

# Snowflakes and Snow Flakes

*God's Power & Grace*

By Arnold Brevick

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**Bible Text:** Job 38:22  
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**First Presbyterian Church**  
5600 S. Biscayne Dr.  
North Port, FL 34287

**Website:** [www.fpcnorthportfl.net](http://www.fpcnorthportfl.net)  
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The passage of Scripture for tonight is Job 38:22 and I'll read the first couple verses also in Job 38 because they kind of explain the context, so Job 38 verses 1 through 3 and then also verse 22.

1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: 2 "Who is this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge? 3 Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me.

Then down to verse 22, and in between these verses God is asking Job question after question after question and he comes to this question:

22 Have you entered the treasury of snow, Or have you seen the treasury of hail,

So there are all these various questions that God is asking Job and he asks them knowing that Job cannot answer, Job does not know the answer to any of these questions and the reason that Job doesn't know is because these are things that only God knows.

Now the title of my sermon tonight, interesting, "Snowflakes and Snow Flakes," is based on the idea of snowflakes which a couple of weeks ago we saw a film here on Sunday night called "The God of Wonders" and one small part of that particular movie was a presentation about snowflakes and that's what kind of inspired me to preach this sermon because they presented the snowflakes in such a way that they showed the glory of God in creating such wonderful things. Then after that happened, I talked to somebody about the movie and they mentioned the snowflakes and we talked about snow, and in talking about snow, we got to the point where we were talking about snow landing on the ground and how it sometimes gets dirty and yucky and all this stuff, and then in my mind as I thought about this sermon and I'll talk about this later, but I thought of snow flakes and I even looked it up, the definition in a slang dictionary, a flake and I'm not reading the exact definition, but a flake is a description also of a person who is called flaky and basically can do stupid silly things. That is a flake and today I want to talk about both kinds of snow flakes.

Now the movie that we saw based its instruction about snow on the idea of the treasury of snow because here God asks Job, "Have you entered the treasury of snow," and they said snow was indeed a treasure because it shows the glory of God. They told us that snow forms in the clouds where water vapor condenses and as its crystals grow, remarkable patterns emerge and these patterns are complex, symmetrical and beautiful, they are breathtaking to behold, and when these patterns are made, they can't be made by man. When we make snow, and a few years ago, maybe five or six years ago, I think it was man-made snow that they had here in Florida over by the baseball field and my children played in it and as far as you could see, it looked just like snow but there were no snowflakes, none of those six-sided hexagonal things at all, none of those beautiful things. And these kind of snow crystals are made of amazing water molecules. Each oxygen atom has a little bit of negative charge and it holds to two hydrogen atoms that have a positive charge and it holds these  $104\frac{1}{2}$  degrees, 104.5 degrees apart, but when the temperature goes down to freezing, these molecules pull together and they pull together and apart as the temperature changes, and as they're blowing through the sky and falling, there's different temperatures at different heights and so that's how the crystals form all these different designs. But it's always these six-sided snowflakes, six little things however they are, and each snow crystal is a reflection of God's creative power, his creativity, and as the movie told us, every day, not in Florida but in other parts of the world, trillions of God's transparent treasures fall to the earth but no two are alike. Just like a human fingerprint, every snowflake is unique and though they are different, they all have the hexagonal shape and each snowflake is made of millions of water crystals, millions of these crystals, these little water molecules, and showing how the wonderful design of God in them.

There are two things that are wonderful about snowflakes. 1. Their beauty. They have a beautiful structure and pattern and there are more than 100 different types of snowflakes, and then their order. There's a consistent pattern in their creation, a pattern that we cannot reproduce. They seem to just fall from the sky and yet the hexagonal pattern is always [unintelligible]. Every single snowflake always has the same pattern, the beautiful design and this consistency, I believe, is evidence for our Creator God. Things just don't happen like that. You don't kick a rock down the street and all of a sudden it turns into something beautiful, but this happens every single time, and so it's evidence of a divine artist and those are the things that this movie told us and yet as I thought about snowflakes through the week, another thing I think we could notice that the movie does not show is their frailty. Snowflakes are extremely frail, that's why there's none in Florida, they can't stand the heat. They melt and so we don't have snowflakes in Florida.

I could ask you how many of you have seen a beautiful snowflake yourself? How many of you have seen in your hand this design? I've seen them. I remember catching them as a child and even as an adult and looking at them and yet when I looked at them, I'd have to look pretty fast because they would be melting right there; you'd get a magnifying glass or something and you might see one pretty good. Also they get lost in the crowd. If they fall down into the snow, it's tough to find a single snowflake because they're all together, they lose that, they lose their individuality. And so they melt, they lose their individuality when they fall on the ground, and so you could say snow as it falls from heaven retains

its beauty but as soon as it touches the earth, its beauty is very short-lived and so many heavenly things are the same. It melts, it gets dirty, it loses its beautiful design, and we as human beings, if we compare ourselves to snowflakes, we do share complexity and beauty, in fact, we're much, much, much more complex. Our brains, our circulatory system, all the different parts of our body, these make us much more complex than snowflakes and the Bible also speaks about us and the way we are made. In Psalm 139 we could read in verse 12, it says,

12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You. 13 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. 17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! 18 If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

So we share this aspect. Just as the snowflake shows the glory of God by its beauty and its complexity, so our human bodies also show the glory of God because they're made in such a fearfully and wonderful way. Our ability to think, our ability to talk and communicate, not only do we glorify in God in these things, or we should, but also Scripture tells us we are created in his image. None of the animals can talk, none of the animals can send an email or work on a computer, or read a book.

