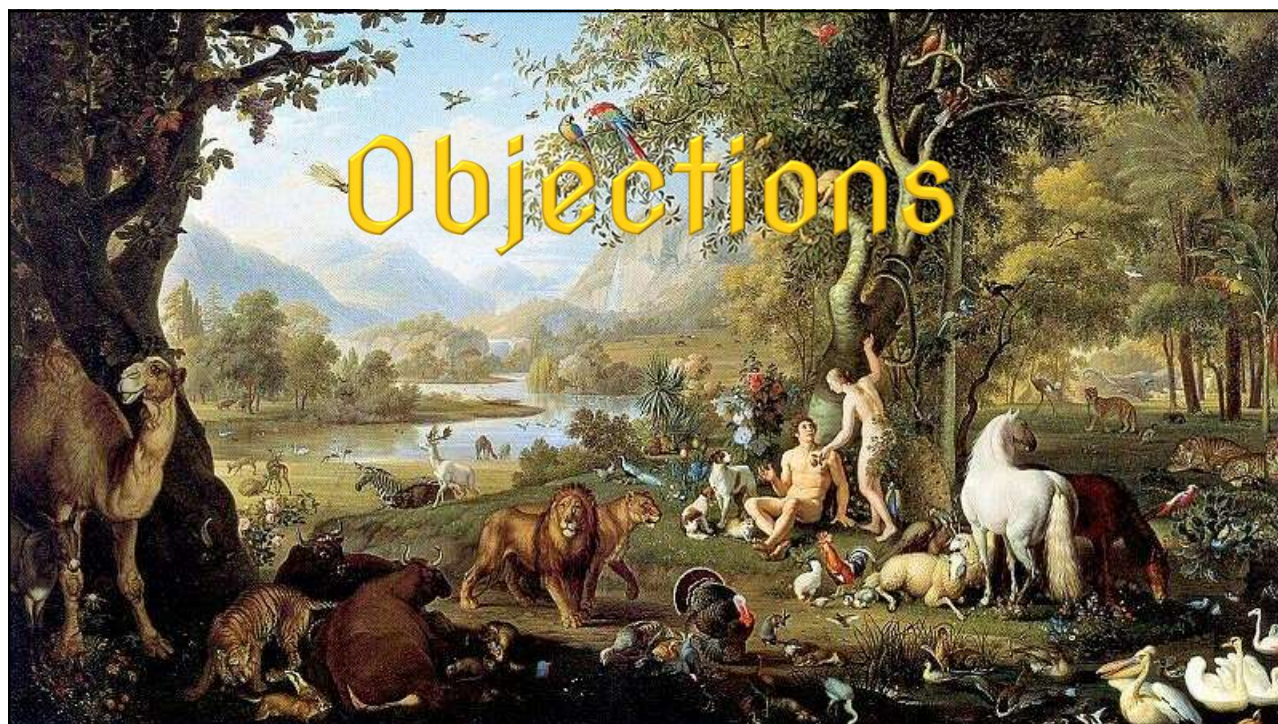
1. Before the fall, Adam's attention was directed upwards toward God.
 - a. Adam was to obey God by keeping God's commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 - b. Adam was to worship God by trusting God to supply the good.

2. After the fall, Adam's attention was directed downwards toward the ground.

☞ Gen. 3:17-19 ☞

"Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat of it: Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. {18} Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. {19} In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return." ' "

2. After the fall, Adam's attention was directed downwards toward the ground. (3:17-19)
 - a. Because of the curse, the ground was now the source of Adam's sustenance.
 - b. Because of the curse, the ground would yield its food to Adam only with much toil and sweat.
 - c. Adam's reorientation toward the ground was a portent of Adam's future to "return to the dust" out of which he was taken.
 - d. Ultimately, even the ground itself could not give Adam life.



