

## NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

### LESSON NINE: RUTH 1:5

By Sandy Harber

***"And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband."***

Mahlon and Chilion died. The cause of death is not given, but we know they were sickly young men. Their wives were left widowed and childless.

Naomi is the focus of this part of the story. She has lost her husband, the only two children she had, and there were no grandchildren. Without an heir, the family line ends. Naomi faced a bleak future alone with no one to care for her. Orpah and Ruth were young, and would be expected to marry again. There weren't a lot of options for women at this time.

Jewish tradition holds that Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion died as punishment for leaving Bethlehem. Maybe. The Bible doesn't say that. At times we're all guilty of reading into the text and drawing conclusions that are not supported by Scripture. This is because the Bible often fails to provide all the details that explain why this or that happened, or why he/she (insert Bible character) did or said thus-and-such, or why God allowed whatever.

We all want to know why. We want to understand. We want to make sense of it all. Otherwise, we feel that we have been left hanging. We are without closure. We are incomplete.

Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth must have wondered, "Why my husband?" "Why my sons?" It's a natural question for anyone who has lost a loved one to ask. It's right up there with the "Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?" question.

The whole book of Job is basically dedicated to this question and the answer is simply: God is sovereign. God is God. He does what He wants, and He doesn't owe you (Job) an explanation.

If I left it there I'd be leaving out an important lesson: it's not all about me, it's all about God. When we ask, "Why did God let this happen to me?" the focus is on me. "Why did God take my husband home?" Focus: me. We need to change our focus. Look up. Get a new perspective.

Here's a start: God is good. God is righteous, just, and never makes mistakes. God has a plan for each of His children. Make a list of His attributes, and meditate on them.

Finally, change the "why" to "how." Replace "why did this happen to me?" with "How does God want me to respond to the situation?"

*"If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth."  
Colossians 3:1-2*