

“WHO WAS I, THAT I COULD WITHSTAND GOD?”

By Keith Greer

“If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” {Acts 11:17} Peter was telling the Jews of the events that led him to preach and open the door of salvation to the Gentiles. Allow me to use Peter’s experience to provide a good explanation of why one should:

Obey the gospel. “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’” {Acts 2:37,38} On the Day of Pentecost, following Christ’s ascension back to heaven, Peter and the apostles presented the evidence against those who murdered Christ. On that day, God opened the way of salvation to the Jews. Some of those present understood that the charge in verse 36 was true – they had crucified the Lord. How could they withstand God? Three thousand gladly believed and obeyed the gospel {Acts 2:28-41}. What about today’s sinful people? The Bible clearly states that the wages of sin is death. {Romans 6:23} We all have the same problem. {Romans 3:23} When people reject the gospel call, they do nothing more than withstand God. One might say, they foolishly choose to call His bluff – only it isn’t a bluff. Sadly, untold millions are choosing to withstand God and remain in their sin.

Be a member of the true church. “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” {1 Corinthians 12:13} The Bible clearly teaches that this one body is the church. {Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:4} In many studies with those in churches begun by men, I’ve tried to show them that the Scriptures forcefully teach they are not in that one body. They react by saying, “One church is just as good as another – we all worship the same God, and that’s all that matters.” They are withstanding God and calling His bluff. Sadly, they’ve convinced themselves that God will change His mind concerning the church He purchased with His own blood! {Acts 20:28} Why not just accept the truth and become a member of that one true church?

Abstain from worldliness. “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” {1 John 2:15-17} Many people want to hold on to the world and God at the same time. God says this is impossible. {Matthew 6:24} God and worldly desire are on opposing sides of the discussion. Unfortunately, many of God’s own people fail to understand the truth regarding this subject. How can one talk like the world, behave like the world, and love worldly things while still claiming to love God? This is another example of withstanding God and calling His bluff. Why risk your eternal destiny by making such foolish decisions?

Be faithful in worship. “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” {John 4:24} God requires men to worship Him, in spirit and truth, with the right attitude, according to the right pattern. Yet, we see that many in the religious world do not believe that

the way they worship God is really that important. In many instances, people today offer worship designed to please themselves – not God. This is yet another case of withstanding God and calling His bluff, which isn't really a bluff. Please remember Nadab and Abihu. {Leviticus 10:1-3}

Look carefully at the statement of Paul again. How utterly futile it would be for any man to place themselves in a position of "withstanding God!" Sadly, men continue to do so at a rapid pace with no sign of slowing down. Foolishness indeed. Are you guilty of withstanding God? ***