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RELIGION
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By the Creek

White as snow

By Sarah Bradfield

Love it or hate it we have had quite a bit of it the past couple of weeks.

After an almost six-year drought our state has had its fair share of precipitation with more on the horizon.

As I look out my window at Tom, Basin and Wheeler Ridge blanketed in white I'm reminded of God's answer to prayer, in His timing. The Sierra appears dramatically different today than it did last summer. The snow has smoothed out the rough edges of the landscape and when you get into the thick of it, the land becomes blindingly white.

Snow is symbolic of absolute purity and reminds me of the Lord's appeal to Judah to return to Him in Isaiah 1:18, "'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."'

In the opening chapter of Isaiah, the Lord makes four accusations of Judah - they were rebellious, unfaithful, hardhearted and participated in meaningless worship. These were God's own sons who had revolted against Him. Of all the nations of the Earth at this time, Israel should have known and understood their God. So He provides an invitation, "Come now, and let us reason together."

He is the Lord who can speak and allow anything to be and He could have demanded them to obey. Instead, He invites them to look at the truth of who they are and who He is. He invites them to turn from their path of destruction and obey God's call to wash themselves clean, remove their evil deeds, cease from doing evil and learn to do right, seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan and plead for the widow.

After this invitation, He states the fact that Israel's, "…sins are as scarlet," and "they are red like crimson."

Scarlet was the name for a worm in Hebrew. This worm was used to make red dye, hence the translation of towla as scarlet.

The female towla would permanently attach her body to the trunk of a tree to lay her eggs. Her body would protect these larvae until they hatched and she would die. During her death, the scarlet fluid stained her body and the surrounding wood. After the eggs hatched and left, the blood-stained tree would turn white.

Towla is also used in Psalm 22:6 (traditionally believed to be a prophetic Messianic psalm) and communicates Christ referring to Himself, "But I am a worm and not a man, a reproach of men and despised by the people."

That the great I AM proclaims that "I am a worm" for our sakes is the ultimate plea the Lord makes toward Israel, all nations and you.

And for what purpose does He send His own Son down to earth to die physically and spiritually for all men? So that our sins will be white as snow. White as snow.

I don't know about you but when I think about myself in my humanity, I am not white as snow. I should be the worm in the story. Yet there is a role reversal in Christ's sacrifice. We come bearing our sin nature and all our unrighteousness with nothing of value to offer the Lord.

When we trust in Christ's work on the cross and resurrection we are given total cleansing in return. He makes us white as snow.

In Job 38:22, the Lord says, "Have you entered the storehouse of the snow?"

This year we are seeing how much snow the Lord has stored up for us and He is now releasing it. Every time your eyes behold the snow-white backdrop of the Sierra, remember how abundant God's grace is to those needy sinners who would receive it and obey His voice.

(Sarah Bradfield is a member of Bishop Creek Community Church, an Evangelical Free Church that meets Sundays at St. Timothy's Anglican Church at 700 Hobson Ave., corner of Hobson and Keough, at 11 a.m. For more information, call 760-872-7188 or email www.BishopCreekCommunity.org.)

To: Snow White - June 2

"Come now, let us reason together"-I love that invitation to personal relationship.

Worm and Towla and Psalm 22 and "attaching to a tree"- my research for tonight 1-24-2017 (my mother's birthday today -85 years young).

What a gift to talk with my MOM tonight and what a gift YOU are in my life.

The peridot ear rings are coming! I think I will design subliminally like a tree or leaf

When I read this Saturday night in Bishop CA it was the first time this old tree read that my God referred to himself (err...herself) as women!

Always back to grasshopper or like a child. I hope I can humbly accept the truth in a spirit of love.

From: Grasshoper - August 17 (In a small way I hope you receive this message from your mother to you through me...you are LOVED!)