



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** America is a Christian Nation

**Guest(s):** Robert Jeffress

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**Dr. James Dobson:** Hello everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson. And thank you for joining us for this program.

**Roger Marsh:** Welcome to Family Talk. The listener-supported broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. And today, we're bringing you a timely message from Dr. Dobson's good friend, Robert Jeffress. Dr. Robert Jeffress is senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas. He hosts a daily radio program called *Pathway to Victory*, which has heard nationwide on over 1000 stations. Dr. Jeffress is a prolific author. He earned his doctorate in ministry from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and his master of theology from Dallas Theological Seminary.

Dr. Jeffress and his wife, Amy, have two grown daughters and three grandchildren. Pastor Jeffress gave the sermon that you're about to hear just two days before the 4th of July, a few years ago. It's one that really resonates with Dr. Dobson, in particular, as Dr. Jeffress details America's Christian founding, and the true meaning behind the phrase separation of church and state. By the way, did you know that that phrase is not actually found anywhere in the Bill of Rights or the Constitution? The idea of separation of church and state comes from the First amendment, which says "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." However, in the decades, following the ratification of that amendment, people have tried to extrapolate a different meaning from those words. So, let's listen now to Dr. Robert Jeffress as he delivers this important message on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

**Robert Jeffress:** You're probably aware of the countless instances in which our government is ceasing to acknowledge any kind of acknowledgement of God as creator God, and any acknowledgement of religious expression in the public square. These efforts range everything from banning nativity scenes in the town square to prohibiting the prayer using Jesus' name at high school football games. What all of these efforts have in common is, they are built upon the principle of the separation of church and state. We are told over and over again that our country's founders were secularists, deists, sprinkled with a few Christians who came to this nation, seeking above all other things, to build an unscalable wall

between the government and Christianity. And most importantly, they wanted to compartmentalize Christianity to the church and to the home. Now, ladies and gentlemen, that version of American history is complete fiction. I realize it is politically incorrect to say this, but it is nevertheless true.

America was not founded as a nation that is neutral toward Christianity. America was founded as a Christian nation. Today, we're going to discover that truth from history. First of all, let's look and see what the record of history says. The founding fathers are those who framed our nation's Constitution. We all know the handful, we can call their names, who were deists. But the vast majority of those who founded our nation were evangelical Christians. In fact, 52 out of the 55 signers of the Constitution, the framers of the Constitution, were evangelical believers. Listen to some of the testimonies of our founding fathers. This is George Washington. He wrote in his diary, "Let my heart, gracious God, be so affected with your glory and majesty that I may discharge those weighty duties, which now requires to me. Again, I have called on thee for pardon and forgiveness of sins for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered on the cross for me. Thou gave us thy son to die for me and has given me assurance of salvation."

That's our first President, George Washington. Or listen to the testimony of the second president of the United States, John Adams. "The general principles upon which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and as immutable as the existence and attributes of God, and that those principles of Liberty are as unalterable as human nature." Or consider the words of Patrick Henry, a man, responsible for the Bill of Rights to our Constitution. We know Patrick Henry for his famous speech, "Give me liberty or give me death." But here's a quote you don't often hear in the history classroom from Patrick Henry. He said, "Being a Christian is a character which I prize far above all this world has or can boast."

People say, "Well pastor, that may be. But personal beliefs of those who founded our nation. But what about the wall of separation between church and state?" That phrase isn't found in the First Amendment in the Constitution. It's not found anywhere in the Constitution. It doesn't appear anywhere. Well, where did that phrase originate? Where did it come from? Thomas Jefferson, on January the 1st, 1802, wrote this letter to the Baptist in Danbury, Connecticut. And this is what Jefferson wrote. "I contemplate, with solemn reverence, that act of the whole American people, which declared that their legislature should quote, 'make no wall respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, thus building a wall of separation between church and state.'" That's where you have the phrase. Now, two things I want you to notice about Jefferson's comment. First of all, he was referring to an establishment of a denomination, not a religion. As we're going to see, I'm going to prove to you in a moment, the First Amendment that prohibits government from establishing a particular religion is dealing with denominations, not faith.

