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Commentary — From the Margins

The Error of Accommodation

Simply stated, my analysis of the biblical and historical texts indicates that the change from Sabbath to Sunday did not come about at the beginning of Christianity by the authority of Christ or the Apostles. Rather the change began about a century after Christ's death during the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian (about A. D. 135), as a result of an interplay of political, social, pagan and religious factors.

Essentially, it was the necessity to avoid the repressive anti-Jewish and anti-Sabbath legislation promulgated in A. D. 135 by Emperor Hadrian that influenced the change from Sabbath to Sunday and from Passover to Easter-Sunday. These changes were designed to show the Christian separation and differentiation from the Jews at a time when Jewish religious practices [sic] were outlawed by the Roman government.

—Samuele Bacchiocchi Ph.D. (from

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1.

Within the past few weeks, I've been asked to again address the question of observing Christmas: if Jesus' birth date was in the fall near Succoth (and it was), and if a decorated tree can neither do good nor harm (Jer 10:5), then what harm can come from getting together with the family on Christmas day, having a meal, opening a few presents, even enjoying the color of a Christmas tree? After all, the real meaning of Christmas is that it's better to give than to receive; isn't that so? Well, is it? Is this why an Observant disciple might be tempted to celebrate Christmas as he or she would, if an American, celebrate Thanksgiving and the 4th of July? Is Christmas a national holiday similar to Hanukkah, the celebration of lights when physical sons of lights under the Maccabees threw the physical abomination that makes desolate out of the temple and from physical Jerusalem? And here is where we should begin.

In all things pertaining to God, the visible reveals the invisible (Rom 1:20) and the physical precedes the spiritual (1 Cor 15:46). Scripture itself forms the shadow of the Book of Life, in which the lives of disciples are epistles written with spirit on circumcised hearts (2 Cor 3:3). The Apostle Peter writes, "If the righteous be scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" (1 Pet 4:18); so the disciples that form epistles in the Book of Life are the righteous who were scarcely saved—and why scarcely saved when Jesus is *more than enough* as popularly proclaimed by Evangelical televangelists? Peter answers the question by writing, "Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good" (v. 19). Disciples will suffer when they entrust

themselves to God, and disciples are to do good. But human nature [a nature received from the prince of the world] doesn't like suffering when doing good, or suffering for doing good. *Good* and *doing good*, according to the reasoning of most televangelists, will be rewarded in this world with a more abundant life ... but only if the disciple accommodates this world, becoming like this world in as many ways as possible, thereby blending in, not making waves, not calling attention to themselves, not standing as a point of unwanted light in the soft darkness of death.

The books of the Maccabees are not part of canonical Scripture; for though valid history, they do not form part of the shadow of Christ Jesus, in the heavenly realm and here on earth, breaking the king of Greece's reign over the heavenly city of Jerusalem. Yes, the heavenly city of Jerusalem, like its physical counterpart, was by God given over to spiritual Babylon because of the lawlessness of disciples who attempted to "just get along" when *just getting along* meant accommodating Roman authority over the Hellenistic world in which disciples lived. As Dr. Bacchiocchi discovered when researching his dissertation, it wasn't Paul and the other Apostles who ceased entering God's rest on the Sabbath, but disciples under Emperor Hadrian, disciples for whom changing the day upon which they worshiped the Almighty God didn't seem that important. Being able to freely worship God was of more importance for these second generation disciples than the day upon which they attempted to enter into God's rest. For second-generation teachers, transgressing the commandments of God was not of as much importance as making disciples for Christ Jesus. Today, separating oneself from the world is not of as much importance as reaching out to family and friends.

