



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Hope of Heaven – Part 1

Guest(s): Anne Graham Lotz

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Welcome to Family Talk, a listener supported division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and whether it's a child who's lost a grandparent or is exposed to death on the TV news, it is essential that we as parents equip our kids with the hope of Heaven. Otherwise, death can be pretty terrifying for children. In this classic conversation from 2012, Dr. Dobson talks with Anne Graham Lotz, the daughter of the late Reverend Billy Graham about her beautifully illustrated children's book entitled *Heaven: God's Promise for Me*. Believe me, she does not sugarcoat the truth. This is straight from scripture but presented in childlike terms and accompanied by whimsical illustrations, and reminds us that our children and grandchildren can have the peace and security that Heaven can be their home if they've placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. So let's listen now to Dr. Dobson's conversation with Anne Graham Lotz here on this special edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: I'm so very pleased to welcome a very special guest and a friend with us who will help us understand what Heaven is and what it's like and how we can convey it to children. Mrs. Anne Graham Lotz is with us today, an evangelist and the founder and president of AnGeL Ministries. She was named one of the five most influential evangelists of her generation by the *New York Times* and has published more than a dozen books including a children's book that's called *Heaven: God's Promise for Me*, which we're going to talk about today. She has three grown children, three grandchildren, and lives in Raleigh, North Carolina. That's not exactly a conservative stronghold is it with the universities around there? But welcome, Anne, I'm so glad to have you here.

Anne Graham Lotz: It's just a joy to be here. Dr. Dobson. It's my pleasure. Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: Shirley and I have admired you and respected you. I told you a few minutes ago, we saw you on the Mike Huckabee show not too long ago, and boy, you laid it down straight. You didn't back off at all.

Anne Graham Lotz: One of the freeing things for me is that I'm really not aiming to be invited back. So I figure if that's my one time, then I'll just go ahead and say what God has put on my heart and not try to couch it so that I would be somebody that they would turn to again. But the interesting thing is that I get calls from time to time and they want me back. I think they want somebody who'll say it out.

Dr. James Dobson: I feel the same way. I don't long for that, the publicity of it and so on. I'd just soon not do it. And so if I'm going to go there, I'm going to take advantage of the opportunity. Sometimes you get invited back and sometimes you don't.

Anne Graham Lotz: That's exactly right. And you always say it like it is too. So I appreciate that so much.

Dr. James Dobson: You and Franklin always manage to find a way to get the gospel in. No matter what the subject is, you do that, and you did it on that show that we saw, talking about the subject for today, the subject of Heaven. Has the Lord specifically laid that on your heart for this time?

Anne Graham Lotz: He has, Dr. Dobson, and because I'm talking to you, I will tell you that I believe we're living at the end of human history as we know it. I think it's a very critical time.

Dr. James Dobson: I do too.

Anne Graham Lotz: And so it just occurred to me when my mother went to our Father's house, when she died, and I was trying to talk to my grandchildren about where she was. It just helped comfort them when we looked past death to where she is now. And then I thought of all the little children out there who wouldn't have somebody to ask questions of or maybe adults who wouldn't know how to give the answers. And then I thought at this particular time in human history, who knows that we have tomorrow? Who knows that we have next year? And maybe we're not looking at the return of Jesus, although I believe we are, but maybe it's just some sort of cataclysmic disaster on America where all of a sudden life changes.

And I thought about little children who may be on the brink of eternity and they don't know it because of their age. They think they're going to live to ripe old age. And I really believe the Lord put it on my heart to write this book and the whole purpose is to bring little children to Jesus and to help the parent or the adults, the Sunday school teacher, to be able to facilitate that. But even without them, a child can read this and understand.

Dr. James Dobson: I can't tell you how much I appreciate this emphasis, and it's obvious that it came from the Lord because it seems to me that even those that are committed to Christ have lost the theology of the afterlife. They don't believe it anymore. They certainly don't believe in Hell, although I do. And they don't know what Heaven is really all about. And yet when I was very young, I grew up with this,

Heaven was very much a part of my life and I learned to pray before I learned to talk because I imitated the sounds that my parents made. But it was my grandmother and my great-grandmother who talked about Heaven all the time. They filled my life with it and I grew up with it. Did you?

