



# Berean Christian Fellowship

## DEVOTIONAL 117.0

July 1  
2016

### Are You Playing By Their Rules?

**“But Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men’” (Acts 5:29 NASB).**

From the Fall, man seeks his own will rather than God’s will. He creates societies (countries, communities, families) to benefit his will and he protects it with his own law (rules of what is “right” and “wrong”), instead of God’s Law. To be accepted and glorified in a human society, you must “play by the rules” they have made to keep you under their authority, otherwise you will be persecuted. Manipulative people get others to play their games by their rules so that “the house” always wins. They imitate the master-manipulator satan who tried to tempt Jesus to play his game and come under his will, saying, “*If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU’*” (Matt. 4:6a). But Jesus countered satan’s crafty twisting of God’s Word into “rules” for his game with the true Spirit behind the Word. Jesus was under His Father’s will.

“Society-makers” also use new societal rules to expose and persecute people who obey someone else, as in the case of Daniel where the rules of the society were changed to persecute his obedience to God (Daniel 6:4-17). We are seeing similar persecution today when people who don’t accept the new rules for what is deemed “right” in society are shunned, shamed, and even fired from their jobs. While most people choose to play by the rules rather than face this hostility, true Believers will always be persecuted, because they do not prostrate themselves to man’s ungodly rules but instead seek the will of God.

The Pharisees were the “society-makers” of Israel. They expected the Messiah to play by their rules if he wanted to be glorified in their

society, but when Jesus came, He wouldn’t play their games, instead exposing them: “*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in*” (Matt. 23:13). They demanded He play by their rules if He wanted to progress in their society, “*seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him. Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, ‘Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation’*” (Mark 8:11b-12). Jesus would not give them what they wanted, and He compared them to “*children who sit in the market place and call to one another, and they say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep’*” (Luke 7:31-32).

Just like John the Baptist, Jesus wouldn’t play to the “tune” of their manipulative games, so “*the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects, plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say*” (Luke 11:52-54). They pursued His death to “win” their game. But they did not realize His death WAS the very will of God—atonement for their sins! Jesus never fought for His own will, like the society-makers of every age—“*He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross*” (Phil. 2:8b), for He said, “*I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me*” (John 5:30b).

Jesus didn’t play satan’s games or prostrate Himself to man’s rules to be accepted or glorified by them, for He said, “*it is My Father who glorifies Me*” (John 8:54b)! “*For this reason also, God highly exalted Him*” (Phil 2:9). In these Last Days, we too must not prostrate ourselves to man’s will to receive his acceptance and glory. We wait for Jesus Who will glorify His Church when He returns! Even so, Amen.

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