

## THE MARA EXPERIENCE

Naomi (pleasant one) changed her name to Mara (bitter one) to reflect her opinion about the Lord's dealing with her life.

Mara is the nickname she chose to describe her view of the Lord's dealing with her life – “And she said to them, ‘do not call me Naomi but call (qara / kal impv) [demand] me, Mara.’”

The name Mara reveals her frustration and misery and agony of soul regarding the Lord's dealing with her life “for the Almighty has dealt very (meod) bitterly (marar / hiphil pf) with me.”

How many of us have entered a pleasant (Naomi) experience in life and exited it very bitter (Mara)? **How many of us have had THE MARA EXPERIENCE?**

<p><b>This lesson will study FOUR aspects of Naomi's MARA EXPERIENCE.</b></p>
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### 1. Naomi doesn't mind telling anyone who will listen about how the Lord's recently left her Mara bitter.

“Do not call me Naomi (pleasant); call me **Mara** (bitter), for the Almighty (shadday) has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, but the Lord (yahweh) has brought me back empty.. Why do you call me Naomi, since the Lord has witnessed against (raa/ hiphil pf/ evil) me and the Almighty has afflicted (anah/ kal pf) me?” (Ruth 1:20-21)

Note that Naomi used two different names for God. She used Almighty (shadday) to emphasize the God of covenant promises. She also used Lord (Yahweh) to emphasize the Lord of personal relationship.

This is important to her testimony against the plan of God because she feels that both of these essences of God have forsaken her recently.

### 2. Full and empty were extreme words she used to describe her Mara bitterness (1:21).

“I went out (halak / kal pf) **full** [male], but the Lord has brought me back (shub / hiphil pf) **empty** [reqam].”

- By full she meant, I had the good life (details of life).
- By empty she meant, I have nothing left but an unjust God. The hiphil of empty emphasizes cause and effect – The Lord is the cause of bringing me back empty and bitter. By empty she meant, God has failed me - “For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.”

She made this point twice (1:20-21). This shows it was a belief that left her bitter. This is her belief but is it TRUE? “The heart knows its own bitterness.” (Prov.14: 10)

Principle: False assumptions lead to false expectations lead to false interpretations lead to false applications.

**Are you struggling with a Mara experience in your life?**

### 3. The truth is that she left the geographical, mental, and operation will of God.

She left because of the hardships associated with the five cycles of divine discipline God had placed upon the priest-nation of Israel because of their idolatrous reversionism described in Judges 6-8.

She lived in the time of Gideon the 5<sup>th</sup> Judge of Israel (Judges 6-8). They were being oppressed by the Midianites for 7 years.

How is it that she believed that she left the 'good life' (full) while living in a nation under divine discipline? She fled to keep the 'good life' but was it the will of God for her to do so? She fled what Gideon and others fought.

Divine Principle: "fight the good fight, finished the course, keep the faith." (2 Tim.4:7)

- How does she believe that she could leave full during the oppression of the Midianites that left everyone else empty?
- How does she believe that it is ok to return and demand all those believers who remained behind and fought the good fight of faith to call her the Bitter One?

She seems to believe that she was the only one who suffered loss during this period of national discipline.

### 4. The life of Naomi teaches that there are many disasters and losses in life and that the believer needs to cycle the word of God by faith in each of them.

Let me suggest 8 departings or losses that effected her life to depart from BD and to go from Naomi to Mara.

- Departing from her home and work in Promised Land.
- Departing from messianic Bethlehem, neighbors, and friends in Promised Land.
- Departing from kin family, tradition, and reputation in Promise Land.
- Departing from synagogue and pivot of believers in Promised Land.
- Departing from the geographical, operational, and mental will of God in Promise Land.
  
- Departing from husband in Moab in pagan land. He died out of the Promise Land.
- Departing from her two sons in pagan land. They both died out of the Promise Land
- Departing from new friends and a daughter-in-law in pagan land.

Why did she react differently to different departings? For example, she said she left full but returned empty. That means that she reacted differently to the first five (which she called full and positive) than the last three which she called empty and negative.

This meant that she left the will of God full but returned in the will of God empty. This is called old man cosmos diabolicus thinking (Eph.4:22-24; John 8:32). She became disorientated to the Word / Will of God (BD) and disillusioned about suffering and life (1 Pet.4: 12; 5:6-10). The road of negative volition and reversionism is a bitter walk (Mara) while the road of positive volition and spiritual maturity is a pleasant walk (Naomi).

She fled what Gideon fought and won (1 John 5:4; Eph.4: 31-32).

Now she has the attitude that the Lord had given more than she could bear which is NOT TRUE! **The Lord may give you more than you are WILLING to bear (1 Pet.5: 7).**

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it." (1 Cor.10:13)