Anne Graham Lotz: Yes. It's our hope. So I don't know why we've become silenced. And the church itself, this is another distressing thing I've noticed... and I think of my daddy, Billy Graham, who's preached all over the world, had stadiums packed and millions of people in his meetings in South Korea and other places... and our world is worse off, Dr. Dobson, so I thought to myself, "Where are these people who were converted and where are their children and their grandchildren?" And I know we've heard a lot of stories of that first generation and they truly have been born again. I know daddy's meetings have made an eternal difference, but somewhere we're not passing it on to the next generation. And I don't know if parents think they're not capable, if they want to leave it to a pastor or an evangelist, and then they're not getting it from their church or the people that are supposed to be telling them. And some churches don't even think a little child can understand this to the point they could make a decision like this.

Dr. James Dobson: I want to do a program with you today and another one tomorrow. And tomorrow I want to talk about the adult scene because adults aren't getting it either.

Anne Graham Lotz: If adults are like that then that is passed down to the next generation, then it's really lost. And so my aim for this children's book is just to try to reach down, it wouldn't even be my next generation it would be the next, it would be my grandchildren's age, and try to reach that generation and let them know that Heaven is for them too. It's not just for adults. Heaven is for children. A child can have the hope of knowing they're going to Heaven. They can have peace. They can know that there's security because Jesus is preparing a place for them. My children are grown, and so they're grown, they're married, and you almost lose touch with the little people. And then when my little girls came along, I have three little granddaughters, and it just reawakens you to little children and to that age.

And so it was while I was talking to my little girls about death and Heaven and just saw their questions and what they wanted to know. And my daughter has done a fabulous job because she's taught them a lot of those hymns, Dr. Dobson, so that my grandchildren are learning some of those hymns that just aren't sung anymore, and taught them about Heaven. And so it just awakened me to the fact that little children have questions and they want to ask them but sometimes adults don't have the answers to give or they'll want to comfort a child when they're faced with death and they tell them foolish things. I mean things that are fun, but they're not true. And I don't think that's doing the child a service. So this little book is based on what the Bible says. I put the Scripture references in the back so the adult can read the Scripture and see what the

Bible says. But it's true, it's just that I've made it user-friendly for little children so that they can wrap their little minds around that.

Dr. James Dobson: Your book is just beautiful. Again, the name of it is *Heaven, God's Promise for Me*. And the woman who did the art here, I don't know her, Laura Bryant.

Anne Graham Lotz: I haven't met her. She actually lives in Asheville, North Carolina, which is real near where my daddy lives. And so one day I'll make a point to go meet her, but she did that and we discussed the drawings and some of the illustrations and I wanted her to think outside the box and I believe she did wonderful pictures.

Dr. James Dobson: I think this is one of the most beautiful books for children that I've seen.

Anne Graham Lotz: Well, it's very fun. There's an angel on every spreadsheet, so little children like to find things like that. And so we've put a little angel in different places so that they can look for the angel, but then the words are based on what the Bible says so that it's true even though it's very whimsical and imaginative.

Dr. James Dobson: I'm sure that you knew Adrian Rogers, a pastor of the Bellevue Baptist Church-

Anne Graham Lotz: Of course.

Dr. James Dobson: ... in Memphis, Tennessee. He was a great friend to me and I to him, and we were like brothers, although he influenced me probably more than I influenced him, and he was on my board. But when he was dying, I called him and I was on my way to the airport and I just wanted to talk to him, see how he was doing. And he said, "Well, Jim, it's not so bad because if I do go on to be with the Lord, I'm going to Heaven. Look what awaits me there. But if I don't get to stay here," he said, "It's win-win, I can't lose."

Anne Graham Lotz: That's like the Apostle Paul, right?

