



BIOLOGOS

Welcome to the BioLogos Book Club!

We're pleased you have chosen to invest some time going through *The Lost World of Genesis One* with us. It is our prayer that this resource will lead you into a productive time of reflection, discussion, and connection with others on several important topics at the intersection of science and faith.

These questions are provided as a tool to help guide and focus your discussion, but don't feel the need to utilize all of them. Choose the questions that best fit your group and interest. Also, please remember to refer to the rich Supplemental Materials BioLogos has selected which coincide with the topics raised throughout the book. They will allow you to go further into issues of biblical interpretation, theology, or implications for the handling of science.

We also hope you can join in on the larger conversation on the book at [The Lost World Book Club Forum](#). The Forum is our online community for readers from all over the world. You can share some of your thoughts and experiences, as well as leave a comment for John Walton. We are grateful to Dr. Walton for taking the time to participate with our readers on the forum and I encourage you to take the opportunity to send him a note!

Many blessings as you begin!

We want to hear from you:

Share photos of your groups, comments, and questions that come up anytime by emailing:

smallgroups@biologos.org

If you send a photo, please also let us know if we have permission to use it on our **BioLogos Book Club** page!

Introduction, Propositions 1-3

Introduction

1. Are there reasons some may feel uncomfortable comparing Genesis with other Ancient Near Eastern literature? How might we answer these concerns?
2. How is translating the language of the Bible related to translating the culture of the Bible?
3. Walton explains why the term "myth" need not be seen as a pejorative, though it is often said (and heard) that way (pp. 12-13). Do you think this is a helpful term in conversations about the Bible and origins?

Proposition 1

1. Beyond the biblical adoption of ancient cosmic geography, what are some other ways in which God accommodates his message to human limitations? What does this tell us about the character of God?
2. Walton argues (pp. 14-15) that the concordist approach to science and Scripture does not just add meaning to the text, but it actually changes the meaning. Do you agree with this position?

Proposition 4

- 1. Walton writes that the created functions described in Genesis are human-centered (or anthropocentric) which contrasts starkly with Ancient Near Eastern literature which focuses on creation meeting the needs of the gods. What does this say about our God, and about his decision to create a world?
- 2. Had you noticed that the creation week in Genesis 1:2 seems to start with some material already in existence? Does Walton’s explanation help clarify the meaning of this verse?

Proposition 5

- 1. In Walton’s reading of Genesis 1, days 1-3 describe the creation of the operations of time, weather, and agriculture for the purpose of food production. Are some of these easier than the others to understand as non-material (functional) creative acts?
- 2. Walton walks a fine line on the matter of the “firmament” (Gen. 1:6). He recognizes that Genesis speaks the language of ancient cosmology (sky as a solid dome) while also suggesting that the Bible does not thereby affirm material solidity. What do you think of Walton’s “escape” (p. 56) from this long-recognized biblical difficulty?
- 3. Walton avoids suggesting that the ancient science of Scripture is untrue. Instead he concludes it has simply been replaced as science progressed (p. 60). What do you think of Walton’s approach to the idea of scientific “truth”?

Proposition 6

- 1. Was the parallel between Days 1-3 (installing the functions) and Days 4-6 (installing the “functionaries”) new to you? Do you agree that such a literary structure points to a meaning beyond a historical recounting?
- 2. Walton suggests that the “good”- ness of creation in Genesis 1 refers to its proper functioning, so that the cosmos is “both purposeful and intelligible” (p. 50). How does this relate to your view of science?
- 3. Walton discusses major differences in the function humans are given in contrast with the rest of creation (pp. 68-69). What stood out to you here?
- 4. Walton see the creation of Adam from dust and Eve from Adam’s side as having archetypal, rather than just material, significance (pp. 68-70). What do you think about this interpretation? (See the Supplemental Resources to read more about Walton’s view and other biblical scholars’ thoughts on Adam.)

Notes

Proposition 7

1. Has reading this chapter changed your view of the significance of Day 7? How?
2. What are some of the similarities and differences between divine rest, as described in this chapter (pp. 71-74), and human rest?

Proposition 8

1. Walton writes that in Genesis, God's temple is implicitly identified with the cosmos itself. How does this counter notions that God is largely unengaged with the activities of the world as described by science?
2. If the cosmos is understood as being God's temple, then its creation (as seen in Genesis 1) has as its focus God's presence rather than how God created. How significantly does this kind of "temple understanding" alter your view of the Genesis 1 narrative?

Proposition 9

1. Walton sees the "day-age" interpretation of Genesis 1 as not only unconvincing, but unnecessary for harmonizing the Bible with modern science. Does Walton's approach avoid some of the challenges of the day-age interpretation?
2. If the Israelites did indeed use Genesis 1 as a liturgy for a yearly religious festival (pp. 89-90), how would this usage shape their understanding of the core message of this creation account?
3. Walton wrote that the Genesis account refers to 7 - 24 hour days that are about functional origins rather than material. Does this then require us to place this week in history somewhere on the 14 billion year timeline of the universe's existence?

Proposition 10

1. Walton explains why he sees Genesis 1 as an account of primarily functional origins, not functional and material origins. Do you agree?
2. Walton writes that young people pursuing a scientific career shouldn't have to choose between the Bible and mainstream science. From your own experience, how has the church done in conveying this message? What are some of the other messages the church tends to convey regarding science and scientific endeavors?
3. Walton claims that the Bible doesn't obligate Christians to defend a young-earth view of origins (p. 95). Are there other reasons people would hold to a young earth view if this is true?
4. Walton explains "what an observer would see if able to observe the process of these seven days" (p. 97) using an analogy about a college without its students. Did you find this helpful?
5. Death happening before the "Fall" (p.100) is problematic for some. Does Walton's functional understanding of creation help bring light to this issue or more questions?

Proposition 14

1. To what extent should we differentiate between God’s roles as creator and sustainer? Do you agree with Walton’s way of seeing these as similar yet not synonymous?
2. What are some ways we might guard against slipping into “practical deism” when speaking of God as creator?

Proposition 15

1. Walton suggests that it is difficult for the arguments of the “Intelligent Design” movement to avoid sounding like “god of the gaps” arguments (pp. 127-28). Do you agree?
2. How would you briefly define “design” if you intended it to apply to all of God’s creations? Would this kind of “design” always be detectable scientifically?
3. Do you agree with Walton that it is the job of scientists to keep looking for scientific explanations (in terms of naturalistic mechanisms) for the things God has made (p. 129)? As Christians, do you think we should expect that endeavor to be ultimately successful?

Proposition 16

1. Think of a time when you have (or do) feel uncomfortable with evolution. Do you think that the discomfort is due to the way evolution was presented (e.g., as being anti-God or with a rejection of purpose) as opposed to the mere science itself?
2. Do you find Walton’s examples of meteorology and embryology to be helpful illustrations of how purpose and divine action can coexist with scientific explanations?
3. Of the three major reasons Walton lists as to why Christians struggle with evolution (pp. 136-39), which do you personally find most significant? Least?
4. Walton writes of a “discontinuity” between evolutionary processes and the creation of Adam and Eve. These flowed from his own “theological convictions” (p.139) How do you respond?

Notes
