

“The Value of Snow”

Baxter Exum (#1010)
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Introduction:

Several weeks ago, we learned from **Genesis 1:31** that everything created by God was “**good**,” and in **Romans 1:20**, we discover from the apostle Paul that God can be seen in the natural world. In other words, people have no excuse not to believe in God. However, we do not always appreciate everything that God has placed in the natural world. We think, for example, about the beautiful dandelion. There is so much we can appreciate about the humble dandelion—kids love to rub them on their skin and turn their skin yellow, they look so nice out there in a field somewhere, children pick them to give to their mothers—and yet at the same time, people spend millions of dollars to get rid of dandelions!

Another part of God’s creation that is not always appreciated is SNOW! This morning, then, in light of what is happening outside right now, I would like for us to study the value of snow. **▶PPT▶** The truth is, some people do love snow. Have you ever med a little kid who does not like snow? Some enjoy making snowmen; others enjoy sledding, or skiing, or snowboarding, digging tunnels, making snow angels, and making ice cream out of snow. At our daughter’s school, we discovered that some of the kids have a little superstition. If there is the possibility of a snow day, the kids have the tradition of wearing their pajamas inside-out the night before the storm—in hopes that the superintendent will call a snow day. And sure enough, our daughter tried this a few months ago, and there was a snow day the next morning!

Some of you know that I grew up in the northwest suburbs of Chicago, where we had more than eight feet of snow during the winter of '78-'79. I was six years old then, and that is when I learned how to shovel snow. We enjoyed digging from the front door out to the sidewalk. We would scratch down to the ground, and when we got to concrete, we would pop our heads out of the tunnel. Some people have grown up loving snow.

Perhaps some of us would agree with the words of Julie Andrews in the Sound of Music as she sang about some of her favorite things, “**Snowflakes that fall on my nose and eye-lashes.**” But somehow, mysteriously, somewhere between childhood and adulthood, many people get things turned around and start to hate what God created to be good! Some of you know that I have lived for just a few years in the south. We lived in Memphis for a year when I was four years old, and I think it would be safe to say that people down there are terrified of even the possibility of seeing a snowflake. We brought our snow shovels with us for that year in Memphis, and people were truly bewildered when they saw us with our snow shovels. Just several

years ago, I was visiting Tennessee for the annual FHU Bible Lectures, and I was eating dinner with an area minister and one of the elders who was serving as a principal of a school down there. During dinner, he got a call from someone warning that they were expecting a quarter of an inch of snow that night, and right there on the spot he cancelled school Monday through Thursday for snow...and Friday for mud! What was expected to be something very minor was very quickly turned into a major catastrophe.

The Bible has quite a bit to say about snow. The word is used around three dozen times. Interestingly, nowhere are we ever told to be afraid of the snow. In fact, snow is sometimes referred to almost in passing, in a matter-of-fact way. We think, for example, about a passing reference in **2 Samuel 23:20**, where the Bible says, ***“Then Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds, killed the two sons of Ariel of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion in the middle of a pit on a snowy day.”*** This man kills a lion, and he happens to do it on a snowy day. In another passage from the Old Testament, we have an interesting reference to a scene from the life of the worthy woman in **Proverbs 31**. In **Proverbs 31:21**, the Bible says, ***“She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet.”*** The worthy woman, therefore, is not afraid of the snow, but she is prepared for it. There is no reason to be afraid, but there is reason to be ready for it. I have attended several events that have been taught or coordinated by the stress-challenge coordinator for the Madison Metropolitan School District. She has an interesting take on this. She has a saying, ***“There is no such thing as bad weather—only bad clothing!”*** Certainly the worthy woman in **Proverbs 31** would agree with that statement! This morning, then, I would like for us to look at several of the three dozen Scriptures on snow—so we can come to appreciate this amazing part of God’s creation...

I. One of the first things we realize from the Bible is that SNOW IS FROM GOD, THAT SNOW IS AN AMAZING DEMONSTRATION OF GOD’S CREATIVE POWER. **»PPT»**

The first passage is found in **Job 37:6**. Job could not understand what was happening, so finally a young man by the name of Elihu speaks, and Elihu makes an interesting statement about the power of God, ***“For to the snow He says, ‘Fall on the earth,’ and to the downpour and the rain, ‘Be strong.’”*** So, snow was designed and created by God. The majesty of God can be seen in something as simple as a snowflake. What could be worth less than a single snowflake? And yet we look carefully, and we can see the amazing power of God—the nutrients that nourish the earth, the intricate design. I am told that there are perhaps around ten basic forms of snowflakes—needles, stars, trees, fishbones, bullets—but all are basically different.

