



July 15, 2007

## *Thunder & Lightning*

Throughout the scriptures there are a number of ways in which God manifests his power and presence. During the Summer months we witness a number of thunderstorms and while there is a danger to such severe weather it is also a display of the power of the creator. God demonstrated his power from time to time by means of thunder and lightning. When God appeared at mount Sinai we have a powerful description of what was seen as the Lord descended on the mountain. ***“And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.”*** (Ex 19.16). This sight had a tremendous effect on the children of Israel as they watched. ***“And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.”*** (Ex 20.18). One may tend to look at the sky, or the weather report on television, and simply regard a storm as a normal occurrence that imposes itself on outdoor activities. There are some of us who like storms and really enjoy the good ones. The Bible we recognize as the voice of God as He speaks to us through revelation. The world around us however also speaks of the wonders of God and thunder and lightning are examples of the power that created them. Paul stated, ***“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse...”*** (Rom 1.20). Lightning is also used as a figure in as Christ describes his return to judge the earth. There are those who think that there will be warnings and signs for the end of the world but that is refuted in the statements that Christ makes speaking to his disciples. ***“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”*** (Matt 24.27). The speed at which the return will occur is something that we are all familiar with. We have watched the lightning flash unexpectedly, realizing what had

happened after the flash. We may predict that the lightning will flash again and may even be successful by watching a particular area of the sky until it appears again. We do not know where it will hit or when. In the image of the lightning we have a statement of the power of God and also of the nature of the end of the world. No one wants to be struck by lightning as this usually causes death and destruction and so we go to certain lengths to protect ourselves from it's devastating force. This mirrors the attitude we should have in life. Christ told his disciples, ***“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. ... Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”*** (Matt 24.36,42). Christ will return at a time that we do not know. To that end we are to be vigilant and watchful, ready to go. When we look into the sky we can see the weather, the sun, clouds and other things and we can walk away with a curiosity about the physics of the workings of these things. All we have seen however is the surface. Behind it is a creator who through the physical creation has provided a means to know and appreciate him by simply looking up when we walk outside. Lightning is also used to describe other events. The appearance of the angel that rolled back the stone from Christ's tomb is described in this manner. ***“His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.”*** (Matt 28.3-4). The throne of God is figuratively represented in Revelation as John records his vision. ***“And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”*** (Rev 4.5). This appears to represent many things but one thing that is conveyed in this passage is the power of the knowledge and wisdom of God. The power to destroy and the power to save. The power to conceal, and the power to reveal. That which has been revealed can be confirmed as we see the power of God displayed in the universe, not just in the lightning, but in other things as well. We can view lightning in terms of physics, proof, or both.

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