



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Hope of Heaven – Part 2

Guest(s): Anne Graham Lotz

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- Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.
- Anne Graham Lotz: Jesus said, I'm preparing a place for you. And then in Revelation 21, it says, it's prepared as a bride is for her bridegroom. And so that preparation is very personal. For instance, my son, I know he loves barbecue spare ribs. I know he loves the homemade apple pie. He loved to play tennis with his dad. So when I knew he was coming home, I began to prepare those things, so when he walked in the door, he would know he was expected, he was welcome that he'd come home. And so Jesus said, the Heavenly Father and He are preparing a place for us so that when we walk through Heaven's door, it's a place that's been prepared just for us. We will know that we've come home.
- Roger Marsh: Hello and welcome to Family Talk, a listener supported division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh and you just heard an excerpt from our guest today, Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of the late Reverend Billy Graham and the author of the book, *Heaven: My Father's House*. It's sad that many churches today failed to address the reality of the afterlife from their pulpits, but Heaven and hell are as real as day and night. Anne Graham Lotz says that for those people who have confessed their sin and trusted Christ as Savior, going to Heaven will not be an impersonal, bleak place. No, Heaven will be a welcoming personal destination. For more than a decade, Anne Graham Lotz taught Bible Study Fellowship, a Bible study class for women in Raleigh, North Carolina that used a highly structured study method. Perhaps you're familiar with the ministry of BSF in your neighborhood. Well, it filled up with 500 people almost immediately, and there was a huge waiting list to get in, the class was that popular.
- After leaving BSF, Anne Graham Lotz founded AnGeL Ministries to speak across America. She noted that angels in the Bible were messengers of God and they went where God sent them. And I feel that describes what I do too. Anne Graham Lotz is the author of more than 10 books, including her best known called *Just Give Me Jesus*. For many years, Anne Graham Lotz was married to Dr. Danny Lotz, a dentist who went to be with the Lord in 2015 and herself battled cancer. And Dr. and Mrs. Dobson and the team here at JDFI have prayed with

and for her throughout her health journey. She's the mother of three children. She's been described by the New York Times as one of the five most influential evangelists in the United States. So let's listen now to the second part of Dr. Dobson's conversation with Anne Graham Lotz, here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, Anne, we had a wonderful conversation last time, you were talking about Heaven for children and your book is about that subject. As I said, it's *Heaven: God's Promise for Me*, that makes it personal. And the artwork and the publication itself is just beautiful. And your purpose is to begin to reach these kids with an understanding of Heaven.

Anne Graham Lotz: To let them know that Heaven can be their home too.

Dr. James Dobson: Doesn't it grieve you that many children do not know anything about Heaven?

Anne Graham Lotz: It grieves me that...

Dr. James Dobson: They don't have that hope.

Anne Graham Lotz: Yes, that parents, even within the church, that's where my grief is greatest, that even within the church, children don't know that because the parents aren't for some reason telling them, either they don't think they can or they don't feel like they have the right answers. Like we'd said yesterday, if they asked a question, maybe we wouldn't know how to answer. And so that really breaks my heart that there are children just running around, that's ought to know. But I think the greatest child abuse is for parents not to be teaching their children about Jesus, not to be teaching them about the scripture, not to be teaching them about Heaven and the fact that you can be with God forever, that he loves you and want you to live with him forever. And to not tell a child the truth, to somehow feel like for whatever reason, I think that's spiritual child abuse that I would put right up there with anything.

The New Testament talks about the resurrection is our living hope. And sometimes I think Christians, we say these things and we celebrate Easter and we know He died on the cross and rose up from the dead on Easter Sunday morning, but somehow it doesn't compute that this is real. Jesus is alive right now in a man's body in Heaven. One day He'll come back to receive us to Himself. In the meantime He said, He's preparing a place for Him that He called My Father's house. And somehow we just don't grasp the reality of that. And maybe in America we've seen America unravel actually, I think, and I wonder if God would allow that because we've been so prosperous, that almost it's like we have Heaven here.

