

How the Kingdom Comes

Scripture Reading — 1 Kings 17:7-24

“Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth.”
1 Kings 17:24 —

In this story Elijah goes outside of Israel, the land of God’s people, and brings God’s blessing to people in another land.

How the Lord directed the woman at Zarephath to welcome Elijah isn’t explained. She already had respect for Israel’s God, but she wasn’t so sure about this prophet.

The woman welcomed Elijah as a stranger and shared her last family meal with him. Amazing blessings followed this selfless decision. Yet would the prophet judge her unworthy?

When her boy fell sick and died, her doubts showed up. She accused Elijah of killing him as punishment for her sins. Only when Elijah interceded for her, covering the corpse of her son with his own body, was she persuaded of his sincerity and compassion. From a Jewish perspective, Elijah made himself kin with a foreigner rather than keeping himself ceremonially “clean” as a Hebrew. His contact with the dead body of the boy made him “unclean” (see Num. 19:11). God, however, can make dead sons and daughters alive again.

This story of grace flowing through God’s homeless servant and his adopted family isn’t just a minor footnote. As Jesus himself proved later, it’s how the kingdom comes (see Matthew 8:5-13).

Prayer

Lord, by your Spirit, we invited you in as you stood by the door of our hearts. Direct us to be hospitable to others, both in showing your love and receiving it. Amen.

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Printed on June 24, 2021