Coming out of the world, leaving the world behind, being in the world but not of the world—all mean that a disciple should spiritually separate him or herself from the world. And if spiritually separated, the disciple will inevitably be physically separated to some degree ... but children are not disciples; they have not been born of Spirit. So is it fair that Believing parents cause their unbelieving children to be ostracized by the world? Is it fair that children of Believers are "marked" and avoided by their peers, by teachers in school, by the world in which they live because of their parent's belief? How much love does a parent have for his or her child when the parent causes the child to feel like a freak because of the parent's belief? And the answer is in the text that the Roman Church uses to refute Anabaptist belief: Acts 16:31.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately, all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he

and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God. (Acts 16:25-34)

Because of the faith of this Philippian jailer—faith that caused this jailer to take Paul and Silas into his home, to dress their wounds, and to feed them; faith initially based upon a miraculous event—the promise of salvation was given to the jailer and to all who were in his house. However, the promise of salvation was not unconditional, but based upon belief, this belief unto faith that produces righteousness, the work of God. The baptism of all who were in the jailer’s household, though, was not conditioned on age or gender or social status. Likewise, all of Cornelius’ household who heard the words of the Apostle Peter were physically filled with the Holy Spirit and were baptized (Acts 10:44-48).

The Apostle Paul, when addressing the saints at Corinth’s conclusion that it was good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman, said that when a Believer, already married, found him or herself wed to an unconverted mate, the Believer should not seek to separate from his or her spouse if the spouse is content to remain in the marriage, that the spouse and their children are made holy by the Believing mate (1 Cor 7:12-14). The spouse and the children are in the same state as was the Philippian jailer’s household.

The account of the conversion of the Philippian jailer doesn’t address the ages of the members of the jailer’s household; nor does the account of Cornelius and his household’s physical empowerment by the Holy Spirit address ages. The assumption can certainly be made that on both occasions only adults were present. But what Paul writes about a Believer’s still-uncalled spouse and children being holy makes moot the question of age. All who are agreeably of the household of the Believer are holy, and theologically in the same condition as the ancient nation of Israel, also physically made holy by God (Exod 19:5-6).

The Apostle Peter writes, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Pet 1:14-16). Being holy as God is holy becomes an action, not an inherited state. The person who conforms to the lawlessness of this world is not, and cannot be holy. The person excludes him or herself from being holy by spurning his or her call to holiness ... every person born of the first Adam has been consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) because of the disobedience of the first parent. The person is not free to keep the laws and commandments of God, but is actually hostile to God (Rom 8:7). When a person is called to be holy, the person is called to righteousness. The person, finally, is free to keep the commandments of God, a blessing that is immeasurable. Thus, the spouse and children of the Believer, because they have been made holy by the Believer, are free to keep the commandments, are free to pursue righteousness even through they have not yet been born of Spirit. They are no longer automatically consigned to disobedience.

But being free to keep the laws and commandments of God doesn’t mean that the person will keep the commandments. Most likely, the person will not; for without the spiritual understanding that comes with receiving the Holy Spirit, the person will not value being free to keep the commandments. Even with spiritual understanding, most of Christendom doesn’t value being free to keep the commandments, but perceive the commandments as oppressive and restrictive, for the commandments will cause a person to separate him or herself from the world. For most of Christendom, being a part of the world—and being

invited to help govern the world—is of more importance than obeying God.

The prince of this world has flattered disciples by inviting them to help him solve problems stemming from disobedience, the manifestation of his lawlessness that he broadcasts as the prince of the power of the air. This has proved a very successful though deceitful ploy: broadcast lawlessness, then invite infant sons of God to make this lawlessness more fair, more just, more godlike. And this bit of cleverness hamstrung Christendom, leaving the Church like a reindeer in deep snow, encircled by wolves and about to be devoured. Although the grave shall not prevail against the Church, sin—lawlessness (1 John 3:4)—and the love of this world has prevailed. Generations of disciples have been devoured by their desire to transform the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of God before that old dragon, Satan the devil, is cast from the heavenly realm. The good intentions of these disciples, admirable for their desire, ultimately bring about the spiritual deaths of these disciples, who spend longer trying to correct the faults of Satan’s administration of this world than they spend growing in spiritual knowledge and maturity.

