

“THE COLORS OF CHRISTMAS” (MATTHEW 2; LUKE 2)

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My family loves to ride around town and look at Christmas lights a few days before Christmas. Everybody enjoys seeing the colorful decorations this season of the year. At church, I see men wearing colorful ties, and ladies with colorful tops.

Although red and green are the primary colors of Christmas, with a little imagination we can see the Christmas story in every color.

GREEN. Green is the color of the fields where the shepherds watched their flocks by night (Luke 2:8). Green is also the color of evergreen trees that remind us of the “everlasting life” offered through the gift of God’s Son (John 3:16). Green reminds us of money, that we either spend wastefully, or use wisely to help those in need and support missions so that those who have never heard of Christ may know the real meaning of Christmas.

RED. Poinsettia plants are popular at Christmas, with their bright red leaves. Sadly, red can also symbolize spending more money than we have on gifts, and getting into debt! Red should remind us of the events of the Bible: the blood of the innocent children of Bethlehem slaughtered by King Herod in an evil attempt to stop the birth of Christ (Matthew 2:16-18), and the blood of Christ Himself shed for our salvation on the cross (1 Peter 1:18-19).

BROWN. The manger and the hay remind us of Jesus’ humility (Luke 2:7), whereas the myrrh, the most expensive of the gifts of the Magi (Matthew 2:11), remind us that he is for both rich and poor. So brown can remind us that Jesus came for all people.

YELLOW. Frankincense, one of the gifts of the Magi (Matthew 2:11), was a yellow incense used in prayer, a reminder to spend time in worship and meditation on the real meaning of Christmas, just as Mary “treasure these things in her heart” (Luke 2:19).

Yellow is also a symbol of cowardice, a warning to Christians not to miss this opportunity to share our faith at this time when the whole world is thinking about Christmas. We should be like the shepherds, who told everybody what they saw (Luke 2:17).

PURPLE. Purple is the color of royalty, reminding us of the Magi and of King Herod. While the Magi, or wise men, were probably not actually kings, it is likely that they served in the court of a king. What a contrast between the Magi and Herod! The former

followed Jesus; the latter tried to kill Him. Purple can remind us of the choice every person must make to follow Jesus or not.

Purple also reminds us of Jesus Himself, who came the first time to save, but will come back to reign as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Revelation 19:16). Every person will one day bow the knee before Him as king (Philippians 2:10).

BLACK. Black points to the night sky where the angels appeared to the shepherds to announce the Messiah’s birth (Luke 2:8-9).

Black may also remind us of the depression many people suffer at Christmas, especially those who are alone and those who have suffered a loss of a loved one since last Christmas.

Black can also remind us of the darkness of our sin, if we are without a Savior (John 3:19).

WHITE. The star in the east, the angels in the sky, and the strips of cloth wrapped around the Christ child are all represented by the color white. White is also a symbol of our cleansing from sin through faith in Jesus (Isaiah 1:18).

GOLD. The gift of gold from the Magi reminds us that Christmas is a season of gift giving (Matthew 2:11), and that God has given us the greatest gift in Jesus.

Finally, gold points us to our future in heaven. If we walk by faith now, we will walk the streets of gold then (Revelation 21:21).

After I shared these “colors of Christmas” at my church in Georgia, a Georgia Tech Yellow Jacket fan got into a discussion with a Georgia Bulldog fan. The University of Georgia fan said I had his team colors of black and red. The Georgia Tech fan replied that I also mentioned his team colors of white and gold. The Bulldog fan replied, but what about your color blue?

Actually, Elvis Presley made “blue Christmas” famous with his song by that name, didn’t he? He sang about how “I’ll have a blue Christmas without you.” Yet blue is one color we want to avoid at Christmas. If someone decorates their home in every color of Christmas, but does not have Christ in their heart, they have a blue Christmas. Yes, Jesus, I’ll have a blue Christmas if it is without You!

The antidote for a blue Christmas is a green Christmas. If I have Jesus in my heart, it is evergreen with the promise of His eternal life.

So may your Christmas be colorful and bright, and especially full of green this Christmas night!