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, if you have that attitude you can deal with whatever life throws at you.

Anne Graham Lotz: That's right, and I think little children, they want that too. And they can grasp that, and they need something that they can understand that's written like a child would be able to grasp because they have questions but they don't know how to articulate them. And adults don't know how to answer them. And so just like Dr. Rogers who had the comfort of knowing if he dies it's okay, children need that too.

Dr. James Dobson: They do.

Anne Graham Lotz: They're faced with death on the news, on videos.

Dr. James Dobson: And then grandparents and great-grandparents.

Anne Graham Lotz: Oh, grandparents. My granddaughter, her father is a football coach and his assistant coach's wife suddenly died. And then she had a classmate who died. She had another classmate whose parent died. Her next door neighbor died and she was surrounded, and then my mother went to Heaven. And so within 10 months, there were five people in her life that died. And you talk about questions? She wanted to know. And it's frightening to a child unless you give them the answers and you can help them look past that and see that when you put your faith in Jesus, which you and I know is the key, that Heaven is for God and His Son and for those who love Him and put their faith in His Son and come by way of the cross. And when you do that, then death is not something to be afraid of. I'm afraid of the needles and the hospitals and some of the things that-

Dr. James Dobson: The process.

Anne Graham Lotz: Yeah, but the actual moment of death is something... and stepping into eternity for a believer is not a frightening prospect.

Dr. James Dobson: My first encounter with death was when I was three years old and I had a little friend who was two and he came over to my house to play. His name by the way was Danny. Danny and I played guns, so I remember bang, bang. Two days later he died. My dad was the pastor and we went to what I now know was a funeral home and they left me in the car and I waited in the car for a long, long time and then they came and got me and they brought me in. My dad held me up so I could see Danny in the casket. My very first encounter with death. I remember saying, "Daddy, why don't you open his eyes?"

I thought if you could reach over and open his eyes, he would be okay. And I don't remember the conversation that followed, but I imagine that my parents used that to describe a little bit in a three-year-old's terms what death was like and about going to Heaven. But I know my grandmother and great-grandmother would have done that because I was blessed with those kind of people in my family.

Anne Graham Lotz: It's wonderful to have godly heritage like that, that teach you the truth.

Dr. James Dobson: Anne, I asked before the program started if you would read from your book. It's poetic. It's in a poetic form, and I've opened it to the first page. Why don't you read about 10 pages of it?

Anne Graham Lotz: It's a story of a little boy and a little girl, they're brother and sister, and it starts out and just says, "I have a little brother. He's as cute as he can be. We do everything together and he always looks up to me. We couldn't fall asleep last week when we went to bed, we had so many questions, thoughts were swirling in our heads. We wondered when our granny died, where did she really go? It's lonely here without her and we just miss her so. Then we whispered a little prayer that only God could hear. Give us some answers, please, we want to feel

you near. In the quietness of the night, this is what we heard. This is what God said to us right from His holy Word. Don't let your hearts be troubled. There's nothing you should fear. In my home that I call Heaven, our loved ones are always near.

"He said His home is a great big house with lots of room and space, filled with gifts and laughter and love with smiles on every face. Jesus, His Son, is preparing a place with treasures from above, our favorite foods and colors and the special people we love. Whatever makes us happy, whatever makes us glad, we'll find it all in Heaven where no one will be sad. If there are tears on your face when you arrive on that day, Jesus himself will wipe them away. Inside there is no crying, inside there is no pain. Inside there are no bad people and you'll never be lonely again. Your home in Heaven is so wonderful, it's much more than you can dream. There'll be no sickness or sadness and everything will be clean.

"There'll be no more crutches or hospital stays. There'll be no more hunger, he will take it away. You will walk and run. You will play and sing. You'll have many friends. Heaven will never be boring. You'll be safe and you'll be free. Nothing will hurt you. You not even a bee. You can pet a lion. You can swim with a shark. You can fly with an eagle and it will never get dark. The light is always on because Jesus is waiting for you. The very best part of Heaven is that He's going to be there too." I'll just stop with that.