Frankly, it is difficult for a disciple not to respond through invited intervention when confronted by the evils of this world. It is especially difficult when filled with youthful idealism. But the prince of this world is not Christ Jesus, but the ancient king of spiritual Babylon (Isa 14:4-21). This world cannot be saved, nor should any of it survive. It must be toppled. And disciples, except for a remnant, will perish either physically or spiritually during the three and a half years that Babylon staggers and reels before falling. Those disciples who have mentally or spiritually remained in Babylon will slay, as Cain slew righteous Abel, fellow disciples who will not “go along” with the lawless one, that man of perdition who comes by the workings of Satan the devil (2 Thess 2:3-4, 9-10). Disciples cannot accommodate this world and the prince of this world and still serve the Father and the Son. All of the good work done by disciples trying to stop injustices presently done here on earth is work done for the prince of this world.

Does the above mean that disciples should not intervene in the politics of this world? Absolutely, yes!

Which human government today is not a part of the single kingdom of the world that will become the kingdom of the Father and the Son (Rev 11:15; Dan 7:9-14) halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation? Is not the United States part of the single kingdom of the world? Is not modern Israel part of this same single kingdom? Is not Germany, France, Norway, Sweden, Russia, China, Chile, Argentina—the list goes on to include every nation, including Vatican City, recognized or not recognized by the United Nations. All of humanity has been consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) through being given to Satan as bondservants. With ancient king Nebuchadnezzar serving as the lively shadow of the king of spiritual Babylon, this demonic king reigns over men wherever they dwell (Dan 2:37-38). He reigns from the timeless heavenly realm because God has given humankind over to disobedience so that He, God, could have mercy on all by liberating them from disobedience through a second birth.

Answering Pilate, Jesus does not deny that He was born to be a king, and that for this purpose He came into the world (John 18:37) ... if Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world, nor from this world (*v.* 36), and if Him being king of His kingdom required that He come into the world to bear witness to the truth, then His kingdom is of “truth,” which isn’t human governance as any human king employs to reign over fellow human beings. Rather, Jesus’

kingdom is of heaven and remains in heaven, where He can reign over the mental topography of human beings as the prince of this world presently reigns through being the prince of the air. Jesus' thousand year reign over human beings as King of kings and Lord of lords will be manifest through a changed human nature. He will impart to every human being His mind and thoughts, the mind of Christ, received through the Holy Spirit being poured out upon all flesh, thereby changing even the natures of the great predators (Isa 11:6-9). No longer will men learn war. The history of His thousand-year reign won't be written in blood, but in truth.

Nevertheless, since King Solomon's reign over physically circumcised Israel forms a lively shadow of the Millennium, disciples today can perceive how, when loosed after the thousand years, Satan is able to deceive enough of humankind to attack unwallled cities. As Solomon sinned through marriage to foreign women, this sinning beginning with his first wife, the daughter of Pharaoh [Egypt represents sin], the lesser light created to rule over the darkness of the spiritually lifeless earth will marry itself to "foreign" ideologies that at the end of the thousand years cause the hearts of this lesser light—the reigning princes and priests of Israel (Ezek 43:19; 44:3)—to no longer be pure before the Lord, but tainted as Solomon's heart was. Thus, Satan being loosed for three and a half years at the end of the Millennium will serve to separate those human beings whose hearts remain pure from those whose hearts are tainted.

If when Satan is bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years and is no longer able to broadcast as the prince of the power of the air; if when every human being is liberated from indwelling sin and death through being filled with the Holy Spirit, the holy nation of Israel wanders far enough away from the truth that some susceptible to being deceived when Satan is loosed and will make war against their neighbors—then should not disciples today, when Satan reigns as the prince of this world, fear to start down the slippery slope of accommodating this world?

It is hard to take uncompromising positions and hold these positions when they threaten family peace. It is doubly hard to refuse to compromise when the world insists that love is compromising. It is even harder to refuse to compromise when children are involved and the issue is Christmas, in name the mass for Christ. In fact, this issue will be foregrounded when the great falling away occurs (2 Thess 2:3). This will be the issue that initiates Christendom's rebellion against God 220 days into the seven endtime years of tribulation, for the first seven months of the sorrow will be so severe that disciples will not want to deprive children of the hope offered by the celebration of Christmas.

2.

