

October 2nd
THE MOUNTAIN NAMED PISGAH

And from the wilderness they went on to Mattanah, and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth, and from Bamoth to the valley lying in the region of Moab by the top of Pisgah that looks down on the desert.

NUMBERS 21:18b-20

"I'm going up to the Altar." When people in western Snyder County make that statement, most know exactly where the people are heading. Mount Pisgah Altar. It was dedicated in 1980 by the combined efforts of Robert Cryon, who bought the land, and Forrest B. Gordon, who oversaw the construction. The construction was a difficult task, since Gordon called local residents to build the altar according to the requirements of Deuteronomy 27:4-7, which required the use only of uncut stones and outlawed the use of iron tools. Cryon and his wife used to go atop of the mountain and watch the Russian Sputnik spacecraft float by. Cryon claims that on a clear day you can see eight counties from the mountain vista. Today there is a community Resurrection Sunday sunrise service led by God's Missionary Church in Beavertown and over 700 weddings have been held there (credit for this information was found at :<https://susquehannavalley.blogspot.com/2019/07/he-mt-pisgah-altare-in-new-berlin-pa.html>).

When people think about Mount Pisgah from the Bible, they often remember it as the final moments of Moses. God took Moses up to the mountain top and showed him the Promised Land. You can find the event described in Deuteronomy 34. Pisgah is referred to here as well as Mount Nebo. However, this isn't the first place where we find Pisgah. The first place we find it is in Numbers 21. What does God teach us here?

To get the full scope of what the Israelites encounter, it's helpful to do a retread of Numbers 20 and 21. At the end of Numbers 20, Aaron dies. God has stayed true to His promise that he won't enter the Land. Chapter 21 starts out with the people finally gaining some victory over the Canaanites. What God has promised is finally coming to fruition. According to James Boice, it's been about 38 years since they denied God's power with the spies' report. They are ready to enter the land finally. Then comes the bronze serpent debacle. God's people have compounded their complaining and now called God's food "worthless." God gives the people water as they continue their journey. Just after giving the people water, you have cities, a valley, the wilderness, and the mountain top named Pisgah.

These geographic names don't mean much to us today. Scholars struggle sometimes to give us accurate pictures of these regions that are long gone. However, God reminds us here of the journey. The journey in the wilderness. The journey in the valley. The journey that leads to the mountain top. God leads His people. He leads the Israelites and He leads you. The road that we travel is filled with bumps in the road that are caused by our sin. We can drift away from looking at our faithful God and look only at our problems. 40 years wandering in the wilderness is no "cup of tea." It brings lots of sand, fear of heat stroke, and thirst. The people endured this every day. But God. God was faithful to lead them and provide for them. My mother's favorite song was "Look what God Has Done for You." Now I know why...because God is good and faithful to work for His glory which brings your ultimate good. God led His people to the mountain to "look down on the desert." This is a reminder of God's faithful leading. God also shows them where they are going. The most important part of it all is that God leads the entire way. The Lord leads you also. To the desert. To the valley. To the mountain top. And He's with you the entire way. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I have all I need..."

Spend some time thinking on ways that God has led you to the desert, the valley, and to the mountain top. Thank Him for always being with you. Ask Him for more grace to trust Him wherever He leads you.

For Further Reading: Deuteronomy 34:1-8