



*The Lost World of Adam and Eve:*

*Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate*

Available March 2015

\$17, 272 pages, paperback

978-0-8308-2461-8

*"We are not compelled to bring the Bible into conformity either with its cultural context or with modern science, but if an interpretation of Genesis, for example, coincides with what we find as characteristic of the ancient world or with what seem to be sound scientific conclusions, all the better."*

— From the introduction

## A Literal Adam and Eve?

Following his groundbreaking *The Lost World of Genesis One*, which examined propositions supporting a literary and theological understanding of that book, John H. Walton has done the same with the story of Genesis 2-3, that most elemental tale of Adam and Eve. Sure to stir the debate in biblical and theological studies, we sat down with Walton to gain some insight into the backstory of this book.

**What made you dive into the discussions (and controversies) surrounding Adam and Eve and Genesis 2-3?**

**John H. Walton:** I have always been interested in Genesis, in ancient Near Eastern backgrounds, and in issues of science and the Bible, so there is no better text to work on.

**What surprised you most as you were researching for this book?**

**Walton:** I think what surprised me most was how varied and controversial the issue was even far back in church history. The interpretation is far from monolithic.

**How did the responses you received to *The Lost World of Genesis One* and *The Lost World of Scripture* shape the arguments and questions you tackled in this book?**

**Walton:** The more I deal with controversial issues, the more I learn of ways to try to avoid potential controversy. It is always important to measure the rhetoric level carefully and not to overstate a case. I have learned that through experience.

**You write that "Christianity has been forced to be content with a number of alternatives on the table for interpreting the early chapters of Genesis. It is sadly true that some have adopted a view that only their particular parochial reading is legitimate for a 'real' Christian. We must confess to our corporate shame that blood has even been shed." Can you unpack that?**

**Walton:** We too easily believe that the world of biblical interpretation is a black and white world—that whatever view we have adopted is right and everyone else is wrong. Such a view is too facile. In many cases we do our best to be faithful interpreters, but the Bible just doesn't offer enough information to give irreproachable confidence. Even as evangelicals with a common core of theological affirmations, we work with varieties of hermeneutical presuppositions and we weigh the evidence differently. Consequently we develop different preferences based on which view has the preponderance of the evidence supporting it. Though ultimately one position undoubtedly is right and others wrong, we are not always positioned to see that well.

That being the case, it is uncharitable to simply label those who disagree with you as wrong,

 INTERVARSITY PRESS

Visit [ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)



**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW CONTACT:**

Krista Carnet, broadcast publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or [kkcarnet@ivpress.com](mailto:kkcarnet@ivpress.com)  
 Alisse Wissman, print publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or [awissman@ivpress.com](mailto:awissman@ivpress.com)  
 Adrianna Wright, online publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4096 or [awright@ivpress.com](mailto:awright@ivpress.com)  
[ivpress.com/academic](http://ivpress.com/academic)



*“If we can study Genesis and human origins without hearing the call to be an image-bearing human being renewed in Jesus, we are massively missing the point, perhaps pursuing our own dream of an otherworldly salvation which merely colludes with the forces of evil.”*

– From “Excursus on Paul’s Use of Adam” by N. T. Wright in Proposition 19

and even as less than Christian, when they have done their best to engage in faithful interpretation based on orthodox theological presuppositions and a defensible hermeneutic. Theoretically, people will know we are Christians by our love, and I am not sure that we always do a good job of that if we are constantly engaged in denouncing others who are simply trying to be faithful to the text.

**One of your major points throughout the book is that the threat posed by the current ideas surrounding human origins is magnified. Why do you think it’s important to address this issue now?**

**Walton:** We should always be ready to address new information coming to the table so that our interpretation is taking account of every piece of evidence. Genomics has brought important new information to our attention that needs to be taken into consideration. While it is appropriate to let Scripture speak for itself rather than being driven by the modern world (e.g., scientific discovery) or the ancient world (ancient Near Eastern texts), we should always be open to being prompted to reconsider the validity of our interpretations and willing to scrutinize them from a different vantage point.

**How has your work as a professor both at Wheaton College and previously at Moody Bible Institute impacted the way you structure your books?**

**Walton:** I suspect it is more my personality than my experiences at Wheaton or Moody. I was a business-economics major trained to be an accountant (and actually worked as an accountant when I was in graduate school). My brain therefore categorizes information in certain ways and follows a particular kind of logic that is represented in the logical flow of the propositions that characterizes the Lost World books.



**John H. Walton** (PhD, Hebrew Union College), author of *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate*

**Available March 2015**

\$17, 272 pages, paperback  
978-0-8308-2461-8

## “A Voice of Reason” in Biblical Studies

John H. Walton (PhD, Hebrew Union College) is professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College and Graduate School. His primary focus is in areas of comparison between the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East, particularly Genesis, teaching classes like Old Testament Literature, Biblical Archaeology, Theories of Origin, Hebrew Grammar and many others. Previously he was professor of Old Testament at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago for twenty years.

Walton’s emphasis throughout his career has been to show students and readers the importance of learning the Bible. “I am saddened by how little exposure to and understanding of the Old Testament many Christians have, but I am passionate in doing whatever I can do to remedy this spiritual and theological loss,” he said.

Walton has published extensively, and some of his books include *The Lost World of Scripture*, *The Lost World of Genesis One*, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, *The Essential Bible Companion*, *Genesis* (NIV Application Commentary) and *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (with Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas). He’s published numerous articles on his topics of expertise in journals such as *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, *Hebrew Studies Journal*, *Christian Education Journal*, *PreachingToday.com*, *Journal of Biblical Literature* and others.

Walton’s work and writing has been widely praised for enlightening current debates and allowing the Bible to shine through his efforts. “John Walton is a voice of reason, and he has shown time and time again that we must learn to read the Bible as God gave it, not the way we’d like it to be,” said Scot McKnight, professor of New Testament at Northern Seminary.

Additionally, “Walton [brings] a fresh perspective that enlightens, enriches, and honors the biblical text,” Sean M. Cordry said in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*.

Walton’s ministry experience includes church classes for all age groups, high school Bible studies and adult Sunday school classes, as well as serving as a teacher for “The Bible in 90 Days.” John and his wife, Kim, live in Wheaton, Illinois, and have three adult children.