In the 2nd-Century, the importance of spreading the good news of Christ, of making disciples for Christ, of showing that Christianity wasn't just another sect of Judaism—all worked together to cause too many disciples to accommodate Emperor Hadrian by ceasing to keep the Sabbath commandment as uttered by *Yah* from atop Mount Sinai, and as confirmed by the Father throughout Jesus' earthly ministry. This accommodation divided the Church as a fertilized ovum divides to form twins in the womb of a woman.

No one will seriously argue that the seventh day is not the Sabbath of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Arguments that the weekly cycle has been broken or lost are

also not credible. God showed ancient Israel which day the Sabbath was by not sending manna on that day (Exod 16:4-5, 22-27). Since then, the physically circumcised nation of Israel has faithfully recorded the weekly cycle even when they were not faithfully observing the Sabbath. So there is really no dispute over which day is the seventh day of an unbroken weekly cycle that goes back to Moses. The argument is, rather, over whether Christians should keep the Sabbath, one of the precepts of God expressed in the uttered commandments.

The argument for Christendom keeping the Sabbath begins with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, the spiritual equivalent of the Ten Living Words uttered from atop Sinai. Jesus said, Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law [the five books of Moses] or the Prophets. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore **whoever relaxes one of the least of least commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.** (Matt 5:17-19 emphasis added)

Heaven and earth have not passed away; all that the Second Covenant mediated by Moses (Deu 29:1) promises has **not** been accomplished. Nothing has passed from the Law, not even the animal sacrifices which return when Israel is no longer covered by Grace during the Millennium—Israel is the holy nation of God whose circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not the letter (Rom 2:29). Endtime Israel is not the physically circumcised nation that has physically descended from the patriarch Jacob, but the spiritually circumcised nation that descends from the promised offspring [Christ Jesus] of the patriarch Abraham. This is the chosen nation, a royal priesthood holy to God that was not previously a people (1 Pet 2:9-10). Thus, the disciple who relaxes the least of the commandments given to Moses and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. This means that St. Augustine will be called, if Christ even acknowledges him when his judgment is revealed (Matt 7:21-23), least in the kingdom, for this bishop of Hippo taught generations of disciples to relax the least of the commandments.

Doing mighty works in the name of Christ Jesus—as Augustine is alleged to have done—doesn't help the teacher of lawlessness, who teaches disciples to transgress the least of the commandments to accommodate a human emperor. Relaxing the commandment of presumed least importance is no small matter with God, and relaxing any commandments to accommodate Emperor Hadrian's or Constantine's decrees simply means the disciple loves his or her physical life more than the disciple loves God. The disciple is without living faith. The disciple literally rebels against God as ancient Israel rebelled against God in the wilderness of Paran when that holy nation would not enter God's rest when commanded, but attempted to enter on the following day (Num 14; Ps 95:10-11; Heb 3:16-4:11).

Under the Sinai covenant, the commandments were written on two tablets of stone and transcribed onto parchment scrolls. However, fault was found, not with the commandments, but with the people who remained subject to the disobedience that continued to dwell in their fleshly members (Heb 8:8) so the Lord tells the prophet Jeremiah that He will establish a new covenant with the house of Judah and the house of Israel (Jer 31:31). Under this new covenant—the second covenant given by Moses at Moab,

a covenant not activated because Israel, when in a far land, never turned their hearts and mind towards God, thereby keeping all that Moses commanded them on that day—will have the laws of God written on hearts and minds (Heb 8:10; Jer 31:33). This is the definition of spiritual circumcision; i.e., the circumcision of the heart (Deu 30:6). This is what it means to be an endtime Israelite (to be of the nation Israel); for the Israel that is today the holy nation of God may or may not be outwardly circumcised, but will be inwardly circumcised, and will (1) by faith keep the precepts of the law that have been inscribed on tablets of flesh by the soft Breath of God (Rom 2:26-29), and will (2) by faith profess that Jesus is Lord and believe that the Father raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:6-9).

