

God also created angels as moral, personal and spiritual beings (Colossians 1:16). Some of the angels rebelled against God and were cast out of heaven, thus becoming evil spirits called devils or demons; the chief among them is Satan (Revelation 12:7–9). Within the limits of God’s permission, these creatures have a certain capacity to influence the world and oppose the work of God (Job 1:12; 2:6; Revelation 12:10–17).

(Sola 5 Confession 3.2)

Writing in 1941, German Lutheran theologian Rudolf Bultmann suggested that the Bible is filled with “mythological thought,” which can be traced to “Jewish apocalypticism” and “the Gnostic myth of redemption.” Bultmann suggested that such mythological thought “is incredible to men and women today because for them the mythical world is a thing of the past.” Given our more scientific approach to the world, Bultmann concluded that it is “the task of theology to demythologize the Christian proclamation.”

Given the hundreds of billions of dollars earned by The Avengers, Wonder Woman, Captain Marvel, Shazam, and their superhero friends, it is difficult to seriously sustain the suggestion that it is “incredible” for men and women today to think mythologically or that “the mythical world is a thing of the past.”

But it is not only to Hollywood that we must look for evidence of fascination with the supernatural. Walk into a popular Christian bookstore and browse for books on angels and demons and you will soon realise that our fascination with the supernatural is hardly a thing of the past. Much of contemporary Christendom is captured by completely unbiblical ideas of angels and demons. Rather than reacting against such misunderstandings, it is necessary for us to go back to the Bible to gain a proper angelology.

Confession 3.2 begins: **God also created angels as moral, personal and spiritual beings.** Paul makes this affirmation in Colossians 1:16 when he writes of “all things” that God created including things “visible and invisible” and “thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.”

Angels are defined as **moral, personal and spiritual beings.** What are the implications of each of these ascriptions applied to angels?

Moral: _____

Personal: _____

Spiritual: _____

From what you know of Scripture, comment on the following widespread perceptions of angels in contemporary culture.

Everyone has a personal, guardian angel. _____

Cherubs are baby-faced angels. _____

People become angels when they die. _____

Angels have wings and halos. _____

The Confession also addresses the existence of fallen angels: **Some of the angels rebelled against God and were cast out of heaven, thus becoming evil spirits called devils or demons; the chief among them is Satan.**

Why do we assume that Satan is a leader of the fallen angels, rather than just one among many? _____

How did Satan **rebel against God**? For what rebellion was he **cast out of heaven** with his followers? _____

Some interpreters doubt that Satan is an actual, persona, being, and think that he is rather some form of personification of evil. Does the Bible support the Confession’s claim that he is a personal being and leader of the fallen angels? _____

The Confession recognises divine sovereignty in its closing affirmation in 3.2: **Within the limits of God’s permission, these creatures have a certain capacity to influence the world and oppose the work of God.**

How do Job 1:12 and 2:6 support this affirmation? _____

What about Revelation 12:10–17? _____

On a related note, what is your understanding, taking into consideration the weight of scriptural evidence, regarding demonic ability to perform miracles? _____

We sometimes speak of Satan tempting us. Do you think you’ve ever had a personal encounter with Satan? _____