Dr. James Dobson: That is so good. You read about half of it. Now, this is intended for children between?

Anne Graham Lotz: Probably four to 10.

Dr. James Dobson: And one or two of your grandchildren gave their heart to the Lord before their third birthday.

Anne Graham Lotz: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: I thought I set a record. Mine was three. But that is incredible.

Anne Graham Lotz: We can tell that it was real because you can see the difference it has made in their lives and how the Holy Spirit has worked to give them a love for the Scripture, to have them quickly aware of sin that needs to be confessed. And so this little book, the purpose is to bring little children to Jesus. One of the things we did is put, at the very back of the book, an envelope on the hardcover. And inside the envelope is the invitation from our heavenly Father where He invites them to live with Him forever in their heavenly home. They can sign it, date it, and it's really for the parent or the adult to record that decision the child makes to help them know for always that they invited Jesus in their hearts.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you lead them through that? Did you get down and pray with them?

Anne Graham Lotz: I didn't. Well, for my children I did, but not for my grandchildren. My daughter and her husband actually prayed with them as they prayed that prayer.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you have a recommendation for parents in regard to allowing them to come to that decision themselves at three, four, five, six, seven years of age, or do you deliberately attempt to teach them what they need to do?

Anne Graham Lotz.: Well, my daughter, she would explain to them about Jesus. They knew about Jesus, they knew about the cross. They knew about Heaven. And then it's funny how the Holy Spirit would just begin to work in their hearts one by one, and they came to her, each one at a different time would come to her and say, "Mommy, I want to ask Jesus in my heart." And she would quiz them, "Do you know about the cross?" And she would have them explain to her what it meant that Jesus died for them. And so one of my little granddaughters, my daughter said, "Are you willing to confess your sin? And do you know what sin is?" And she said, "You mean when I push my little baby sister off the bed?" And her mother said, "Yes, that's right." So she was confessing her little sin, and so they understood. A parent just needs to be alert to take the opportunity when it comes.

Dr. James Dobson: What do you say to a child where a grandparent or a parent has died? Do you take them to an understanding of Heaven at that time and that the one you love is there waiting for us, is still alive?

Anne Graham Lotz: Well, for my little grandchildren, when my mother died, that would be their great-grandmother, that's the way we did it for them. And we knew my mother had gone to Heaven. I think if there are children and they don't know the person who has died has gone to Heaven, I think that's one of the things that we trust Jesus with. He's the judge, we're not. So we can just bring that person to Him and the child and tell them about Heaven. And the point is that we believe we'll see our loved ones again if they put their faith in Jesus. But for us, nevermind the loved one, but for me, is Heaven my home? And is it my home do I know that because I've put my faith in Jesus? So the emphasis in this little book is to give that child the assurance that Heaven is that child's home, that they can look forward to Heaven because it's been prepared for them.

Dr. James Dobson: Before we leave the children, I failed to ask you about the story involving Dwight L. Moody. Can you share that?

Anne Graham Lotz: I loved it. That was a true story. It was told by this little boy who'd then grown up and told my mother. But he said when he was a boy living in London, he had heard that Dr. Moody was coming to preach and he wanted to go hear him. So he went across town and the doorkeeper grabbed him and spun him around and said, "Where do you think you're going?" And the little boy said, "Well, I'm going inside the church. I want to hear Dr. Moody preach." And the man said, "Not you." And he looked at his uncombed hair and his unwashed face and his unshod feet and he said, "You're too dirty to go inside this church." And so the little boy thought, "Well, I'll find another way inside the church." So he went

around the church but the windows were too high to climb up and the doors were all locked.

So he came back and sat on the front steps and he began to cry, he was so disappointed. And just then this distinguished looking man was walking up the steps and saw the little boy crying and he asked him why he was crying. So the little boy told him, he said, "I've come to hear Dr. Moody preach but they say I'm too dirty to go inside the church." So the man looked at him and he just held out his hand and he said, "Then put your hand in mine." So the little boy did. And then they walked hand in hand up the steps, came to the door that had been closed, now it's flung wide open. The man takes the little boy down the center aisle, puts him on the front row. Then the man gets up on the platform and stands in the pulpit to preach. And the man was Dr. D.L. Moody.

