

# Lightning or Lightening?

## A Study of "ἀστραπή"- "astrape" and "φαίνω"- phaino" as used by the Gospel Writers

By Lloyd Dale

"For as the lightening (ἀστραπή"- "astrape") does come out of the east and shines ("φαίνω"- phaino") as far as the west, so will be the Parousia of the Son of Man." (Mt 24:27)

"For as the lightening (ἀστραπή"- "astrape"), that lightens (ἀστράπτω astrapto) out of the one *part* under heaven, shines ("λάμπω" lampo) unto the other *part* under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day (i.e. His Parousia)." (Lu 17:24)

It has generally been understood by most Bible students that the meaning of "astrape" in the two passages above is "lightning." I.e., it will be sudden, shocking, and 'visible' to all -- as is lightning above us in the sky.

May I please be permitted to suggest an alternate understanding of this word in these passages; and thus, an alternate understanding of the Parousia of Jesus Christ? To me, it seems that the meaning of the Greek word "astrape" as used here is better understood in the context of Luke 11:36:

"If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining (ἀστραπή"- "astrape) of a candle doth give thee light ("φωτίζω" photizo)." (Lu 11:36 AV)

-- *not as a single brilliant flash of light*, but as a steady glow of light as from a candle or more specifically from the sun getting brighter and brighter (lightening up) as when the

sun comes up in the morning sky and shines from east to west thus bringing the light of the Gospel of the kingdom of Jesus Christ to the whole world.

This understanding of “ἀστραπή”- “astrape” in Matthew 24:27 and Luke 17:24 seems more realistic, especially when we also consider the word "phaino" used in Matthew 24:27 which is perhaps better translated "lighten" rather than "flashes".

I think that the idea which Matthew is conveying here is that the Parousia is an event more like that of the sun coming up in the morning and as it progresses it brings light to the whole land -- so the Parousia, i.e. the enthronement of Jesus on “the throne of His glory” [Matt 19:28, 25:34; Rev. 3:21] and the establishment of “his heavenly kingdom” [2Tim.4:18] which occurred in the first century and continues until “the gospel of the kingdom” [Mt 4:23, Mt 9:35; Mr 1:14] shines brightly to the whole world. In this context the “Parousia” and the “thousands years” Reign of Christ are near synonymous.