

John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One, Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (InterVarsity Press, 2009)

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John Walton in the *Lost World of Genesis* added a new pillar of foundation for my faith and science sensibilities with respect to the debates in and around origins. Both my faith in the inerrant Word of God, as given to us in the Bible, and my comfort with the scientific evidence for deep time and the evolution of the material universe and the evolution of life have been reinforced through the reading of this book. The key perspective that is so well articulated and explored by Walton is the issue of the revelation of God's purpose for our world and for man (men and women) by focusing the account of his creative actions on functionality. Scientists are trained to evaluate their assumptions when drawing conclusions. It is because the scientist is influenced by his biases and beliefs that objective evaluation of evidence is one of the most difficult responsibilities when drawing conclusions. Walton exposes an assumption held by many that God through the Bible seeks to tell us the origins of the material world. There is another perspective and Walton makes the case convincingly that God is seeking to establish that he is the Author and Sustainer of purpose by establishing the functionality of the universe and declaring it good. I had realized that the declaration that "And God saw that it was good" was declaring the object of his creative acts to be fully capable of carrying out its purpose. I have a deep understanding of the how the natural world works in harmony to sustain life. I missed the possibility that God revelation in Genesis 1 was not interested in an account of the material (also God's creation) origins but to give the universal truth to all generations that he is the author of the order and functionality of the universe for His purposes. It is therefore possible that God did dedicate His temple, our universe and Earth in 7 24 hour days sometime in the near past (near as compared to the geological record). The Bible declares that he created two humans, Adam and Eve in his image, prepared and placed them in the Garden of Eden and then took up residence in his temple the universe, walking talking with them in the temple he dwelt with them. It is also possible that all that we know by scientific investigation about the history, structure and evolution of the universe and life over deep time is how God brought the material world to its present state. By Faith we know that God spoke both the material world and the functional order into existence. Now I am left with an interesting paradox. The scientific evolution indicates that humans evolved over time and that there were indeed dead end branches stemming from the ancestors of anatomically modern man, for example, Neanderthal. Evolutionary psychology has man developing his ethical values as part of the process of natural selection. The Bible clearly says that we anatomically modern humans have fallen in relation to the state we were in when "God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." Our fallen nature is central to the entire message of the Bible and to the Work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Rollie Otto, August, 2012

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