People have now perverted Thomas Jefferson's words. And liberal groups today use those words to restrict Christians from the public expression of their religious beliefs. Thomas Jefferson would roll over in his grave today if he believed that we were perverting his words in such a way. How do I know that? Well, consider Thomas Jefferson's own actions. Do you know that exactly one year after he wrote this letter to Danbury Baptist, Thomas Jefferson encouraged Congress to pass a treaty with the Cascadia Indians that would allow tax dollars to support Christian missionaries to those Cascadia Indians. And three times after that, he signed the treaty again and again. Now, think about it. Can you imagine a president today using federal tax dollars to support evangelical missionaries, where if Thomas Jefferson were alive today, he would be drug into court. He would be sued because of the separation of church and state that he had written about.

Secondly, consider how the court has interpreted this phrase separation of church and state. This is so key to understand, ladies and gentlemen. For the first 140 years of our nation's history, the judiciary reaffirmed over and over again that this country is a uniquely Christian country. For example, in 1799, the case of Runkel versus Winemiller, the Supreme Court of Maryland said in its decision, "By our form of government, the Christian religion is the established religion. And all sex and denominations of Christians are placed upon the same equal footing and are equally entitled to protection in their religious liberty." 100 years later, the United States Supreme Court affirmed the very same principle. In The Church of the Holy Trinity versus the United States, the Supreme Court said, "No purpose of action against religion can be imputed to any legislation, state, or national, because this is a religious people. This is a Christian nation."

When people tell you, this is not a Christian nation, you just quote the United States Supreme Court. The court said we are a Christian nation. And to support their 16 page decision, one case they quoted from was a case in 1811, a New York case entitled The People versus Ruggles. And United States Supreme Court cited that court case, which said, "We are a Christian people. And the morality of this country is deeply engrafted upon Christianity and not upon the doctrines of worship of those imposter religions." Now, the person who wrote that decision for the New York Supreme Court was a man named James Kent. And I went back this week to read that whole decision, the People versus Ruggles, which the United States Supreme Court affirmed. And James Kent identifies, in that court case, imposter religions. And among those religions that he names as an imposter religion, he names the religion of Islam.

Robert Jeffress:

In 1811, he said, "Islam is an imposter. It is a false religion. We are not an Islamic nation. This country is a uniquely Christian nation." Or listen again to the court, 1844, the case of Vidal versus Girard's Executor. It involved a man named Stephen Girard, who left the city of Philadelphia, in his will, money to be used for the establishment of a college. But in his will, he said, "I want morality to be taught in this college I'm establishing, but I do not want the Bible to be taught."

In other words, I want morality without the Bible. Sound familiar to you? Well, it went to the United States Supreme Court. They unanimously rejected that.

Listen to what they said. "Christianity is not to be maliciously and openly reviled and blasphemed against to the annoyance of believers or the injury of the public. It is unnecessary for us, however, to consider the establishment of a school or college for the propagation of deism, or any other form of infidelity. Such a case is not to be presumed to exist in a Christian country." Say the people were saying back then, "Well, wait a minute. If we start teaching the Bible as a basis of morality, don't we have to teach other religions as well?" Don't you hear that today? We don't restrict people's right to worship however they choose to worship, but that doesn't mean we treat all religions equally. This is a Christian nation. Now, I did a little bit of studying this week about the man who wrote that decision in *Girard's Executors versus Vidal*. He was a man named Justice Joseph Story of the United States Supreme Court. He was appointed to the court by president James Madison. James Madison was known as the architect of United States Constitution.

And this week, I came across the fact that Justice Story had written an entire commentary on the United States Constitution. And I want you to listen to what US Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story said about the First Amendment. "The real object of the First Amendment was not to countenance much less advanced Islam or Judaism or infidelity by prostrating Christianity, but simply to exclude rivalry between Christian denominations." Justice Story, the founder of Harvard Law School, appointed by James Madison, the architect of the Constitution, said "Every other religion is an imposter religion. It's an infidelity. The First Amendment was never created to create an equal level playing field among our religions, simply to exclude rivalry between Christian denominations." Listen to what the Supreme Court of the United States said.

