



FIGURE 1-8. Guardians Part the Veils, Taking Muhammad by the Hand to See the Throne of God

SEE COLOR PLATE 1-8.

When Gabriel took him up to each of the heavens and asked permission to enter, he had to say whom he had brought and whether he had received a mission [or: had been sent for] and they would say “God grant him life, brother and friend!” until they reached the seventh heaven and his Lord.<sup>1</sup> Doubting Meccans had asked that Muhammad “confirm the authenticity of his prophethood by ascending to heaven and there receiving a holy book... In this, he was to conform to a model illustrated by many still-extant legends... regarding Enoch, Moses, Daniel, Mani, and many other messengers who had risen to heaven, met God, and received from his right hand a book of scripture containing the revelation they were to proclaim.”<sup>2</sup> During his “night journey” (*isra*), the angel Gabriel mounted him on Buraq, a winged steed,

that “took him to the horizon” and then, in an instant, to the temple mount in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> At the Gate of the Guard, Ishmael “asks Muhammad’s name and inquires whether he is indeed a true messenger.”<sup>4</sup> After having given a satisfactory answer, Muhammad was permitted to gradually ascend from the depths of hell to the highest of the seven heavens on a golden ladder (*miraj*).<sup>5</sup> At the gates of the Celestial Temple, a guardian angel again “ask[ed] who he [was]. Gabriel introduce[d] Muhammad, who [was] then allowed to enter the gardens of Paradise.”<sup>6</sup>

Commenting on the implications of this experience for later Muslims, Schimmel writes: “Islamic modernists..., when discussing the heavenly journey, have pointed out that Muhammad was able to speak to God in a true I-and-Thou relationship. This seemed to Iqbal a very important corrective of the widespread doctrine of the Unity of Being: the legend of the heavenly journey confirms that God is not a mute, remote *prima causa* but indeed a personal power who can be addressed, and thus proves that there is the possibility of a fruitful person-to-person dialogue between Creator and creature, a dialogue in prayer, out of which true religious activity can grow.”<sup>7</sup>

1 M. Ibn Ishaq ibn Yasar, *Sirat Rasul Allāh* 270-271, p. 186.

2 D. C. Peterson, *Muhammad* (2001), p. 527.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 528-529.

4 A. Schimmel, *Messenger*, p. 160.

5 No relationship to the English word “mirage.” See W. J. Hamblin, *et al.*, *Temple*, p. 136; M. Ibn Ishaq ibn Yasar, *Sirat Rasul*, 263-271, pp. 181-187.

6 W. J. Hamblin, *et al.*, *Temple*, p. 136 n. 134.

7 A. Schimmel, *Messenger*, p. 164.

describing His purposes for this earth and its inhabitants,<sup>39</sup> and outlining the Creation, the Fall, and how the Plan of Redemption was given to Adam and Eve.<sup>40</sup>

Moses’ transforming experience prepared him for the next stage of his mission.<sup>41</sup> Explaining the purpose of a vision of good and evil that was opened to the mind of Joseph Smith at Hill Cumorah in 1823, the angel Moroni said:

“All this is shown, the good and the evil, the holy and the impure, the glory of God and the power of darkness, that ye may know hereafter the two powers and never be influenced or overcome by that wicked one. Behold, whatever entices and leads to good and to do good, is of God, and whatever does not is of that wicked one: it is he that fills the hearts of men with evil, to walk in darkness and blaspheme God; and you may learn from henceforth, that his ways are to destruction, but the way of holiness is peace and rest.”<sup>42</sup>

39 Moses 1:35-40.

40 Moses chapters 2-5. See *Endnote 1-24*, p. 79.

41 See *Endnote 1-25*, p. 80.

42 *Messenger and Advocate*, 2:1, October 1835, p. 198, in F. W. Kirkham, *New Witness 1*, pp. 98-99 and J. Smith, Jr., *Papers 1989-1992*, 1:87; cf. D&C 88:6, 122:7-8.