So who wants to go to Heaven when I can have a new car and a new house and I can do this and that and make a name for myself and maybe God would allow us to lose some of that so that we know that we begin to long for something more. This life is not all there is. And if we treat it like it is, then we're going to

lose out big time. And I think this life is just... In fact, I write in the adult book we're going to talk about, it's just the narthex to what's coming. This is just the ante room. This is just the bootcamp preparing us for eternity.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we were talking last time as we said about Heaven from a child's point of view and teaching children about Heaven. And today we want to talk about Heaven from an adult point of view. What does the Bible say about it? What can we learn about it? There's really quite a bit in the Scripture about it. Talk to the people out there who really don't understand much about Heaven. It's vague. It's kind of like it doesn't really exist. What do we know about Heaven? What's it going to be like?

Anne Graham Lotz: We know what the Bible tells us. And Jesus... In fact, I will tell you this, that I was speaking in Montreat to a summer conference where my daddy lives and my daddy came to hear me and I was speaking on Heaven. And afterwards my daddy said, Anne, you need to write that down. And so I did and then asked him to do the forward. So it became a little book, *Heaven: My Father's House*. And it came out, it was published right after 9/11. And so I was able to get it into the hands, for instance, of the women who were pregnant when their husbands died in that attack. And there were 120 mothers who were pregnant with babies who were born after that disaster. And I was able to get one of these books into each one of their hands. I just had such a burden to get this little message out.

Because I think people, they talk about Heaven as though it's a hope so, they talk about Heaven as though it's maybe fanciful or whimsical. There've been books written since about Heaven from this religious point of view or that religious point of view or whatever. But Jesus really, He's one who has died. He's come back to life. He tells us that Heaven is His father's house. He talks about it in very personal terms that it's big enough for everybody to go. And then later in the Bible, His beloved disciple John, who was so close to Him that he put his head on Jesus' shoulder at The Last Supper, they were intimate friends. And that same apostle who wrote the Gospel of John and gave us John 3:16, "for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him would not perish but have everlasting life."

That same John said in Revelation four, I saw Heaven opened. And then in chapter 21, he describes what he saw. And of course he starts out just looking at the beautiful city with a wall that went around and the city itself and the streets and the gates and the people inside and he makes it... So he gives us a glimpse. It's not enough to satisfy our curiosity, but one of the things John said, he said, the angel that was showing him this had a measuring rod and he marked it off. And so he gives us the measurements. And I don't know if the measurements would be taken literally, but I think what the angel was impressing on John, you can walk it off. It is a literal physical place.

Dr. James Dobson: As much as it tells us about Heaven in the Scripture, it also says it hasn't entered into the mind of men, what I have prepared for it. If God Himself who made the

beauty of this universe and of this earth, the most beautiful places on this earth, if He says it's so much greater than that, you can't even think about it, I'll take it.

Anne Graham Lotz: But one of the sweet things that I sort of parked on because Jesus said, I'm preparing a place for you. And then in Revelation 21 it says, it's prepared as a bride is for her bridegroom. And so that preparation is very personal. So I believe Jesus knows the colors I like, the people I want to be with, the scenery I enjoy, the music I want to hear, and He's preparing a place for me. So it's like when my children are gone, they're grown... And when I knew one of them was coming home after a long period of absence, I began... For instance, my son. I know he loves barbecue spare ribs. I know he loves the homemade apple pie. He loved to play tennis with his dad. So when I knew he was coming home, I began to prepare those things. So when he walked in the door, he would know he was expected, he was welcome, that he'd come home.

And so Jesus said, the heavenly Father and He are preparing a place for us so that when we walk through Heaven's door, it's not going to be this great big grand place where we're going to be lost in the mob. It's a place that's been prepared just for us. We will know that we've been expected, it's been prepared for us, that we're welcome, that we've come home. And my mother pointed out that gold down here is one of our most precious commodities. In fact, right now it's getting more precious. I mean the prices of gold are skyrocketing and you wear gold and you hoard gold and you work hard for more gold. She said in Heaven, you can tell what God thinks of gold because he paves the streets with it. It is like asphalt.

So the application would be that some of the things we put a high value on down here are meaningless in Heaven. And some of the things that Heaven puts a high priority on are things we don't pay attention to down here. And so I think it's a challenge to get our priorities straightened out, that we would know that we're living for eternity and that's what we're investing our lives in. What we are doing is for more than just this life. If we're just living for this life, then we're going to come up short in eternity. And I believe this life is just preparation for what comes next. And we need to really walk with God to spend time in prayer, reading His word, that He would let us know what's on His heart and mind, that we can be a part of what He's doing so that when we come to Heaven, we'll have an abundant entrance and we won't have wasted our life down here.

