

E-102 Another possibility is that the men in Moses 8:21 are not really part of the covenant “sons of God” but are only falsely claiming to be. The most common ancient traditions, however, assert that it was not only the female descendants of Noah (and Seth) but also the men in that family line who were eventually drawn into forbidden relationships. For example, following what became the standard tradition in the Syriac Church that saw the “sons of God” as Sethites and the “daughters of men” as Cainites,¹⁷⁷⁸ Ephrem the Syrian also interpreted these traditions to mean that: “those who lived on higher ground,¹⁷⁷⁹ who were called ‘the children of God,’ left their own region and came down to take wives from the daughters of Cain down below.”¹⁷⁸⁰

An Islamic source likewise argues: “But one errs and misunderstands [if] he says that ‘angels’ descended to ‘mortal women.’ Instead, it is the sons of Seth who descend from the holy mountain to the daughters of Cain the accursed. For it was on account of their saintliness [chastity?] and dwelling-place upon the holy mountain that the sons of Seth were called *banu ’elohim*; that is, ‘sons of God.’”¹⁷⁸¹ For valuable overviews of a range of different interpretations for the term “sons of God” in this context, see Wright¹⁷⁸² and Collins.¹⁷⁸³

E-103 Of relevance is the fact that the major doctrinal themes that preceded this reference included the physical details of the resurrected body (“the Spirit of God flowing in the veins instead of the blood”) and the condemnation of “those who know the Gospel and do not obey” to “prison” as described in Isaiah 23.

E-104 In place of Grébaud’s translation that these angels “openly exposed all the work they had seen in heaven,”¹⁷⁸⁴ Budge renders this to say that: “these made symbols of everything which they saw in the heavens.”¹⁷⁸⁵

The insertion of the phrase “in their bodies” in the translation from the French above was inferred from the subsequent lines: “The sin, they learned it because of their pride, because they received bodies. Therefore, it is not meet that man should glory in himself. Happy is he who conquers Satan while yet being in the body.”¹⁷⁸⁶ Budge gives his translation of the Ethiopic of this passage as: “... and they taught sin because of their pride and boastfulness, because they had clothed themselves with flesh, but it was unseemly for men to boast themselves because of this. Blessed is the man who having put on flesh conquereth Satan.”¹⁷⁸⁷

E-105 Besides the unauthorized revealing of the mysteries, the three sins specifically mentioned in these texts are drunkenness, fornication, and murder.¹⁷⁸⁸

E-106 In this context, Islamic tradition also speaks of “charms and incantations” written by demons “during the period of the decline of the reign of Solomon” and buried in a manner that they could later be found by the people.¹⁷⁸⁹

E-107 For example, Ginzberg cites Rabbi Bahya as saying: “The Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life were both in the center of the Garden, for they formed one tree at the bottom, and branched out into two when they reached a certain height.”¹⁷⁹⁰ In some Jewish accounts, the Tree of Knowledge was seen as a grape vine entwining the Tree of Life.¹⁷⁹¹

A fifteenth-century Armenian Christian poem sees the Tree of Life as being hidden by the Tree of Knowledge:

1778 Brock in Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, p. 189 n. 1:11.

1779 Cf. Moses 7:17.

1780 Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, 1:11, pp. 81-82. See S. C. Malan, *Adam and Eve*, 3:4, p. 147; H. W. Nibley, *Enoch*, pp. 178-193; *Commentary* 5:41-b, p. 388.

1781 J. C. Reeves, *Eutychii*.

1782 A. T. Wright, *Evil Spirits*, pp. 61-75.

1783 J. J. Collins, *Sons of God*, pp. 260-263.

1784 French *Ceux-ci ont donc fait voir toute l'oeuvre qu'ils avaient vue dans le ciel*.

1785 B. Mikael, *Enoch*, p. 142.

1786 French *Le péché, ils (l')ont appris à cause de leur orgueil, parce qu'ils avaient revêtu un corps. C'est pourquoi il ne convient pas à l'homme de se glorifier. Bienheureux est celui qui vainc Satan, tout en étant revêtu d'un corps*.

1787 B. Mikael, *Enoch*, p. 142.

1788 A. al-Tha'labi, *Lives*, p. 88.

1789 *Ibid.*, p. 86. See *Commentary* 5:51-a, p. 398.

1790 L. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:91 n. 50.

1791 J. A. Tvedtnes, *Olive Oil*, p. 430.