So the wonderful, in fact the impact it's had on my life, because it just sets you free. The only way anybody gets into Heaven is because they're holding the hand of Jesus. The only way that little boy got inside that church was because he was holding the hand of Dr. Moody. And the only way anybody gets into heaven, it doesn't matter, dr. Dobson, all your radio programs, your books, your ministry is fabulous as it's been, all my daddy's crusades, all the books, all the people he's led to faith, it doesn't matter, the only way we get into Heaven is because we put our faith in Jesus.

And when we put our hand of faith in His and we confess that we're a sinner, that He died for us and we claim Him as our savior, invite Him into our hearts, surrender our lives to Him, He comes into our lives. We're born again into His family. He walks with us through the steps of life. And when we come to that door of eternity, it's flung wide open, and we can walk right into Heaven. We're as accepted as He is because we're holding the hand of the Son.

Dr. James Dobson: I wonder about that man who turned the dirty little boy away. Didn't he read about Jesus saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me"? That's what it's all about. Unless you come as a little child, maybe a dirty one.

Anne Graham Lotz: In a sense, we're all dirty in our sin, aren't we? But you don't have to clean up to come to Jesus. You just come as dirty as you are in your sin, and you put your faith in Him. He'll clean you up and take you through life and bring you into Heaven.

Dr. James Dobson: Our time has gone and I already said that we want to have you back tomorrow because we want to talk about this from an adult perspective. But I'm so pleased that this book is out and I appreciate you being here-

Anne Graham Lotz: Thank you so much.

Dr. James Dobson: ... and what you're doing and your love for the Lord. God be with you.

Anne Graham Lotz: Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: You were waiting for me, I was about 10, 15 minutes late today, and you were waiting for me and I got pictures of Billy Graham all over the waiting room down here.

Anne Graham Lotz: He would be so honored to know that. Thank you.

Dr. James Dobson: God bless you, Anne.

Roger Marsh: You're listening to Family Talk, and that was part one of Dr. Dobson's conversation with Anne Graham Lotz, the daughter of the late evangelist Billy Graham. They've been discussing Anne's children's book called *Heaven: God's Promise for Me*. This beautifully illustrated book is meant for your children and grandchildren and will provide them with assurance of where their loved ones go after they pass away if they've trusted Christ as their Savior and Lord. It will also empower boys and girls to understand the concept of repenting of their own sins and having a righteous relationship with Jesus Christ as well. Children can take an active step toward that bond by filling out the invitation in the back of the book as well, and they're also able to sign and date it right after hearing the story, and they can respond to their heavenly Father's call to live with Him forever.

That's about as good as it gets, isn't it? What a creative way to memorialize that precious moment when the doors of eternity are literally opened wide through Jesus Christ. Now, you can listen again to today's program. You can also learn more about Anne Graham Lotz or find a link to her children's book called *Heaven: God's Promise for Me*, you can do all that when you visit drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. That's drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. Now, if you have been a faithful listener of Dr. James Dobson over the years, you know that he has been on the radio for many, many decades, and in May of 2020 he marked the 10-year anniversary of the first Family Talk broadcast, which has now been on the air for 13 years. So if you've been blessed by Family Talk and want to enjoy how God has spoken to our listeners through the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, then you will certainly appreciate a selection of 20 of the most beloved programs from over this first momentous decade of Family Talk broadcasts.

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Once again, our ministry mailing address is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, or JDFI for short, PO Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949. And remember to join us again tomorrow for part two of Dr. Dobson's classic conversation with Anne Graham Lotz explaining to kids what Heaven will be like. I'm Roger Marsh, and thanks so much for making Family Talk a part of your day. The voice you trust for the family you love.

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

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