Dr. James Dobson: Anne, you mentioned the book that you wrote at your dad's suggestion. I have it in my hands and it says, in troubled times, looking forward with hope to Heaven, my father's house. Forward by Billy Graham.

Anne Graham Lotz: I was talking to my mother... I'll just give this personal example. About five months before she moved to our Father's house, we thought she was dying. She had pneumonia and I was standing beside her and just stroking her head and patting her hand and she couldn't speak. She was so weak, but I felt like she could hear me. So I started talking to her about Heaven. And my mother loved

England. She loved everything British. She had a big picture book of Princess Diana next to her bed, and she had a video of the Queen getting ready for a dinner at Windsor Castle on her video machine.

Dr. James Dobson: She was born in China, wasn't she?

Anne Graham Lotz: Yeah, she was born in China and she had a heart for the world, which I believe is where my daddy got it. But anyway, I was explaining to her, I'd been recently to London and been to Westminster Abbey, which is the grand cathedral downtown London, and it's where kings and queens are married. And I said, when I went to Westminster Abbey, and it's not like this now because I've just been and they've changed it. But when I was telling mother, you go through an ordinary looking door, you came into a darkened room that was like a narthex, and in the narthex you bought your tickets and your guidebook and then that would get you through the next door, and the next door would open up into the sanctuary of Westminster Abbey. And so I told mother, I didn't see anybody going into the narthex who bought their ticket and got their guidebook so excited going out on the street saying, I've been to the narthex of Westminster Abbey and I've got my ticket.

I said, the whole purpose of the narthex is to provide that transition. So you get your ticket and that guide book that tells you something of what you're going to see on the other side of the next door. Then you go through the next door and you go into the glorious sanctuary of Westminster Abbey. And I said, mother, this life is like the narthex. We get our ticket to Heaven when we put our faith in Jesus, we get our guide book, which is the Bible that tells us a little bit of what we're going to see on the other side. When death comes and we go through that next door, we give our ticket and it opens up into the glorious sanctuary of our Father's house. Who wants to stay in the narthex when you go into our Father's house?

And so my mother, on June 14th 2007, at 5:05 in the afternoon, I was standing right beside her bed right next to my daddy when she left the narthex and went into the sanctuary of our Father's house. And I'll tell you Dr. Dobson, at that moment, it didn't matter she was Mrs. Billy Graham who had written best-selling books, was a poet, could play the piano, always asked by the president to sit at his table at a state dinner. The only thing that mattered was that she had put her hand to faith in Jesus' hand. And at that moment, He took her into his heavenly home and welcomed her into the center of our father's house.

Dr. James Dobson: If that would be the most important thing, then it ought to be the most important thing now.

Roger Marsh: You're listening to Family Talk, the broadcasting division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh and we have reached the midpoint of today's broadcast. Today Dr. Dobson is talking with Anne Graham Lotz, the daughter of the late Reverend Billy Graham about the hope of Heaven. This

classic broadcast was originally recorded in 2012, but the subject matter is still very relevant today. Dr. Dobson and Anne are discussing how Christians young and old can have unwavering hope and peace that they will someday live with Jesus in Heaven. In describing why we can have hope in Heaven, Anne says, the New Testament talks about how the resurrection is our living hope, the fact that Jesus is alive and that is good news indeed. Okay, let's rejoin Anne Graham Lotz and Dr. Dobson right now on the special edition of Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Anne, have you ever just let your mind sort of wander and you've followed it wherever it went and began thinking about the people that you know and love who are over there on the other side?

Anne Graham Lotz: Yes, I have a little welcoming committee.

Dr. James Dobson: I've often said that we're going to have a reunion just inside the eastern gate and you're invited.

Anne Graham Lotz: But one of the things that I want to spend the first several million years doing is just gazing on the face of Jesus. If I can lift my eyes to His face, I don't know if I'll have the courage to do that, but I just want to gaze and gaze and gaze on the one who gave His life for me. The one who I've learned by faith through the Scripture loves me, has a plan and purpose for my life, gave His own life that He could open Heaven's gates for me. And the sweet thing about Heaven to the Gates of Pearl, each pearl was big enough to be a gate in a wall that was 200 feet thick. And pearls are formed by oysters when a little grain of sand gets inside and it covers that little grain of sand with layer of mother of pearl.

