

CAN I BE A “WITNESS” FOR CHRIST?

Many in the religious world refer to themselves as “witnesses” for Christ. In some cases, these individuals claim that they are being led by the Holy Spirit to do or say something to lead others to Christ. Others claim that they are “witnesses” by giving a “testimonial” of the event that led them to believe that they were saved. Let us compare these thoughts with what the Bible teaches regarding witnesses of Christ.

According to Webster’s Dictionary, the word *witness* means, “a person who sees” or one who can attest to the truth of something based on their eyewitness account. In order for a person to be a witness for Christ, the individual must have been able to see and hear Jesus in person. After Jesus had come to John to be baptized, John was able to proclaim, “behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Shortly before His ascension to Heaven, Jesus told His apostles that they would serve as His witnesses (Acts 1:8). Later, Peter would preach, “we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; Whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly; ***Not to all the people***, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead” (Acts 10:39-41, emphasis B.G.). Notice that not all people were witnesses. Only those who saw the things that Jesus did were referred to as witnesses. One of the qualifications to be an apostle was that of being an eyewitness to the things which Jesus said and did. There was only a select group of men who had accompanied Jesus and the apostles “beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us” (Acts 1:22) who could serve as a witness for Christ. Those who had not been with Jesus from the time of His baptism until the time of His ascension could not be considered as a witness. The apostle Peter would once again declare, “we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were ***eyewitnesses*** of His majesty” (2 Pet. 1:16).

From the Biblical perspective, no one today can honestly claim that he is a witness for Christ. No one alive today walked and talked with Jesus from the time of His baptism until the time of His ascension. Fortunately, those who were witnesses for Christ and inspired of God preserved their eyewitness accounts in written form (cf. Rom. 1:16-17; 10:17; John 12:48). No man today receives any information from God other than that which was “once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Today, our mission is to stay true to the message and doctrine of those who were eyewitnesses. When we practice and preach only those things which are authorized by God in the Bible and are “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15), we are continuing steadfastly “in the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42) and are speaking “as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11).

- *Brad Green*