

God in Nature

Bible study

Snow

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<https://siarchives.si.edu/history/featured-topics/stories/wilson-bentley-pioneering-photographer-snowflakes#:~:text=For%20over%20forty%20years%2C%20Wilson,crystals%20and%20their%20many%20types>

Wilson Snowflake Bentley was the first person to photograph snowflakes to show their individuality. Here is a website to learn more about this native Vermonter.

Snow facts

<https://www.foxweather.com/learn/7-facts-about-snow>

1. There must be pollen or dust in the air to form snow

The first step in the formation of a snowflake is an extremely cold water droplet freezing onto a pollen or dust particle in the sky. This creates an ice crystal.

Then, water vapor freezes onto the primary ice crystal as it descends toward the ground, which builds new crystals – the six sides of the snowflake.

2. All snowflakes have 6 sides or arms

A snowflake is made of frozen water, so it has two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom (H₂O). Water molecules are shaped like a V, so when they align and freeze together, a hexagon shape develops.

When more water molecules are added to a snowflake, they are evenly added to the hexagon, so the shape does not change. Instead, the snowflake increases in size while maintaining its six sides.

3. No two snowflakes are exactly alike

Each snowflake follows a slightly different path from the sky to the ground, and therefore, encounters slightly different atmospheric conditions on the way down.

Therefore, every flake tends to look unique, resembling everything from prisms and needles to the familiar lacy pattern, according to the National Weather Service.

4. Snow can fall with temperatures above freezing

It's possible for snow to fall with temperatures at the surface as high as 50 degrees, but only if environmental conditions are just right.

This can happen if the warm layer of air near the surface is very shallow, so the snowflakes falling from the clouds don't have enough time to melt before reaching the ground.

When it snows with temperatures above freezing, the temperature will drop. If the snow is falling heavily, the temperature will quickly drop to near 32 degrees. This is due to evaporation and melting, both cooling processes.

The best chance of seeing a 50-degree snow is when the air is very dry and the snow is quite heavy because more evaporation will take place within that dry air.

5. It can never be too cold for snow

Although it can technically snow at temperatures up to 50 degrees, it's simply too warm for snow to reach the ground with temperatures any higher than that. But it can never be too cold for snow. Whether it's 30 below or 30 above zero, there's a chance it could snow.

6. Snow isn't white

Snow might appear white as it falls from the clouds or accumulates on the ground, but it's actually translucent. That's because snow is comprised of tiny ice crystals, which are also translucent.

Light is bent when passing through a translucent material, so when light hits a snowflake, it is bent and scattered across the visible light spectrum by the facets and imperfections in each crystal, according to ScienceNotes.org.

The scattering results in white light, similar to the way a pile of sugar or salt appears white even though each individual crystal appears clear, ScienceNotes.org said.

7. It takes about 1 hour for a snowflake to reach the ground.
Although it depends on each snowflake's size and mass and the surrounding environmental conditions, most flakes fall at speeds of 1 to 4 mph, according to the United Kingdom's Met Office.

The largest, heaviest snowflakes can reach speeds up to 9 mph, but the typical flake descends toward the ground at about 1.5 mph and takes around an hour to reach the ground, the Met Office said.

London museum

<https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2022/12/weather/wilson-snowflake-bentley-cnnphotos/>

Snow Meditation

Each snowflake is created in the same six-sided pattern, but they have distinct differences. Just as each of us have similarities, we are unique.

Read the following verses and take time to meditate on God's power to create such beauty in snowflakes and even more beauty in us.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Genesis 1:26-28, 31.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,^[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Isaiah 1:18

"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

God created each of us uniquely. Give thanks to God for his handiwork. Also feel free to share your concerns with God on where you may feel inadequate. This exercise is for your own self-reflection.

God created each one of us uniquely. He created us in “their” own image. He knew we fell short and provided a way for us to be clean through his Son Jesus Christ. God did all these things because of his deep love for each of us.

Digging deeper

Psalm 51:7

“Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow”.

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”

Psalm 51:7 refers to David’s cry of repentance. David was not merely looking for a way to clear the air, but instead he desired to become pure. He wanted to experience the gifts from God; Joy, restoration, purity etc. Hyssop was an herb used to signify purity in ceremonial uses. The Hebrew word for “wash” was not in reference to washing your hands...but instead this meant to beat or pound...such as laundry against rocks. It was a dramatic representation of how this process of becoming pure can be painful at times.

1. When you repent of a sinful behavior; has it been a painful process?

2. After repenting: what gifts from God have you experienced?

Isaiah 1:18 also uses snow as a symbol of purity. This purity is not based on a specific change in behavior. Instead, forgiveness occurs when you ask for it and commit to following Jesus. Your faith in Christ makes you “white as snow”. Changed behaviors are still crucial to your intention of following Christ.

3. What are your thoughts on these two perspectives of purity and forgiveness? What do you see as the main difference?

4. When you committed to following Christ: did you find it difficult to believe that you are now “pure as snow in God’s eyes”?

Jeremiah 18:14

¹⁴ Does the snow of Lebanon ever vanish from its rocky slopes?
Do its cool waters from distant sources ever stop flowing?

The motif of snow as a cleansing agent is further illustrated in the above verse. Jeremiah 18 is a prophetic message to Judah and Jerusalem. God is using the example of a potter reshaping a marred project. In this example God is the potter and each of us represents a creation marred by our sinful nature. We each need to go through the painful process of being reshaped. The snow in the above verse emphasizes this message by representing purity. God is saying this water runs without needing any reminder. This pure water also flows into the Jordan...the river where Jesus was baptized. We strive for purity through the living water of Jesus.

- 5. What are your thoughts on this verse? Do you feel like surrendering your sinful ways is similar to a clay item being reshaped on a potter’s wheel?

Jeremiah 17:13

Lord, you are the hope of Israel; all who forsake you will be put to shame. Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the Lord, the spring of living water.

John 7:38

Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”

Living water is a metaphor for Jesus. He spiritually quenches our thirst. As living water flows through us we continually grow closer to Jesus. We can share the “river of life” with those around us. This will then open others to the goodness of Jesus.

- 6. What does it mean to be filled with living water?

- 7. How can our relationship with God refresh us and transform us?

- 8. What evidence of transformation do you think other see in your

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Matthew 3:16-17

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Mark 1:9-10

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Acts 8:36-38

³⁶ As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" ³⁷ [G] ³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

As a culmination of our discussion of snow; baptism by emersion is a wonderful way to tie these Scripture passages together. Our Sins have been made pure as snow through the blood Jesus shed for us. As a symbol of our belief in Jesus; we publicly profess this faith through baptism by emersion. This process of leaving our sinful nature behind and becoming a new creation in Christ captures the fullness of living water.

9. What was your experience with baptism by emersion?

Prayer for Winter

God of creation, thank you for the beauty of winter- for snow, icy window panes, evergreen trees, warm coats, sledding, and hot cocoa. Thank you for the reminder of purity through snow. Let us enjoy Your creation in all its glory, this winter and always. Amen
- Author Unknown