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shows what it means to have the laws of God written on the heart and placed into the mind:

You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.” But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, “You fool!” will be liable to the hell of fire. ... You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery.” But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matt 5:21-22, 27)

What was said of old was the old written code, the inscribed laws of God on tablets of stone: the *Decalogue*. What Jesus does is show how these same commandments appear when they are written on tablets of flesh, the heart and mind of His disciples. Whereas the old written code governed the actions of the hand [murder] and of the body [adultery], the same commandments when written on hearts and minds govern the desires of the heart and the thoughts of the mind. Therefore, the Sabbath commandment that under the old written code regulated the activities of hands and bodies on the seventh day moves inside the disciple to regulate the desires of the heart and the thoughts of the mind on the seventh day; the Sabbath commandment doesn't move to the eighth day. So the disciple who ceases to observe the Sabbath commandment on the seventh day, choosing instead to observe the eighth day to accommodate Emperor Hadrian or any other human king, consciously and willfully breaks the commandments.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus spoke not His own words but as the Father instructed Him (John 8:28). When He healed the man blind from birth, He said, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him” (John 9:3). Thus, Jesus' healings are the works or speech-acts of the Father uttered by Jesus verbally and theatrically—and the recorded healings occur on the Sabbath and at Feasts [high Sabbath days] (cf. John 5:8-10; 7:23; 9:13; Luke 6:1-11). The healings are the Father speaking to Israel through Jesus, and the Father *speaks* on the Sabbath. The healings are the sermons of the Father, not uttered daily but on the Sabbaths of God.

In the timeless heavenly realm, there is no seven day week or thirty day month. No time markers exist for there is no time. Thus, the Father works as Jesus worked. Healings could occur anytime, unless the Father made a conscious effort to have healings occur at a special time-marker in the physical realm ... the Sabbath is that portion of time made holy by God (Gen 2:1-3) as a representation of entering into the heavenly realm. The writer of Hebrews compares the Sabbath to Judea, which the Psalmist called God's rest. The Father confirms

that the Sabbath is a representation of heaven by performing speech-acts uttered by Jesus, His Spokesperson, on the Sabbath. So in the Gospels, disciples hear and see the speech-acts of the Father in the words and actions of Christ Jesus, and disciples hear and see the Father testifying of Himself to Israel on the Sabbath. His testimony is deemed true for the Father and the Son and the one healed bear witness to these speech-acts of the Father delivered on the Sabbath.

If Jesus teaches that He did not come to abolish the Law delivered by Moses, and if Jesus shows how this law functions when written on hearts and minds instead of tablets of stone, and if the Father testifies of Himself on the Sabbath, how many other witnesses are necessary for a disciple to believe God, turn to God, and begin to keep the precepts of the law, which will have the disciple entering into God's rest on the Sabbath? And if the disciple believes the testimony of the Father and the Son, what power is so great that it can cause the disciple to accommodate a Roman emperor by ceasing to keep the Sabbath and begin, instead, to worship on the day of the sun, the day following the Sabbath? Love of life? Desire for respect? Fear of causing turmoil within a family? What god does the disciple place before the Most High and His Christ?

It really doesn't matter why 2nd, 3rd, 4th Century disciples spurned Moses and chose to accommodate a Roman emperor; it really doesn't matter why 21st-Century disciples spurn Moses and choose to accommodate the world around them; it really doesn't matter why disciples in any age compromise with the world—many disciples are called but few will be chosen (Matt 22:14), for few indeed will not accommodate the world just a little bit. After all, what harm will come from a Christmas wreath on one's door, or a Christmas tree in the house, or giving the children presents? What harm will come from attending church services or Sunday, or even a Christmas mass? And that is the connection between Christmas and the weekly Sabbath: the "Christian" authority that brings Christmas to the world also brings Sunday to Christendom. Same authority; same accommodating the Roman emperor, an earthly representative of the spiritual king of Babylon—and no disciple can enter into God's rest on the following day. Likewise, no disciple can trim pagan Roman and Greek spirituality from Christmas to make it a truly secular holiday, like the 4th of July. All a disciple can do is either celebrate the holiday as 2nd-Century disciples complied with the decrees of Emperor Hadrian and ceased observing the Sabbath, choosing to worship Christ Jesus on Sunday instead, or the disciple can refuse to accommodate the world, paying the earthly penalty for this refusal, as some disciples refused to accommodate a pagan emperor. Your choice.

3.

