



SERVICE TIMES:

Sunday : 9:30 AM
10:30 AM
5:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

ELDERS

Todd Cox Jimmy Griffith
Travis Everett Paul White

DEACONS:

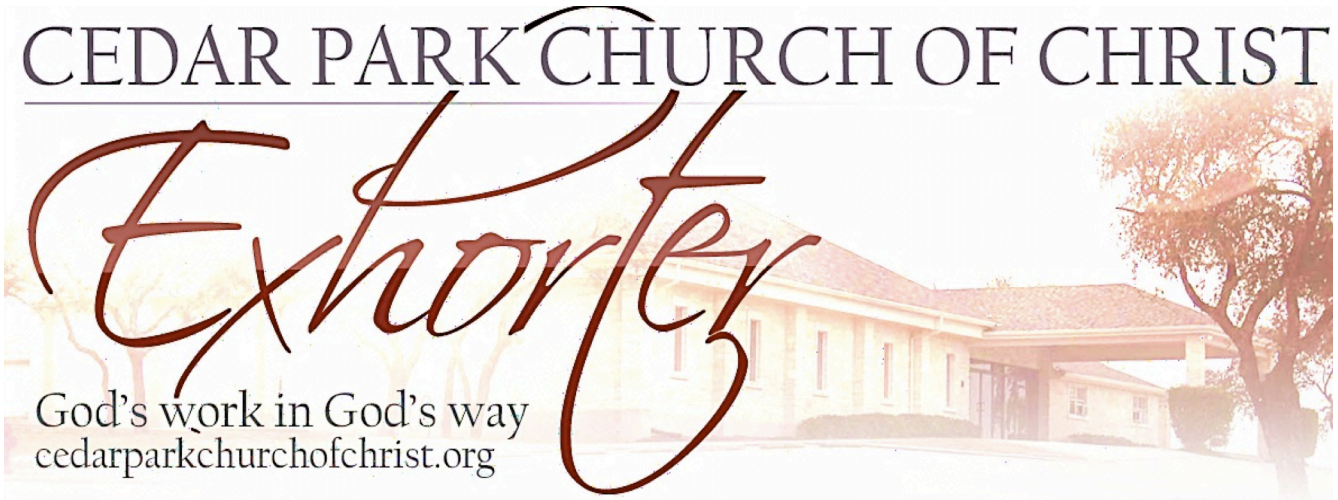
Derek Anderson Bret Cox
James Dow Patrick Gaughan
Ryan Griffith Dan Harbin
Craig Hecht Danny Meek
Skyler Meek Phil Parker
Jay Silvers Jason Stannard
Travis Starling Bryan Tacker
Steve Turquette Eric Wise

EVANGELIST

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The Bible In Living Color

Recently, my 8 year old asked me on the way to church why the devil is red. I found myself rambling in response, as any good parent would, to try and answer his question. I went down a rabbit hole that he may or may not have understood. I started with cultural depictions in paintings and pop art, going on to the cultural meaning and definitions of colors, and then I went into some of the psychology and emotion behind the different colors. It was probably too late at this point, since I most likely lost him around the usage of the word “psychology.” But I should have realized straight away that the obvious answer was, “because it comes from the Bible.” Revelation 12:3, for instance, talks about a red dragon that could be meant as the devil, and again a few chapters down, 17:3 mentions a scarlet beast with a similar description.

In retrospect, I probably could have answered my son a little more at his level, but that long rambling got me thinking in a broader sense of how color is used throughout the Bible. I found color is sprinkled throughout the Bible from beginning to end. Some books lean on it more heavily, while I have some stories with color ingrained into my memory more than others. Some references are more symbolic while others are more descriptive of a scene or object.

A lot of our visual depictions, both color and attributes of characters and objects, are based at some level on God's word. It's important to be careful not to take color too literally when studying it, deriving meaning that just isn't in the Bible (Proverbs 3:5). However, I do think it is a type of visual language. If we can understand that visual language, then we might be able to paint biblical meaning for ourselves and others.

One of the first things that comes to mind for me when I think of color in the Bible is how it's used to note wealth and hierarchy within the social ladder at that time. We take for granted today how we can jump on Amazon and, with one click, buy a colorful shirt that will be delivered to our doorsteps in two hours. It's so insignificant to us and lacks meaning for us today because it's so common and cheap, but in biblical times, colored dyes were expensive. Some colored dyes were more expensive than others, meaning only royalty could afford them. Daniel and Mordecai were both given purple robes to honor them and distinguish them, along with gold jewelry (Dan 5:29, Esther 8:15).

Colors in the Bible are often used to illustrate or paint a picture for the reader. In particular, moments like visions, dreams, and prophecies throughout the Bible can get very descriptive and detailed. Whether color is specifically mentioned or merely inferred by the material in use, this type of language allows us to go back in time and visually see what is happening in the text. A really good example that comes to mind for me is Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:31). For me, it really paints a colorful picture by inferring the colors through the materials listed. The gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay add not only an impressive texture to the story, but also imprint color into the story because these are materials we can relate to today. It helps to captivate even the minds of young children.

If you were to do a quick search on Google, you'd find so many articles on what each color means in the Bible and what that means for you and me as a Christian today. Some of the definitions out there might be a bit of a

stretch to try and give each color one clear definition, because it can depend on its context in the Bible. Other colors in the Bible are used almost universally to mean the same thing over and over again to where you can make out a clear pattern from beginning to end. In Genesis after God destroyed the people of the world with the flood, He promised never to flood the world again and put the rainbow in the sky, to help us remember that promise (Genesis 9:13). He put it there to remember, but it symbolizes the beauty and power of God since he has saved us, making what is dark turn to light, and what is unclean clean (Ezekiel 1:28, Revelation 4:2–3, Revelation 10:1).

We have to be careful not to rely too heavily on our cultural understanding and biases of today that didn't exist when the Bible was written. Today, our culture has adopted this red dragon as the devil, pulled directly from the Bible, but culture changes the meaning over time. In the middle ages, the devil was often painted black. During that time, red may have been more of a royal and noble color while black might have reminded people of the black beasts that were difficult to kill.

God gave us colors throughout the Bible in these different ways to captivate our attention and better understand (Romans 15:4) his Word. Hopefully this article gives you a little appreciation for how color is used in the Bible. Maybe next time you — if you don't already — will see color used, and it will grab your attention and help you better understand and visualize God's word. Lucky for me and my boy, my ramblings didn't completely deter my son's interest in understanding the Bible and meaning of colors, because the very next day he asked me what the color black means. What are some colorful stories in the Bible that come to your mind?

- James Dow