

HIS

# Nature

From the throne came flashes of lightning,  
rumblings and peals of thunder.

REVELATION 4:5

ISSUE  
02

## BRILLIANT LIGHT

Nature is rich with the glory of Christ (Isaiah 6:3), yet nothing on Earth reflects God's *holiness* quite like the awesome spectacle of lightning. Often accompanying summer thunderstorms, these blinding veins of glowing air dimly radiate the brilliant purity and unimaginable power of our Lord.

No one truly understands the mechanics of lightning and how God creates it. *Oh that we could know his mind!* We do not understand why he uses powerful rivers of electricity to pierce the sky. Searing heat and brilliant light are left in the wake as electricity tunnels its way through the atmosphere. A lightning bolt can reach temperatures of 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit—five times as hot as the surface of the sun. That heat causes the air to violently explode as it expands. A shock wave of thunder is sent in all directions.



## Lightning Strike

Compared to man-made electricity, the power of a thunderstorm is staggering. A single bolt of lightning can deliver an electrical punch of 100 million volts and 100,000 amps. It's not difficult to see how much greater our Creator is than mere man.

Scientific curiosity has given us a glimpse into the incredible engineering mind of God. The violent turbulence of a thunderhead, with its powerful updrafts and swirling downdrafts, is what creates the potential for lightning. Like a dam breaking under a surge of water, an electrically-charged

*continued...*





thundercloud bursts open, plunging electrons down toward earth. A brilliant rush of light then travels upwards of 60,000 miles per second,\* followed by a deafening flood of sound.

The current of electricity that causes a lightning flash may travel many miles through the air but is only an inch in diameter—as a result, most lightning appears to be slender and thin. Jesus fashions each bolt with several distinct upward and downward strokes. These strokes move so quickly that our eyes cannot tell them apart. What we do see is a “flickering” to the lightning flash.

The Bible uses the spectacle of lightning to paint a picture of Christ’s heavenly glory. Several passages in the book of Revelation describe a close mingling of lightning with the holy presence of God (Revelation 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18).

Christ’s *holiness* can be understood as his “absolute purity” and his “otherworldliness.” God is without sin, and he is utterly different from us (Isaiah 55:8). In this sense, lightning is an apt reflection of God’s holy character—lightning is composed of *pure* electrons and nothing else. Electricity also has an “otherworldly” quality, making it potentially dangerous.

No person has ever seen electricity because it is invisible. No one has ever seen God either (John 1:18).

The lightning we experience in the night sky is the afterglow of a stream of electricity digging its way through the air, creating heat and light as it goes; we don’t actually see the electricity itself. Likewise, if we desire to know our Creator we must look to the brilliance of Jesus (Hebrews 1:3). There is no other way to see our invisible God.

The effects of electricity are stunning, to be sure, but the Son of God possesses infinitely greater beauty and power. Some people are frightened by lightning and thunder, and that’s understandable. Many others are simply amazed. Hopefully, these “flickers” of God’s glory will inspire us with a deeper wonder for our Creator. And in the end, may we all tremble with joy and awe before the breathtaking throne of our loving and holy Lord.

\*This is greater than 200 million miles per hour (mph)!  
Customer service/subscription number: 1-800-998-0737.  
Published by Jim Kraus, designed by Mary Pappas, edited by Rick Destree. Copyright © 2010 HIS NATURE, issue 02. *His Nature* is published monthly by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 351 Executive Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188. Printed in the USA. Subscription \$12 per month per 100 copies. Canada: \$14 per 100 per month. Cover photo © Patti Smith/iStockphoto. All rights reserved. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *His Nature*, Subscription Services, P.O. Box 464 Mt. Morris, IL 61054.

*Let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.”*

HEBREWS 12:28-29