

**MAKE FRIENDS IN THE WAY**  
**A Devotional Meditation from**  
**Amos 3:1-15, 9:11-12; Matthew 5:21-26; Acts 15:16-18**  
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Often the verses that become bywords in our Christian circles come from a surprising and even alarming context. Consider this one, for example:

Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7 NKJV)

The clear meaning, of course, is that the Almighty will let us know ahead of time before He intervenes in human history. The question is not whether He is communicating, but whether we are willing and able to listen.

That chapter of Amos has another familiar verse:

Can two walk together unless they are agreed? (Amos 3:3, NKJV)

The full meaning of the original Hebrew is more than what the New King James conveys. Here's another perspective on it from the Tree of Life Version:

Can two walk together unless they meet by appointment? (Amos 3:3, TLV)

This verse appears is part of a scathing rebuke God uttered against the northern kingdom of Israel in the generation before He permitted the Assyrian Empire to end their existence as a people. Happily, the book of Amos ends on a very hopeful note. Chapter 9 contains a promise of restoration on the Day of the Lord, when Messiah establishes His eternal kingdom in Zion:

“In that day I will raise up David’s fallen *sukkah* [tent]. I will restore its breaches, raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in days of old—so they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations called by My Name.” It is a declaration of *ADONAI*, the One who will do this. (Amos 9:11-12 TLV)

You might recognize that passage from the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts, when James quotes it as an explanation of why so many Gentiles were coming to faith in Messiah Yeshua. It would seem, that the Apostles considered the work of Yeshua as the key to restoration of God’s covenant nation of Israel – the Kingdom of Heaven, as it is elsewhere called. We are all on a journey toward that Kingdom, and that is one way to understand the cryptic reference in Amos 3 about two walking together by appointment. By way of explanation, let me offer a story from my younger days.

In 1983, when I was a young Army officer at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, three of my colleagues decided to go home over a long weekend. These men were all from Utah, and



*Glen Canyon Dam, substation (left) and bridge (in front of the dam) as seen from the south, near Page, Arizona, USA, March 2010, by Adbar, [via Wikimedia Commons](#).*

all were Mormon. I had never been to Utah, so I asked to go along, and thus we set off on the 850 mile journey to Salt Lake City – three Mormons and a Baptist. Along the way, two of my friends got into a heated discussion about fine points of Mormon theology that I didn't understand. One, a liberal Mormon, was trying to encourage his friend to take advantage of the long weekend to drive over to Nevada and elope with his fiancé. The other, being much more conservative, refused to consider it because eloping would mean they couldn't get married in the Mormon Temple.

I could have chimed in with my Baptist point of view, but that would not have helped. A Temple wedding was a matter of great importance to my Mormon companions, but not to me. Not only was it alien to my beliefs, as a "Gentile" to the Mormon faith, I could not enter the Temple in Salt Lake city anyway. So, instead of offering an opinion on this and any of the other points of contention raised in their conversation, I chose to sit quietly and listen while watching the captivating desert scenery go by – such as the stunning view from the Glen Canyon Dam not far from the Utah state line. Eventually we got to Salt Lake City, and a couple of days later we made our way back to southern Arizona without incident – although with considerable discussion and disagreement between my two talkative Mormon friends.

What is the point? Simply that we arrived at our destination together. We had made an agreement to travel together, and so we did. There were hazards along the way. That particular spring, Utah experienced tremendous rainfall and unprecedented flooding. We had to watch the road carefully and listen intently to weather and traffic updates on the radio, ever vigilant for any development that would require us to change our course. We realized upon reaching Salt Lake City just how hazardous the journey was: sandbags along the intersections of city streets contained the worst of the flooding. At one place we passed, the water was so high that we saw men paddling down the street in a canoe!

Even without such hazardous circumstances, it would have been silly for one or more of us to jump out of the car just because we took offense at another's opinion or deeply held beliefs. At some points along the way – such as on the bridge over Glen Canyon – a sudden departure from the moving vehicle would have had deadly consequences.

We arrived because each of us contributed something to the journey, such as paying for gas, sharing food, taking shifts at the wheel, and so forth. Withholding that contribution would have created hardship for everyone, and might even have prevented us from getting to our destination.

This is not a story about Mormon theology, but about how people who have agreed to travel together should act along the way. My traveling companions and I were opponents theologically, but we had found a way to reach a shared goal. This reflects something our Messiah said:

"Make friends quickly with your opponent while you are with him on the way. Otherwise, your opponent may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the assistant, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I tell you, you will never get out of there until you have paid back the last penny! (Matthew 5:25-26 TLV)

That particular segment of Matthew 5 contains a lot of advice from Yeshua on how and why to get along with others. He places great emphasis on cultivating healthy

relationships – both maintaining good relationships with friends, and establishing friendly relations with enemies.

This is part of our calling as the people of God. Our Creator has invited us on a covenant journey to restore His Kingdom. It takes all of us to contribute what He has given each of us to ensure that we all get there safely. He did not say we have to agree with one another, or even like one another, and it's quite possible we will have irreconcilable differences. That is not the real, question, though. The real question is whether we can love one another through those differences, no matter how great they seem. If we can't, then we create greater hardship on everyone, and possibly prevent people from completing – or even starting – the journey. If we can, then we hasten the return of our Messiah as we become willing instruments in the Creator's hands.