They said, "Why may not the Bible, and especially the New Testament, without note or comment, be read and taught as a divine revelation in the school, it's general precepts expounded, it's evidences explained, and it's glorious principles of morality inculcated? Where can the purest principles of morality be learned so clearly are so perfectly as in the New Testament." That's the United States Supreme Court. Did you know the first time the United States Supreme Court ever mentioned the separation of church and state was in nineteen forty-seven, a hundred and fifty years after the ratification of the First Amendment? It was the first time it was ever mentioned. It was in a well-known case, *Everson versus the Board of Education*. And in this landmark case, the Supreme Court said it is illegal for New Jersey, the state of New Jersey, to use tax dollars, to support a private parochial religious school.

Back in 1947, all religious schools were basically of one faith. They were Catholic schools. All right? The man who wrote the court opinion was Justice Hugo Black. And he talked about how the "wall must be kept high and impregnable". American university professor Daniel Driesback, and University of Chicago law professor Philip Hamburger, claimed that the iron curtain black erected

between Christianity and government was not Jefferson's wall, but it was Justice Hugo Black's wall. "You can't understand the period when Justice Black was on the court without understanding the fear that American elites had of Catholic influence and power." Justice Hugo Black was an ex-member of the Ku Klux Klan. And if you know anything about the KU Klux Klan, you will know the only people they hated worse than African-Americans were Catholics. And thus, when Justice Hugo Black talked about the wall of separation from church and state, it was his anti-Catholic bias pouring out. And by the way, that's not just conjecture. Two current members of the Supreme Court agree.

Justices Thomas and Scalia have both argued that this rabid desire to build this wall, to protect sectarian groups from government, was founded upon anti-Catholic bigotry. Justice Clarence Thomas said, "It was an open secret that sectarian was a code for Catholic. This doctrine of separation of church and state, born of bigotry, should be buried now." Since the Everson case in 1947, the courts have succeeded in their effort to build that wall higher and higher. In 1962, in the case of Engel versus Vitale, the Supreme Court ruled that students in New York could no longer recite the simple 22 word voluntary prayer. The Supreme Court said it's unconstitutional for students to pray for themselves, their teachers, their parents, and for their country. 1971, the Supreme Court outlawed Bible reading. And in doing so, they actually quoted from a psychologist who said, "If portions of the New Testament were read without explanation, they could be, and had been, psychologically harmful to the children."

Now, compare that to what the Supreme Court had said 140 years earlier. "Why should not the Bible, the New Testament, be read? Where can the principles of morality be found apart in the pages of the New Testament?" 1967, a kindergarten teacher was having her students recite this poem. The poem said, "We thank you for the flowers so sweet. We thank you for the food we eat. We thank you for the birds that sing. We thank you for everything." The court said, "You cannot recite that poem in school. Because although the poem doesn't mention God, that poem may cause children to think about God, and that's unconstitutional." But the most outrageous ruling of all time, in my estimation, was the 1980 Supreme Court ruling Stone versus Graham. The case arose out of a Kentucky case in which copies of the Ten Commandments were being posted in the hallways of Kentucky schools. And in Stone versus Graham, the Supreme Court said that's unconstitutional.

What was the basis for their ruling? If I were to simply tell you, you would think I was making it up. So, I'm going to read the court case to you, their ruling of why it's unconstitutional to post the Ten Commandments in school. The Supreme Court said, "If the posted copies of the Ten Commandments are to have any effect at all, it will be to induce the school children to read, meditate upon, perhaps to venerate and obey the Ten Commandments. This is not a permissible state objective under the first amendment." In other words, the court said, "We can't do that. If we allow those Ten Commandments to be posted, students

might actually read them. And heaven forbid, they might actually obey them. And that's unconstitutional."

