

1-2019

Friendship, Mid-Eastern Style

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Recommended Citation

Willmington, Harold, "Friendship, Mid-Eastern Style" (2019). *Dr. Willmington's Personal Observations of the Bible*. 19.

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FRIENDSHIP, MID-EASTERN STYLE

There is an old Arab proverb that says: “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.” Simply stated, this refers to and occurs when two previous enemies team up against a common and more hated enemy.

Interestingly there is an occasion in the Bible where this actually happened. It involved two bitter political rivals, Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea, and Herod Antipas, Governor of Galilee.

However, during the trial of Jesus, Pilate at first refused to condemn the Savior but instead recognized the authority of Herod to do so. The Gospel of Luke gives us the results:

“And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves” (Luke 23:12).

All this of course happened 2000 years ago. Is there however, a modern Middle East parallel illustrating this parable? Consider: it has been estimated that over 50,000 Iraqi citizens have been killed since the U. S. invaded their country, and that some 90% of this frightful number met their deaths NOT by American soldiers, but rather at the hands of their own countrymen! Murderous mobs of Shiite Arabs and Sunni Arabs seek out and destroy each other daily!

Now, quickly travel 1500 miles west from Iraq where the nation Israel is fighting a battle of survival against the Hamas in the south, who are Sunni Arabs and the Hezbollah in the north who are Shiite. So what do we find? Simply this, that both previously bitter foes are now pledging full support to their beloved Arab counterpart brothers in a common goal to annihilate the Jewish state! What a strange world we live in.

One final thought: How does God view all this? The answer is surprising—the followers of Jesus are instructed to utterly destroy all their enemies if possible! What’s that again? Well, here is God’s divine proverb:

“The most effective way to destroy your enemy is to make him your friend!”

P.S. May I ask you to tell someone about Emmaus Bread?