🌀 **Objection** 🌀

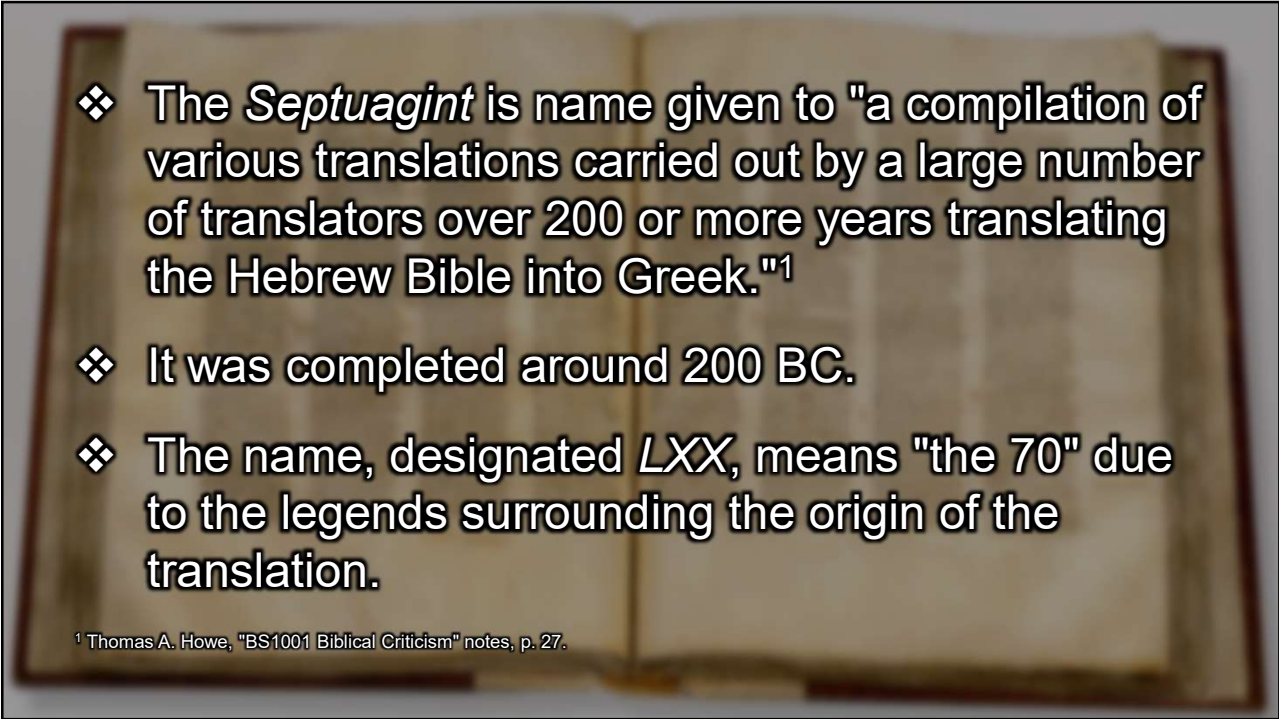
If this is the way to read the original Hebrew here, why do all English translations have it differently?

Answer

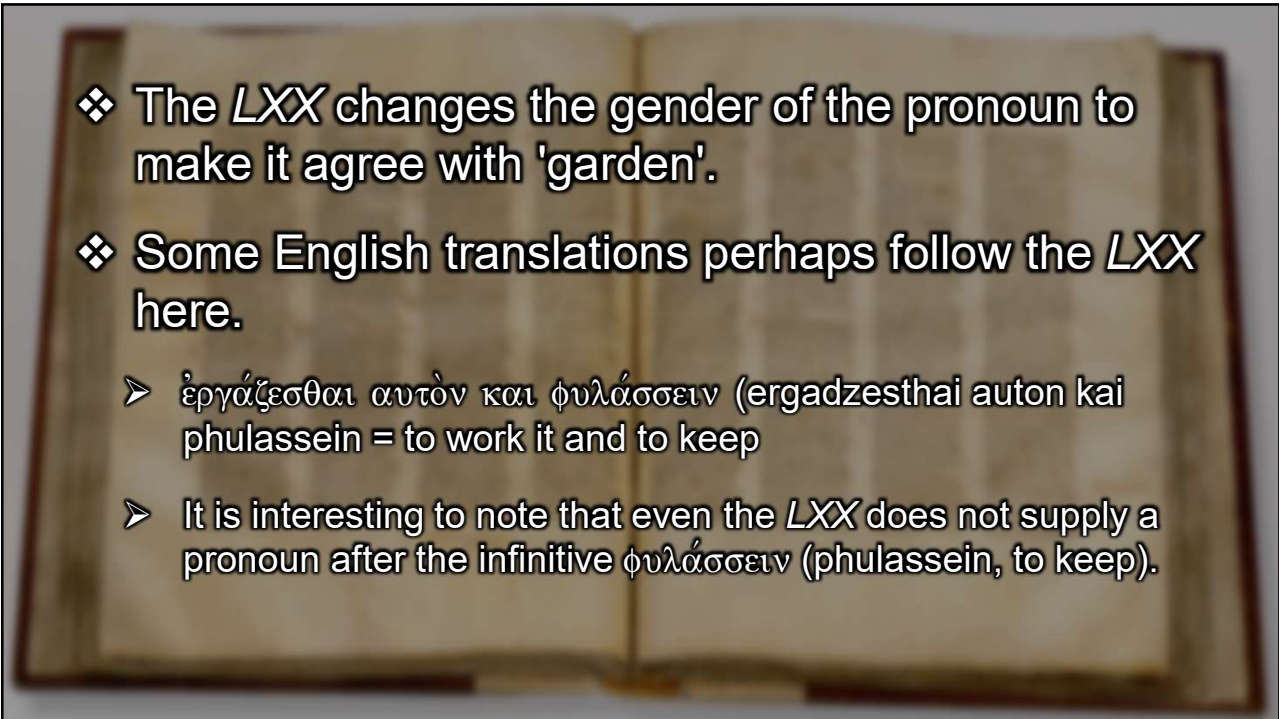
The history of the English Bible indicates that perhaps both the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate have had a tremendous influence upon English translations.