And can you imagine how great the suffering of that oyster was to create a pearl that was big enough to be a gate in the wall that was 200 feet thick? And so I think the pearls represent the cross and that the only way we get inside Heaven. And people who say there are other ways to God, even the gates speak of the cross, only way we can get into Heaven is through the death and the blood of Jesus Christ. And so I want to spend a long time when I get to Heaven just basking in His presence. I want to hear Him teach.

Dr. James Dobson: Will you dare ask Him anything? And if so, what?

Anne Graham Lotz: I wrote a little book entitled, *Why? Trust in God When We Don't Understand*. It's when my son went through his first divorce and I didn't understand why. And I came to the conclusion that down in this life, we just trust Him when we don't understand. And I believe when I get to Heaven, I won't have any more why questions. I think He will be the answer to all my questions. I don't even think they'll come to my mind.

Dr. James Dobson: Even Jesus asked why.

Anne Graham Lotz: Yeah, that's right.

Dr. James Dobson: On the cross. My God, my God. Why?

Anne Graham Lotz: Why have you forsaken me?

Dr. James Dobson: Every single one of us hits a wall where we ask, why would you do this?

Anne Graham Lotz: And to me, it's not so much why me? Because I think it's like, well, why not you? It's like, God, what is your purpose? What am I missing? I know you're allowing this and what's the reason? How can I be a part of what you're doing in this horrific situation? The book on Heaven for me, *Heaven: My Father's House*, it just helped me refocus my priorities and my perspective because when you do a study of Heaven... I'll tell you this, this life just doesn't seem so attractive and you can think it's very important that you have this or you have this material thing or you have this money or you have this security for the future. And it's like that doesn't matter anymore. And eye has not seen, mind is not conceived, ear is not heard what God's preparing for us. And when you begin to focus on that, then this life just doesn't.

It matters because I want to serve the Lord and I want to bring Him glory, but I'm talking about the material things or reputation or relationships or money or that just doesn't... So it just helps put that in perspective I think, or at least it has for me. And we don't have to live for Heaven but the fact that God loves you, that He has a plan and purpose for your life, that includes living with Him forever when that time comes. But in the meantime, He has a plan and purpose for you right here and now. And He can put joy in your heart that's not dependent on your circumstances. Peace, regardless of the war that's all around you, in your family, or in the world. Give you a sense of purpose that your life has eternal significance. Your life is about something that's bigger than just you and just your job or just your immediate needs.

And so I feel like it's not so much the call of Heaven, but the call of God himself to follow Him in a life of discipleship. And this is a sad thing. A lot of the churches are not teaching the word, and so they have to go outside the church in our city to get to the word. Now there's some great churches that have cropped up. So for me it is sad because they're comparing themselves with each other. They're basing their eternal security on their works or their goodness or their morality or what they give to the church or however many times they go or some perceived standard that is a very low standard because God doesn't measure us according to each other. He measures us according to His Holy Spirit.

There's nobody who measures up and He says all have sinned, all have fallen short of that standard of perfection. So every single one of us are sinners, but sometimes when you're born and raised in the church, or it could be another religion that you think your religion is enough to get you into Heaven, but it's not. And God is not calling you and me to a religion, a denomination,

organization, institution. He's calling us to a personal relationship. The only way you can have that is through faith in Jesus Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: And you are a born teacher, you really are. You have taught in Bible study fellowship, haven't you?

Anne Graham Lotz: That's right. I taught that for 12 years, never missed a class because I wanted everything God had for me. Then He called me out of that to begin this itinerant ministry. I want to do the work of an evangelist to bring people to faith in Christ, but I really am a teacher or a messenger.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you have been doing some teaching today and last time, it's been a real pleasure having you here. I knew it would be. I've been looking forward to you being here for weeks and so glad that you came.

Anne Graham Lotz: Thank you so much.

Dr. James Dobson: You were in Denver?

Anne Graham Lotz: Yes, in Denver.