Another passage is found a few chapters later. In **Job 38**, God now speaks directly to Job and confirms what Elihu said. Please look with me at **Job 38:22-23, 28-30**, where God says, ***“Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you***

seen the storehouses of the hail, which I have reserved for the time of distress, for the day of war and battle? Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew? From whose womb has come the ice? And the frost of heaven, who has given it birth? Water becomes hard like stone, and the surface of the deep is imprisoned." God, then, refers to the *"storehouses of the snow."* We think of the glaciers, the snow in the mountains, the snow at the north and south poles. My understanding is that around 20% of the earth's land mass is covered by snow at any given time. Fresh snow falls on one out every four square miles of land every year. One-third of the world's water for irrigation comes from snow. In the United States, that figure stands at 75%. Water is stored in the mountains and melts and comes down just at the perfect time for crops. It is delivered through the Rio Grande, the Colorado, the Missouri, and the Columbia Rivers. Snow produces 26 trillion gallons from the Columbia River alone—that is enough water to cover the state of Kansas knee-deep or to raise the level of Lake Michigan by six feet! Truly, God is responsible for the *"storehouses of the snow."*

We are also aware of what is written in **Psalm 147:16-18**, where the author says, *"He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes. He casts forth His ice as fragments; who can stand before His cold? He sends forth His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow and the waters to flow."* Snow, therefore, demonstrates the power of God. Today, even with all of our technology, we are so limited as we try to reproduce what God has done. We think of all of the ski hills around here with their thousands of dollars worth of snow-making equipment, but even with all of their effort, they are only able to cover a very small area.

We look at what is happening outside this morning, and we are humbled at the power of God. Even just a few inches can shut down a major city, the interstates, and schools. We agree with the words of **Psalm 19:1**, *"The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands."* Snow, therefore, is a great blessing. In winter, we are reminded of God's promise after the flood, *"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."* Snow was designed by God and is a great blessing!

II. As we look back to the Scriptures, we also discover that SNOW IS USED IN THE BIBLE TO ILLUSTRATE PURITY AND FORGIVENESS.

Several weeks ago, we looked together at the sin that King David committed with Bathsheba. He was up on the roof of his palace, he looked down and saw Bathsheba bathing, he had her brought up to the palace, he committed adultery with her, and then to cover it up he had her husband murdered. Well, after he was confronted by Nathan the prophet, he wrote **Psalm 51**. If you will, please look with me at one little verse in that Psalm—**Psalm 51:7**, where King David said, *"Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."* Snow symbolized the forgiveness of David's sins.

Can you think of anything whiter than snow? Outside on a snowy day when the sun finally comes out, the snow can be absolutely blinding! We need sunglasses; we need to cover our eyes. God could have designed snow to be red, or blue, or purple, but He chose white—totally pure! I would suggest that no white paint can possibly be as bright as snow.

Isaiah also spoke about snow this way. In **Isaiah 1:18**, Isaiah passed along a message from God, ***“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.’*** Snow is used here again as a symbol to picture the forgiveness of sins. Sometimes we sing the song, ***Whiter Than Snow...***

*Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;
I want Thee forever to live in my soul;
Break down ev'ry idol, cast out ev'ry foe;
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

*Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow;
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

When we look outside today and we see everything covered in snow, we start to understand that all of our sins have been completely forgiven—let us thank God for that!

III. There is another value to snow, and that is, SNOW IS USED IN THE BIBLE TO PICTURE JESUS CHRIST. »PPT»

It gets back to this idea of purity. In **Daniel 7:9-10**, we read about the Ancient of Days, where it appears that the Lord is being described for us. Daniel says, ***“I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened.”*** We notice that his clothing was like snow and His hair was like wool—the purity and the majesty of Jesus Christ!

The description continues in **Revelation 1:12-16**, where the apostle John says, ***“Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword;***

and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.” Again, His head and His hair were like snow, like white wool. White hair is often used in the Bible to picture great wisdom. Church growth experts tell us that visitors to a congregation need to see at least a few people in the audience with white hair—it shows stability and maturity—the church is stable and is here to stay. We worship a Savior with white hair—with hair the color of snow!

IV. And finally this morning, we discover that SNOW IS USED TO ILLUSTRATE THE POWER OF GOD’S WORD. »PPT»

In **Isaiah 55:10-11**, the Bible says, ***“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.”*** Isaiah says, then, that just as the snow comes down and helps the crops, so also God’s word comes down and works in our lives—the importance of studying and reading the word of God!

Conclusion:

As we close, there may be someone here this morning whose sins are red (like crimson—like a bloody stain), but who want their lives to be as white as snow. The Bible teaches that we must believe in Jesus, we must repent of our sins, and we must be immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins. At that point, our sins are washed away. If you need the prayers of the church to overcome some challenge or sin in your life, you can let us know about that this morning. But if you are ready to obey the gospel right now, you can let us know as we sing this next song. Let’s stand and sing...

To comment on this lesson: church@fourlakescoc.org