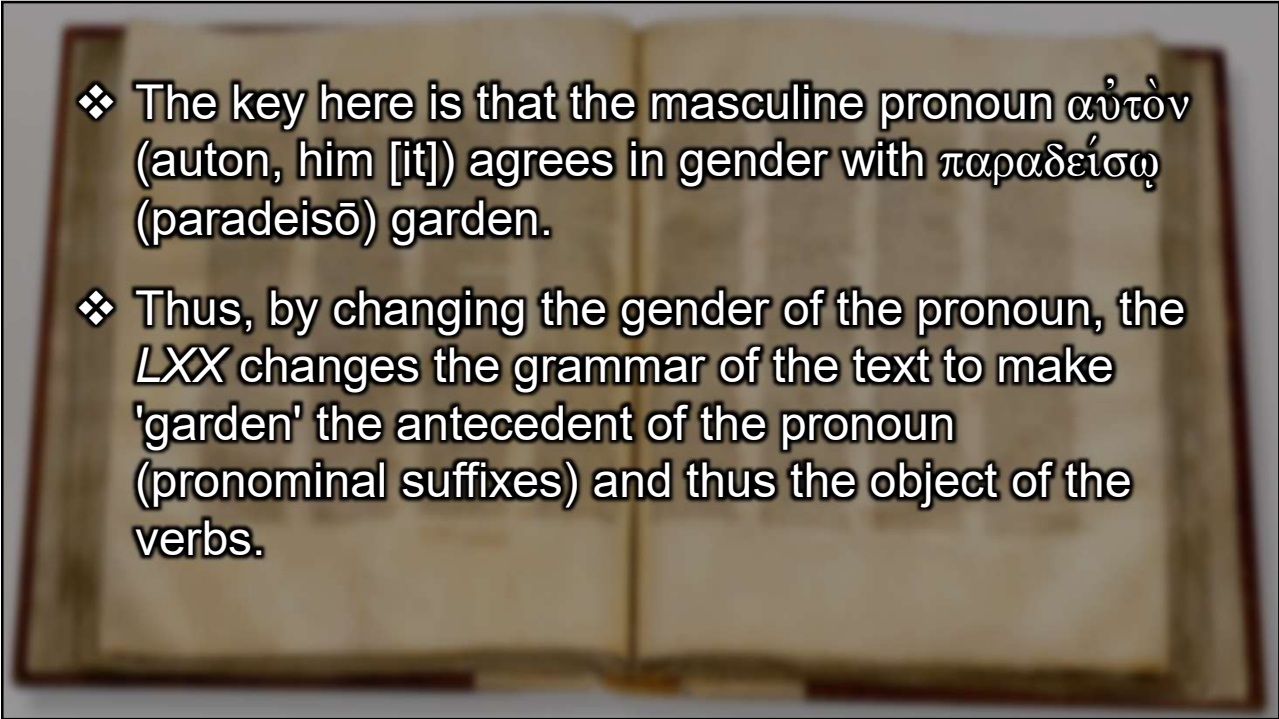


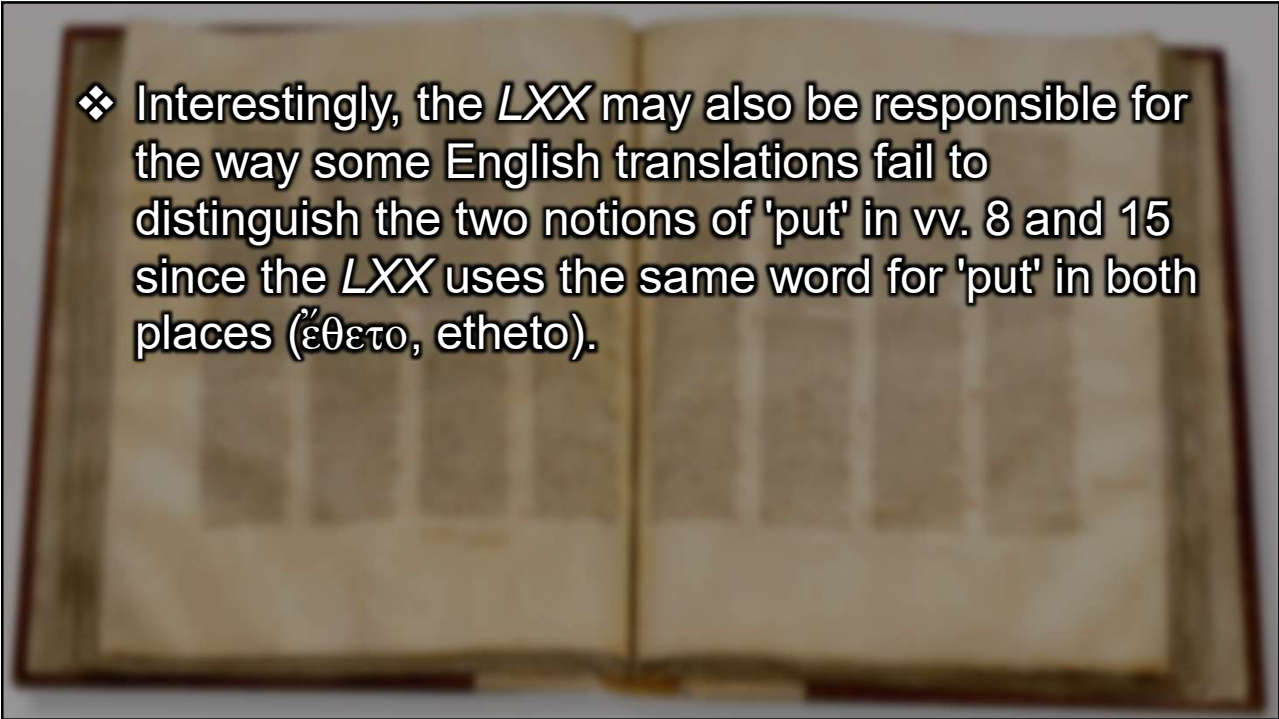
The Septuagint

- 
- ❖ The *Septuagint* is name given to "a compilation of various translations carried out by a large number of translators over 200 or more years translating the Hebrew Bible into Greek."¹
 - ❖ It was completed around 200 BC.
 - ❖ The name, designated *LXX*, means "the 70" due to the legends surrounding the origin of the translation.

¹ Thomas A. Howe, "BS1001 Biblical Criticism" notes, p. 27.

- 
- ❖ The *LXX* changes the gender of the pronoun to make it agree with 'garden'.
 - ❖ Some English translations perhaps follow the *LXX* here.
 - ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτὸν καὶ φυλάσσειν (ergadzesthai auton kai phulassein = to work it and to keep)
 - It is interesting to note that even the *LXX* does not supply a pronoun after the infinitive φυλάσσειν (phulassein, to keep).

- 
- ❖ The key here is that the masculine pronoun αὐτὸν (auton, him [it]) agrees in gender with παραδείσω (paradeisō) garden.
 - ❖ Thus, by changing the gender of the pronoun, the *LXX* changes the grammar of the text to make 'garden' the antecedent of the pronoun (pronominal suffixes) and thus the object of the verbs.