Dr. James Dobson: And you drove down to be with us.

Anne Graham Lotz: Well, it's such an honor, Dr. Dobson. I feel blessed. You've been a great man of God that so many of us have looked to for leadership, to say things into our culture that we would want to say, but don't have the opportunity. And so you've articulated for us things that needed to be said, and I just am so thankful that you're here and that God has opened this door for us. I told you before, I think we still need to hear from you.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you're very kind. But I've looked to your family. I've been with your dad a number of times, or I've been in the audience, or I have been on the platform with him a few times. And the one that I remember most is after 9/11 and President Bush and his team...

Anne Graham Lotz: The National Cathedral.

Dr. James Dobson: Put together a service in the National Cathedral and your dad came and prayed. I'm telling you, that rocked me.

Anne Graham Lotz: To see him teeter down the aisle and then stand up in the pulpit with the power of God and speak to the world.

Dr. James Dobson: His white hair gleaming was like an angel.

Anne Graham Lotz: No, I've told daddy. I said, you used to be handsome. Now you're beautiful. It's just that white hair.

Dr. James Dobson: We appreciate you so much, Anne. Let's do it again.

Anne Graham Lotz: I'd love to, anytime you ask.

Roger Marsh: God is calling each of us to have a personal relationship with Him, which is a great lesson to teach children when they are young. You're listening to Family Talk with our special guest, Anne Graham Lotz. What a beautiful picture of Heaven that Anne painted in her conversation with her late mother, Ruth Bell Graham, and compared this world to the humble narthex of the Westminster Abbey in London, where tourists received tickets and guidebooks before stepping into the magnificent sanctuary. While here on Earth, we only get a tiny glimpse of what Heaven will be like, but one thing is for sure, Heaven is indeed real, and to receive the gift of eternal life with Jesus will be a magnificent way to spend eternity.

Now, to learn more about Anne Graham Lotz or her book, *Heaven: My Father's House*, visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And by the way, if you missed any of today's or yesterday's program or if you'd like to share them with a friend or family member, remember you can do so very easily when you go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

Now, if you have been a faithful listener of Dr. James Dobson, you know that he has been on the radio for many, many years and May of 2020 marked the 10 year anniversary of the first Family Talk broadcast. By the way, we've now been on the air for 13 years. If you've been blessed by Family Talk and you want to enjoy how God has spoken to our listeners through the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, you will definitely want to receive a collection of 20 of the most beloved programs from over the first momentous decade of Family Talk broadcasts. Listen in as Dr. James Dobson sits down with amazing guests like Dennis Prager, Eric Metaxas, Dr. Tim Clinton, and Anne Graham Lotz, who you just heard from. We'll be happy to send you this all-star audio collection as our way of thanking you for your gift of any amount in support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute today.

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

Dr. James Dobson: Have you ever had the experience of walking through an open field in late summer and feeling the sting of small cockleburs in your shoes and around your ankles? Those thin brown weeds are armed with dozens of sharp spines that

grab our socks and eventually work their way into the skin. They're terribly annoying. But let me tell you something interesting about cockleburrs. Inside those prickly seed pods are not just one but several seeds and they germinate in different years. If the first seed fails to sprout one year due to a drought or other poor conditions, the second is still waiting in the ground. When the next season rolls around, it begins to open and grow. But if that one doesn't take root, there is still a third seed waiting for the year after that, they're the original time release capsules.

Now, I was thinking the other day about these cockleburrs as they relate to children. We parents work so hard to teach certain concepts and civilities to our kids in the hopes that some of them are going to take root and grow, but many of those seeds fail to germinate and the effort seems in vain. The good news, however, is that this instruction can also be like a time release capsule. It may lie dormant for a decade or more, and then suddenly break through the ground and sprout. The key is to remain faithful to the cause, to continue planting seeds and to not get discouraged. The harvest may be in years to come, but it's worth the wait.

Roger Marsh: To get involved, go to drjamesdobson.org.

Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. Do you need help dealing with the everyday tasks of raising a family? I'm James Dobson here, and if you do, I hope you'll tune into our next edition of Family Talk. Our main purpose in this ministry is to put tools into your hands that will strengthen your marriage and help you raise your kids. Hope to see you right here next time for another edition of Family Talk.