Robert Jeffress:

William Bennett, former secretary of education under President Reagan, observed in his report a few years ago, he called it the Index of Leading Cultural Indicators. And he notices what has happened in American history during those same years that the court started its all-out assault against the Christian faith. During the years 1960 to 1990, when the court outlawed Bible reading, prayer, the posting of the Ten Commandments, and on and on and on, listen to what has happened during that same period of time. There has been a 560% increase in violent crime, a 400% increase in illegitimate births, a quadrupling of divorces, and an 80-point average drop in SAT scores. Today, 3.3 million teenagers are problem drinkers. 135,000 guns go to school every day, and 40 children are shot or killed. Just a coincidence? Not at all. The nation that honors God will be blessed by God. The nation that rebels against God will be judged by God. Blessed be the nation whose God is the Lord. Ladies and gentlemen, just because we've changed our priorities does not mean God has changed His priorities.

I want to suggest to you three questions you ought to ask yourself about anyone for whom you vote. Question number one, "Is the candidate a Christian?" You see, we believe that a Christian is a unique person. A Christian has been indwelt by the spirit of God. A Christian is uniquely led by God. A Christian is favored by God. Why wouldn't we want a Christian instead of a non-Christian as our leader, in any office? Question number two, "Does the candidate embrace biblical values?" But some of you are thinking, "Well now, pastor, why are you cherry picking those issues? What about other issues?" But the reason I mentioned these three issues are, these are the issues that made God's top 10 list called the Ten Commandments. Number three, "How does the candidate's private faith influence his public policy?"

Our rulers do determine the direction of our country. And listen to me, God has given to you and me the right and responsibility for selecting our leaders. When you go into that voting booth, you're going to make a vote, not just for a candidate. You are voting for the spiritual and moral direction of this country. You are voting for righteousness or unrighteousness. Whether you're voting for president, vice-president, congressmen, sheriff, or any other position, you are determining whether you're going to vote for righteousness or unrighteousness. "Righteousness exalts a nation, but wickedness as a reproach to My people." When you go into that booth, you have to choose. Am I voting for righteousness? Or am I voting for unrighteousness? Blessed be the nation whose God is the Lord.

Dr. James Dobson:

Well, this is Dr. James Dobson, and you've been listening to Dr. Robert Jeffress, the senior pastor of Dallas First Baptist Church. I think you can see why I wanted you to hear this message. In this day, when the American people are divided like never before, when violence and evil walk the streets, when families are disintegrating and drug abuse is rampant among the young, we desperately

need to return to the moral and spiritual principles evident in our heritage. I hope our listeners will go online to [Dr. James Dobson.org](http://Dr. James Dobson.org) and share this broadcast with family and friends.

Roger Marsh:

Mm-hmm. Yes. By the way, you can learn more about pastor Robert Jeffress, his ministries, or First Baptist Dallas by visiting our broadcast page at [Dr. James Dobson.org](http://Dr. James Dobson.org). That's [drjamesdobson.org/broadcast](http://drjamesdobson.org/broadcast).

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Again, that address is, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. box three nine zero zero zero, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949. Now, before we go, I want to fill you in on some exciting news. Thanks to some special friends of our ministry. We currently have a matching grant, \$300,000, set aside for the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. This means that, right now, any gifts that we receive from listeners just like you will be matched. And your tax deductible donation to our ministry will be doubled. So, if you give a \$100, it becomes \$200, \$500 becomes \$1,000. And you can do the math from there.

Until we meet our goal of \$300,000, this matching gift will be in place. Twice as many parents will be encouraged, twice as many families provided with resources they need. So, make your tax deductible donation today. To do so, you can go online to [Drjamesdobson.org](http://Drjamesdobson.org), or you can call us at (877) 732-6825. And a member of our team will be happy to walk you through the donation process. Again, that's (877) 732-6825.

I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for listening to Family Talk, the listener supported broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. We hope you'll join us again tomorrow for another edition of Family Talk.

Announcer:

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Hi, this is Dr. Tim Clinton. Thanks for listening to Family Talk. You going through a tough time right now? Can't see your way out? You think there's no hope? We'd love to talk to you. I want you to know this.

Dr. Dobson has been doing this for a long time. And he really cares about you so much that we'd love to talk to you right now. You can actually call us toll free. Our number is (877) 732-6825. You're going to be encouraged. You're going to

be challenged. You're going to find new hope. You know why? Because God really does care about you. He loves you. And Dr. Dobson cares about you too. Call us now, (877) 732-6825.