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**GRACE NOTES RADIO PROGRAM
SERIES: ELIJAH – A MAN FOR THE TIMES
TITLE: THE SHOWDOWN
SONGS: REVIVAL IN THE LAND
HE'S STILL IN THE FIRE**

Welcome to Grace Notes!

Barbara Sandbek has been taking us on a journey with the prophet Elijah. As God's spokesman, Elijah was called to deliver God's unpopular message of doom to Ahab, the King of Israel. He told him that there would be no rain or dew on the land until he said so. After his speech, he followed God's orders and hid in the wilderness for a time. From there God sent him to Zarephath where he learned the power of prayer, and the power experienced through waiting on God. During this 3 ½ year period, God blossomed Elijah's faith. Now God has given Elijah his marching orders to go back to Ahab and finish the task he started – to bring revival to the land.

***** GOD'S GONNA SEND REVIVAL *****

So, what's been going on in Ahab's land?

Ahab has sent out search parties to hunt for Elijah, the wanted fugitive – but God has hidden him well.

Queen Jezebel has been busy killing off all the Lord's prophets – or so she thinks. Right under her nose, is Obadiah, who is in charge of the palace. He's a devout believer. God has used him to hide and take care of one hundred prophets. God always has his man in place.

The famine is severe.

Ahab and Obadiah have embarked on a journey to find grass for the animals. They've divided the land. Ahab has gone in one direction and Obadiah the other.

As God would have it, it's Obadiah who meets Elijah on his return.

Elijah tells him to announce his return to King Ahab.

Obadiah fears that Elijah will disappear again, and that Ahab will kill him for lying, but Elijah assures him that he will indeed present himself to Ahab.

The long awaited meeting takes place between Ahab and Elijah.

Naturally, Ahab blames Elijah for the drought – calling him a 'troubler of Israel'.

It sounds so like our times. People blame God for every disaster that occurs, and give Him no credit for the good He bestows.

Elijah's response to Ahab is that he and his family have caused the trouble because they've abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. You'd think Ahab would be enraged at this and kill Elijah, but Elijah is his only hope for rain. Besides, God is protecting him. Ahab can do nothing the Lord doesn't allow.

Elijah continues by asking Ahab to summon the Israelites to meet him and to bring along the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah.

Let's follow the story now from the Bible.

So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said...

**ELIJAH: "How long will you waver between two opinions?
If the Lord is God, follow him, but if Baal is God, follow him."**

But the people said nothing. Then Elijah said to them...

**ELIJAH: "I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left,
but Baal has 450 prophets. Get two bulls for us.
Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into
pieces and put it on the wood, but not set fire to it.
I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood,
but not set fire to it.
Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the
Name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire – he is God."**

The people liked this proposal.

Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal...

**ELIJAH: "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so
many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the
fire."**

**What a contest! God has designed it to expose Baal, the alleged god of
weather – who was often depicted carrying a thunderbolt.**

Picture this...One lone prophet against all these false prophets.

Alone? Not hardly. Martin Luther once said, One with God is a majority."

**Let's watch the showdown scene where Elijah serves on the front lines
of the struggle between the forces of good and evil...**

**Baal's prophets get busy and prepare the bull. They dance around the
altar and call on the name of Baal from morning till noon, shouting
"O Baal, answer us."**

They employ a practice known as imitative magic by doing on earth what they desired their god to do from heaven. Their dancing suggests flickering flames.

**But there's no response – no one answers.
It's like the atheists 'Dial of prayer phone line'.
They call and no one answers.**

Elijah's enjoying this and starts to taunt them.

ELIJAH: "Shout louder! Surely he is a god. Perhaps he is deep in thought or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened."

They shout louder and slash themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flows, in hopes that the down-pouring of blood might prompt the down-pouring of fire – but to no avail.

**They continue their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there is no response –
no one answers –
no one pays attention.**

Then Elijah tells the people to come to him. They come and he repairs the altar of the Lord, which was in ruins. He takes twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Judah. With the stones he builds an altar in the Name of the Lord. He digs a trench around it, arranges the wood, cuts the bull into pieces and lays it on the wood.

Then he tells the people to fill four large jars of WATER and pour it on the offering and the wood. He has them repeat this three times. The water runs down around the altar and even fills the trench. Elijah's adding insult to injury by doing this. Water was a precious commodity after 3 ½ years of drought. There could be no doubt that only a miracle could burn the water-soaked sacrifice. The odds were certainly in Baal's favor.

Elijah rebuilds the altar so he can come to God aright. I imagine that the water on the altar reminded him of his brook in the desert, where not even the driest of weather could stop God. When they doused the altar with water three times – Elijah must have remembered how the Lord made the impossible happen when he raised the dead boy after he laid across him three times and prayed.

It was time for the sacrifice. Elijah stepped forward and prayed...

ELIJAH: "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at Your command. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so that these people will KNOW that You, O Lord, are God, and that You are turning their hearts back again."

The fire of the Lord falls and burns up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and even the SOIL. It also licks up the water in the trench!

When all the people see this, they fall prostrate and cry...

PEOPLE: "THE LORD – HE IS GOD! THE LORD – HE IS GOD!"

Mission accomplished! But there's one more piece of unfinished business to attend to – remove Baal's influence for good. Elijah commands the people to seize the prophets of Baal and he has them slaughtered.

Elijah then tells King Ahab to go eat and drink for he hears the sound of heavy rain.

What can we learn from this?

Elijah prayed fervently in the Name of the Lord.

His experiences had taught him much about the greatness of God so He prayed with assurance.

He wanted God's Glory to be revealed – not his own.

When we pray like Elijah did, God is compelled to answer mightily.

Nothing is impossible with God.

In fact, the more impossible the situation, the more God shows His power.

God unleashed a spectacular display of His power that day. He still works miracles when we call on His Name because He's the same yesterday, today and forever!

***** HE'S STILL IN THE FIRE *****

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