

School of the Desert

Hosea 2: 14 "I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her there."

The Hebrew language is full of fascinating revelations, yet few Believers know what they are.

For example, a Christian who reads an English Bible wouldn't realize that the Hebrew word for desert and speaking are the same Hebrew word translated in English as MDBR.

By inserting different vowels into this Hebrew word, we pronounce desert as meed-bar and speaking as meda-ber.

It is no coincidence that these two words are one since it is in the most desolate places where God has made His most significant appearances and where He speaks into the lives of His people.

This had been especially true at Mount Horeb.

Mount Horeb, Har Charev, is also known as Mount Sinai or "the mountain of God."

Charev comes from the Hebrew word charab, which means to make desolate.

This desolate mountain of God is the place where Moses is redeemed, even after committing murder (***Exodus 2:11–15***).

One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people.

12 He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

13 When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?"

14 He answered, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid, and thought, “Surely the thing is known.”

15 When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

It is his encounters with God in the desert that molded his character and allowed him to see the Glory of God.

We can encounter God in the desolation of our desert experiences, too.

Let’s discover how.

In the Desert,

- **The Lord Redeems Our Desolation**

We often think of redemption in terms of freeing us from the eternal damnation and desolation that our sin requires. But, Jesus already did that when He died and rose again.

Abba — Father God — is our Redeemer from all forms of desolation and desperation.

We saw this when He delivered Moses out of his exile as a shepherd in the land of Midian and brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt.

Moses had spent the first 40 years of his life learning how to be a prince (only to be exiled for murder).

He spent another 40 years as a shepherd in the wilderness of Midian, learning how to lead and guide his flock with patience and compassion.

After being fully trained for his life-calling and purpose, ***Moses the shepherd “led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.” (Exodus 3:1)***

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

There at Horeb, he heard the voice of God calling him from within a burning bush (***Exodus 3:2***).

And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.

Imagine . . . In the desert, at 80 years old, Moses sees a bush on fire, but the fire is not consuming the bush, and out of that fire comes God's voice speaking to him!

In that encounter, God redeemed Moses out of the wilderness as a shepherd of sheep and placed him in a new role as shepherd of 600,000 men, plus the women and children (anywhere from 2.5 to 4 million Israelites).

To shepherd this nation, God hands Moses a new kind of staff to lead, protect, and intervene on behalf of His chosen people.

With staff in hand, Moses goes back to Egypt and challenges Pharaoh to set his people free so that they can worship and serve their God.

Finally, after ten plagues, Pharaoh allows the Israelites to leave Egypt.

The Jews are set free.

End of story.

Right?

Or is it?

No, this is just the beginning.

God has more to say.



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In the Desert,

- **The Lord Sets Us Truly Free**

“The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb.” (Exodus 5:2)

Moses leads the Israelites across the Red Sea and where does he take them?

To the same mountain in the desert of Horeb where God spoke to him from the supernatural burning bush that did not become consumed.

At that mountain of God, Moses tells the people God’s conditions for their freedom:

“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:4–6)

“The people all answered as one: ‘Everything that the Lord has spoken we will do.’” (verse 8)

In saying, **“We do,”** the redeemed nation entered a marriage contract with their Redeemer.

Securely under His authority, the Jewish People are finally truly free to worship and serve their new Master under His terms, not Pharaoh’s.

All this happened when God spoke to His people in the desert.

And they had to depend on their marriage contract, to know how to live holy and righteous lives so they would stay in their Master’s protection, provision, and blessing.

In the desert

- **The Lord protects**

In the desert

- **The Lord provides.**

Too often, however, we focus on getting out as fast as possible:

“Lord, deliver me from this terrible place or situation that I’m in,” we pray.

Instead, we need to embrace what God has for us in times of trial.

In the desert

- **We can possess all that God has for us.**

At what time will we have a better opportunity to see God’s hand move than when our backs are up against the sea, a body of water that we cannot cross without Him.

We need to say to Him,

- **Grow me**
- **Train me**
- **Build me so I can stand strong for you!**

As we listen and learn from our Father in Heaven on how to move forward, we have to take note of how He and He alone sustains us with supernatural power to endure these times of growth, as He did with Moses and the Israelites.

During all this heavenly instruction and provision that our Father brings us through, it is the righteous jealousy of the Loving Father that says,

Please don't forget Me when things are going well!

However, the Israelites did just that.

And if we are honest, quite often we forget Him as well.

In our forgetfulness, the Lover calls His beloved aside:

"[Israel] ... went after her lovers, and forgot me, says the Lord. Therefore, I will now allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her." (Hosea 2:13–14)

Perhaps one of the most poignant passages in the Bible is when God refers to the wilderness days, as with the longing of a jilted lover, remembering how He drew His beloved to Himself:

"Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, 'Thus says the Lord: I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.'" (Jeremiah 2:2)

How amazing it is that Almighty God remembers us and longs for us to cling to Him in those desert days.

Our tendency to forget Him is why He is so strict about idolatry.

In fact, ***"God yearns jealously for the Spirit that He has placed in us." (James 4:5)***

When we forget Him, He will lead us back into the wilderness, the place where we must again be dependent on hearing His voice and His alone.

There, He will speak tenderly to us.

And whatever He says we must do so we can move into all that He has waiting for us in our own Promised Land.

Though many of His people did forget Him, the Lord has promised that He will never abandon us.

“Return, faithless people,” declares the Lord, “for I am your husband. I will choose you—one from a town and two from a clan—and bring you to Zion.” (Jeremiah 3:14)

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- **The Lord Redeems Our Desolation**

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- **The Lord Set Us Truly Free**

In the desert

- **The Lord protects**

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- **The Lord provides.**

In the desert

- **We learn that we can possess all that God has for us.**

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