

1. Geography of Egypt:

- Nile River creates a perpetual oasis in the desert
  - Water, food, shelter
- An inhospitable desert surrounds the Egyptians/Israelites

2. Egyptian concepts of *Ma'at* (Order) and *Isfet* (Chaos) –

<i>Ma'at</i>	<i>Isfet</i>
- Truth, Order, Justice	- Chaos, disorder, injustice
- harmony	- disharmony
- associated with the cycles of the cosmos	- cycles out of balance
- Pharaoh supposed to maintain <i>Ma'at</i>	- if Pharaoh sins, <i>Isfet</i> takes over
- physical representation of the Nile	- physical representation of the desert
- food, water, shelter	- no food, no water, no shelter

3. Paradox:

- Pharaoh was supposed to maintain *Ma'at* – but he created chaos and injustice.
- Israelites lived in *Ma'at* – they had all that they needed but were slaves
  - All aspects of slavery: body, mind, spirit.
- God delivers the Israelites into the wilderness (*Isfet*) to be free.

4. Why does God take the Israelites into the wilderness (desert)?

5. Hebrew word for “speak” (v) or “word” (n):

- DVR - *dabar* – is the verb - **to speak, declare, converse**<sup>1</sup>
- DVR – *dabar* – is the noun - **word, speaking, speech, thing**<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Earl S. Kalland, “[דָּבַר 399](#).” ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 178.

<sup>2</sup> Earl S. Kalland, “[דָּבַר 399](#).” ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 178.

- Other variants of *DVR*
  - Plague or pestilence
  - Oracle
  - Holy of Holies
  - Speaker
- “All, however, have some sense of thought processes, of communication, or of subjects or means of communication.”<sup>3</sup>

#### 6. Hebrew word for “Wilderness” or Desert:

- A variant of *DVR* - *mDVR* (pronounced Midbar) <sup>4</sup>
- What does the desert have to do with the word or speech of God?
- Where do we hear God’s voice (words) the clearest?

#### 7. Desert = total reliance on God.

- Desert strips you of everything.
- You must rely on God as your shepherd.
- You must learn to hear God’s voice because it is all you have to survive.

#### 8 Desert Metaphor in our lives:

- We all go through deserts where we experience a stripping of everything that provides stability in our lives.

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#### 9. Celebrating God amid the Chaos<sup>5</sup>:

- Exodus 15: 19-21
- You are leaving everything you’ve ever known to go out into the desert with no defined destination or timeline.
- What do you bring with you?
- The Israelite women caught it first! You must be prepared to celebrate God.
- Do you have your tambourine ready?!

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<sup>3</sup> Earl S. Kalland, “[399 דָּבַר](#).” ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 179.

<sup>4</sup> Midbar is the Hebrew name for the book that we call Numbers in English. Based on Numbers 1:1.

<sup>5</sup> Ray Vanderlaan, *That the World May Know* lecture in Visalia, CA in 2010.