

Two Old Friends...

Deuteronomy 34:1-6

Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the LORD showed him the whole land-- from Gilead to Dan, all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, the Negev and the whole region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar. Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it." And Moses the servant of the LORD died there in Moab, as the LORD had said. He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is. (NIV)

At first read, the death of Moses on Mt. Nebo seems to be a penalty. In Numbers 20, he disobeys God by striking a rock and as a result is told he will not lead the people into the promised land. This is a land that Moses had worked so hard for and had dreamed of for over 40 years. It had been the rallying cry when the nation exited Egypt and when they were eating manna in the desert. It was the land promised to Abraham generations ago in stories still told by every Hebrew family.

My perspective changed on this complicated story when touring the Holy Land. We visited Mt. Nebo on a very windy day. You could see for miles. It was truly beautiful. I began to see Moses' death, not as punishment, but perhaps relief. This was an old man who had been the mediator between an obstinate people and a demanding God. He waded through their mistakes, God's frustrations, and surely was tired. If I were Moses, the last thing I'd want to do is take the people across that river and begin a land invasion that certainly would mean violence.

Moses died with his closest companion. Outside of Jesus, no one in scripture has a closer relationship to God. Moses argues and changes God's mind, he demands to see the backside of God's glory and God obliges, the scriptures reveal that God and Moses spoke to one another face to face as a man speaks to his friend. Moses climbs the mountain. Sees the incredible view of the land he longs for and dies with God. God is so reverent of Moses that He buries him Himself. Now that is the way I want to go.

JDB

Point for Prayer

How would God describe his relationship with you?