And yet as much as we share with the snowflake's beauty and complexity, we also share their frailty and Scripture says as much. In 1 Peter 1:24 and 25 we read,

24 because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

And when we think of this, just as the snowflake is very frail, it falls to the earth, it melts in your hand, so is our lives. They are very short. Psalm 91 talks about them going away as a whisper in the night or like a dream, and we are that way and our glory is short. "Those were the days, my friend, we thought they'd never end. We were young and we were sure to have our way," is that song, and when we're younger, we're stronger, we're more powerful, more able to do things, and even somebody like Michael Jordan, this champion basketball player, he's not that old yet, he's still younger than I am, yet he cannot really play professional basketball anymore, he can't compete on that level because he's gotten a little bit older and the same happens to everyone.

We all grow old, we get more frail and eventually we die, and yet beyond frailty we bring sinful stupidity into the game, and as I was thinking of snowflakes and I said earlier I'm talking not just about snowflakes but also snow flakes, flaky people, I remembered being in Maine because that's the last place I really lived where there was snow, and I lived in a house that had six acres of land, and this is typical in Maine, almost everybody's home had a lot of land connected to it, and most of the land where I was was wooded and within the wooded land, even on my land, there was a snowmobile trail and it went through the woods and it was only probably so wide so it wasn't that wide and you'd go through these trees and I remember more than once hearing of people that were right near where I was, where I lived, not on my land but near that area, that these young men were drunk, they were riding their snowmobiles and they crashed into trees and died, and when I think of snowflakes, these, how stupid can you be to here you have a beautiful woods, beautiful snow, everything is beautiful and perfect, and you've been given the gift of life, given these things by God, and in the midst of God's perfection, we choose to sin, we choose to even destroy ourselves. I'm sure they weren't intending to destroy themselves but they got themselves drunk, they got themselves, they were riding through these trees probably really enjoying themselves, but in this narrow, narrow place, they even did this at nighttime because they had lights, but they crashed into the tree. And this more than one time it seemed like we were there for four years and probably maybe four different times somebody right in our area had crashed into a tree, it seemed like one every winter at least, and killed themselves on a snowmobile.

And of course, this is something that happens not just in the snow, it's something that happens almost every day and in every way, and we see how beautiful God made the world and yet how quickly sin mars the picture, and I can preach about people running into trees and yet we have all been stupid also, we could say, haven't we? I mean, we probably can think of some time in our life, one time or another where we did something maybe not as stupid as being drunk on a snowmobile going through the woods, but maybe close to that, and somehow maybe God spared us, somehow we didn't pay the consequence for what we did, and by grace I imagine most of us can say we've lived to our current age by the grace of God because he was good to us, he saved us from this decision or this other bad decision that we made. We are beautiful creations of God. We are created to live for his glory and yet all we like sheep, Scripture says, have gone astray. We've turned every one his own way and the glory of God, which is seen in snowflakes and seen in our human bodies and seen in the trees and the sun and in the sky, has been marred by men, by our sin, and yet Christ's death on the cross, and next Sunday we'll be celebrating the Lord's Supper, I forgot to announce that in the bulletin but I should have, now I'm announcing it to the Sunday evening people, we'll be celebrating the Lord's Supper, Christ's death on the cross. It erases our sinful stupidity. All, he says, "Though your sins are as crimson, they shall be as white as snow," bringing the snow theme back in, as white as pure, clean snow. And so even though we may make stupid mistakes in this life, even though we go beyond stupid mistakes and sin, even though we may be flakes, we can be made as white as snowflakes again by the grace of God. He makes things beautiful again and even more beautiful than we were before, because of his grace he can make us right and good again.

Well, let's pray.

*Father, we thank You that You're a God of grace, that You are a God of power, that You're a God of creativity, that You've made many beautiful things in this world, and Father, we have marred those things with our sins, we have gone astray, maybe sometimes we lead others astray, and yet by Your grace, Father, You bring us back and You cleanse us of sin by the blood of Your Son and we thank You for Your, we thank You for even what we have in common with snowflakes, we are both Your creation and we both can be beautiful and, Father, we both and we should learn that we both have a frailty in this life, our lives are short-lived in light of eternity but the word of God, Lord, abides forever. So Father, we pray that we might remember that and we pray that we might live for You and we thank You for what Christ has done for us on the cross. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*