I would like to make Christianity—life as a disciple of Christ Jesus—easier, less traumatic. After all, my own children have made accommodations with the world so their children will not feel as separated as they felt. But no human being has the authority to set aside the precepts of God. And the precepts of God are that Israel separate itself from its neighbors and learn not their ways, this separation occurring through the keeping of the commandments of God.

Solomon sinned by his many foreign wives, each of whom only wanted what was reasonable, that Solomon accommodate their beliefs by setting up idols so that they could

worship their gods. It was unreasonable on Solomon's part to "force" them to worship only his God. Why should they have to worship Solomon's God when they have their own gods that were just as real or more so for them? Why should they have to give up their holy days and festivals for the Sabbaths of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Yes, why indeed? They had only married Solomon; they hadn't become *Solomon*.

Two become one when married, but these two remain two physically, not one. They can only become one spiritually as Jesus and the Father are one (John 17:22), with Jesus' prayer being that His disciples become one with Him and the Father (v. 23) ... how accommodating was Jesus during His earthly ministry? He twice drove moneychangers from the temple, once at Passover six months into His ministry, again at Passover at the end of His ministry. Couldn't He have accommodated these moneychangers? He was not doing business with them—how were they harming Him?

The moneychangers were corrupting the temple of God.

Today, disciples are the temple of God, each a living stone being shaped off site to fit into a living temple when Christ returns; each a miniature of this completed temple.

How much corruption will Christ Jesus tolerate in the living temple before He rejects the stone? How much accommodating of the world is allowable?

Why go down the road of accommodation? Why tread where missteps will cost a disciple his or her spiritual life? Why marry an Egyptian, thereby bringing sin into oneself?

All accommodation is spiritual travel in the wrong direction. All accommodation is steps that will have to be retraced.

The person who desires that the disciple accommodate his or her beliefs will today use the same reasoning and logic as the many foreign wives of Solomon used to cause his heart to no longer be pure before God. The person will make the disciple feel guilty for being so unreasonable, for disrespecting the beliefs of the person, even for denying that the other person's beliefs have merit. And if the disciple is a wife, she will feel additional guilt for not being in subjection to her lawless husband ... Satan has it all figured out: go ahead and accommodate the world just a little bit. Where is the Scripture that says the disciple cannot let a little of the world back into his or her life? Where is the Scripture that says a Christian should not celebrate Christ Jesus' birth on December 25th? Where is the Scripture that says it's wrong to celebrate His birth? Where is the Scripture that says it's wrong to have a little color in the middle of winter [northern hemisphere]?

Actually, the Scripture exists, but it is concealed within long sealed prophecies. It is concealed by when the morning and evening sacrifice will be taken away—and it cannot be read or understood by those who willingly accommodate the world, so it is not useful in stopping accommodation but in reinforcing why a disciple who by faith refuses to accommodate the world should not accommodate this same evil world.

Accommodation is easy, seems reasonable, makes sense in most cases, and helps further the spread of the gospel of Christ Jesus. So why isn't it a good thing? ... The third of the angels who were cast into outer darkness accommodated an anointed cherub, now the prince of this world that deceives all of humankind (Rev 12:9).

Leaving spiritual Babylon means separating oneself from this world while still living in this world. Leaving Babylon means not keeping the festivals of this world, especially the ones that are overtly religious such as Christmas. It might well mean not keeping any of this world's festivals, including national holidays, but that decision waits to be made. It certainly

means not keeping the feasts of God as ancient Israel kept these feasts—and if God hated how His feasts were being kept with iniquity [lawlessness] by ancient Israel (Isa 1:13), what does He think of a disciple keeping a feast that isn't His with manifest greed taught to the children of this disciple? Does He not command that disciples take away from Him the noise of Christmas songs (Amos 5:21-24) and let justice roll down like water, righteousness like an ever-flowing stream? If a disciple wants to accommodate anything, let him or her accommodate justice and righteousness. If a disciple wants to accommodate the world at Christmas, let him or her feed the hungry and house the homeless and not put up a decorated tree, but put up the person who is a stranger in the land. The disciple's reward will not be in this world, where neighbors notice Christmas decorations, but in heaven where there will be no need for winter color.

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