

Ezekiel 1:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

Analysis

The creatures' running and returning 'as the appearance of a flash of lightning' emphasizes the instantaneous nature of angelic obedience to divine commands. Unlike human servants who delay and question, these beings respond with electric speed. Lightning suggests both power and the fearful nature of God's judgment. The back-and-forth motion pictures active service—not static existence, but dynamic execution of God's purposes. Divine service is characterized by immediate, energetic obedience.

Historical Context

Lightning in ancient Near Eastern thought represented divine power and often accompanied theophanies (God-appearances). The speed of lightning surpassed all ancient understanding of velocity, making it the perfect metaphor for instantaneous divine action. Ezekiel's description would have communicated incomprehensible power to his exile audience, assuring them of God's ability to act despite their powerless situation.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the lightning-swift obedience of angelic beings challenge our slow, reluctant response to God's commands?
2. What does the active, dynamic nature of heavenly service teach us about vigorous Christian living versus passive faith?

Interlinear Text

וּבְנִי וְתַ	רָצַ וְתַ	וַיָּשַׁבָּתָ	כְּמַרְאָה הַ
And the living creatures	ran	and returned	as the appearance
H2416	H7519	H7725	H4758

: בְּנִי
of a flash of lightning
H965

Additional Cross-References

Zechariah 4:10 (Parallel theme): For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

Matthew 24:27 (Light): 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.

Psalms 147:15 (Parallel theme): He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly.

Mark 13:27 (Parallel theme): And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Matthew 24:31 (Parallel theme): And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Luke 17:24 (Light): For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

Daniel 9:21 (Parallel theme): Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org