- 
- ❖ Interestingly, the *LXX* may also be responsible for the way some English translations fail to distinguish the two notions of 'put' in vv. 8 and 15 since the *LXX* uses the same word for 'put' in both places (ἔθετο, etheto).



❖ The Vulgate, or Latin Vulgate is "a collection of translations which differ both in origin and in character. ... The Vulgate, therefore, is far from being a unity, and the only justification for calling it 'Jerome's Vulgate' (as we often do) is that there is more of his work in it than there is of anyone else's."¹

❖ ¹ *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, 5th ed. (Stuttgart: 2007), from the preface of the 1st ed., xxxiii.

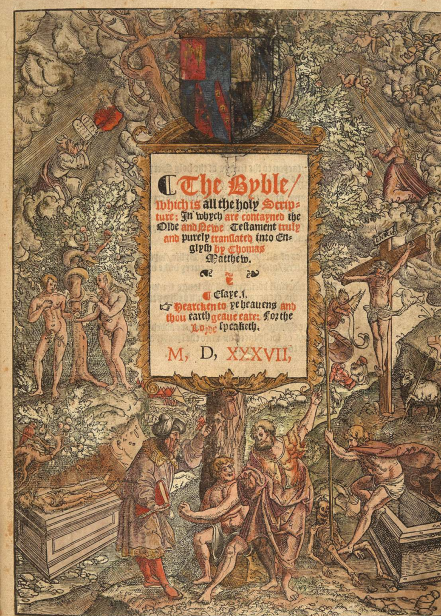
- ❖ It was the principle test used in translating the earliest versions of the Bible.¹
- ❖ It is perhaps likely that current English translations are influenced by the long history of English translations stemming from those based on the *Latin Vulgate*.

❖ ¹ F. F. Bruce, *History of the Bible in English*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 14.

- In Gen. 2:15, the Latin says *ut operaretur et custodiret illum* (to serve and watch over it).
- The key here is the insertion of the demonstrative pronoun *illum* (it, that) which agrees in gender with *paradiso* (garden).
- Further, the Latin uses the same word for 'put' in both v. 8 and v. 15 (*posuit*).
- It is possible that the *Latin Vulgate* was itself influenced by the *LXX*.

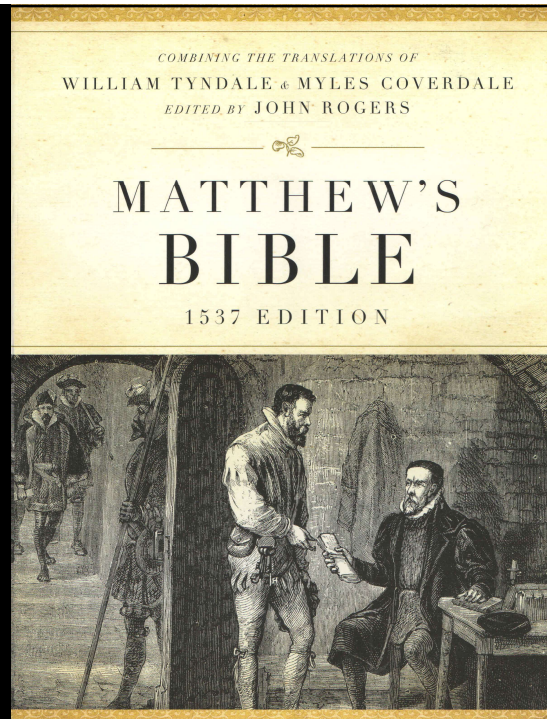
It should be noted that scholars did not begin to translate the Bible from the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek until the onset of the 16th Century.

The first complete English Bible translated from the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek was the Matthew's Bible in 1537.



Set forth with the Kinges most gracious licence.

***The first complete
English Bible
translated from the
Hebrew, Aramaic,
and Greek was the
Matthew's Bible
in 1537.***



☞ Objection ☞

***Does not Gen. 2:5 indicate that man
was originally placed in the garden
to till the ground?***

Answer

Genesis 2:5 is a portent of the coming judgments of God on the sin of man.

Gen 2:5

"... before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. **For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground**"

Gen 7:4

"For after seven more days **I will cause it to rain on the earth** forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made."

Gen 3:23

"therefore **the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.**"