



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Ask the Experts: Worldview

Guest(s): Panel

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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.
- Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh. If you invited 100 committed born-again believers to a backyard barbecue, how many of them do you think would actually hold a biblical worldview? According to one well-known study, that number is just 9 out of 100. Isn't that shocking? Well, on today's Family Talk broadcast, Dr. James Dobson sits down with an impressive panel of Christian thinkers and apologists. The lineup includes Josh McDowell, Lee Strobel, Dr. Frank Turek, Dr. Gary Habermas, Dr. Erwin Lutzer, Dr. Del Tackett, and Dr. Alex McFarland. That is a lot of wisdom gathered in one room. Together, they will tackle the big questions of faith, what a Christian worldview really is, why so few believers actually understand it, and how to give a clear, confident answer for the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. So find a comfortable spot and settle in. Here now is Dr. James Dobson starting the conversation with his panel of experts.
- Dr. James Dobson: Alex McFarland is one of the individuals on the stage here with us today and explain the word apologetics.
- Dr. Alex McFarland: Apologetics is an ancient legal word that means a defense. A reason, a justification why we believe what we believe. In other words, prove your case. It's found in verses like 1 Peter 3:15 that says, "Believers are to be ready always to give an answer to anyone who asks a reason for the hope that is within you." An answer, a reason, why we believe what we believe. That's apologetics.
- Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Del Tackett, what you are attempting to do is to get a Christian Worldview across to people and amazingly and depressingly, most people don't understand a Christian worldview.
- Dr. Del Tackett: No, that's true. They don't. That's exactly the problem that we have right now today in our culture. Barna had a study not long ago where he attempted to try to determine the percentage of Americans that had a biblical worldview. The response to that survey showed that only 4% of Americans have a biblical worldview. That was based upon 10 basic fundamental questions from the Scriptures, and he then sliced that data, only 4% of Americans have a biblical

worldview, then re-sliced that data to look at the born-again believers in America, and it jumped up to an anemic 9%.

Dr. James Dobson: So 9% of people who say they're committed to Jesus Christ, they've had a born-again experience with Him do not understand what a Christian worldview is.

Dr. Del Tackett: That's correct. So if you had a barbecue, invited 100 people, 100 born-again believers to your home, 91 of them would not have a biblical worldview.

Dr. James Dobson: What is a biblical worldview?

Dr. Del Tackett: That's a great question. I think the best way to illustrate that is if you were to simply view yourself standing in the middle of a large navigational compass. There isn't a direction that you couldn't turn and gaze out upon all the areas of life that God has not given us His truth claims about life.

Dr. James Dobson: Lee Strobel, you've also written a book on that very subject.

Lee Strobel: Right, and interviewed Dr. Habermas and others about it.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you?

Lee Strobel: Yeah. I was an atheist. I was someone who doubted the resurrection was true. I grew up asking questions that I didn't have anybody to give me answers. And I began to suspect that things like the resurrection were fairy tales and made up and make-believe. And then I learned about evolution in high school, and I thought, well, that puts God out of a job. But later, after marrying a woman who was an agnostic and she ended up coming to faith, began to see positive changes in her character and her values and so forth, and encouraged me to investigate the evidence. And so few people actually take the time to do that. And I spent nearly two years of my life delving into the evidence for whether or not the New Testament can be trusted, whether or not the resurrection of Jesus Christ is an actual historical event that we can depend on. I came away with the conclusion that the resurrection, that Jesus not only claimed to be the Son of God, but that He proved it by the resurrection, that I think is the best attested event of ancient history.

Dr. James Dobson: Have you found yourself in debates with those who were coming from the other side?

Lee Strobel: Oh, sure. Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: How does that evidence hold up?

Lee Strobel: I'll tell you how it holds up. This will give you a good example. I did a television show for the PAX Network called *Faith Under Fire*. We have scholars like Dr. Habermas and William Lane Craig and others who make a career of debating atheists. And we did one of those debates in Chicago, and we took a vote. And

among the people who walked in as avowed atheists, and we had thousands of people there, over 84% said, after hearing the case for Christ and the case for atheism, the case for Christ was by far the most persuasive. And we had 47 confirmed atheists who walked in the door, heard the debate, and walked out as followers of Jesus Christ because of the power of the evidence.

When I was working on my book, *The Case for Christ*, I was interviewing a scholar about the evidence for Christianity. And during a break, he paused and he said, you know, I just want to tell you, nobody's going to read your book. And I said, really, why not? And he said, "Well, we live in a postmodern world, especially young people today. They don't care about evidence for the resurrection. They don't care about historic reality. They don't care about truth." You know, you got your truth. I got my truth. It's a postmodern world. I remember going home and telling my wife, "Nobody's going to read my book. I'm wasting my time." And yet the single biggest group of people who've written me to say that they have come to faith in Jesus Christ through the evidence in the book, *The Case for Christ*, have been 16 through 24-year-olds. So I think this idea that somehow young people don't care about truth and don't care about reality and don't care about historic evidence is just not supported by the evidence.

They want answers. They definitely want answers.

Dr. James Dobson: They're hungry, aren't they?

Dr. Erwin Lutzer: It's illustrated by all the people who are here this weekend, Dr. Dobson. When Dr. Habermas lays out the evidence for the resurrection, or Lee lays it out, the skeptic may say, well, you know, miracles can't happen, so therefore I'm not going to believe in the resurrection. But what's the greatest miracle in the Bible? The greatest miracle in the Bible is not the resurrection. It's the first verse. If the first verse of the Bible is true, every other verse is believable. If the universe was created out of nothing by God, He can do anything else he wants in the universe. And we now have scientific evidence that the universe was created out of nothing. Now what is nothing? Aristotle had a good definition of nothing. Nothing is what rocks dream about. So there was nothing, and then this entire space-time continuum leapt into existence. So miracles are not only possible, it is probable, given the evidence.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Del, what percentage of people in the church believe in absolute truth or what Josh calls universal truth?

Dr. Del Tackett: Well, I think I'd probably ask Josh that. He knows his statistics very well.

Dr. James Dobson: He's next.

Dr. Del Tackett: Let me turn it over to him.

- Dr. Josh McDowell: Of adults and that would consider themselves born again. In other words, would say, I personally trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and if he were to die today, I know I'd go to Heaven because He is my Savior and forgive me my sins, it'd be right about 9%, almost identical to youth. And the reason is, the stats that even I talked about this morning on belief is a reflection of the parents of the adults. Now you're finding very little difference in the statistics and beliefs between young people and the adults in the church.
- Dr. James Dobson: I don't understand how you can call yourself a follower of Jesus Christ and not believe in absolute truth. And what people say about that is that that's fine for you. Yeah, absolute truth is different for every person. I don't know how they come up with that either, but they do.
- Dr. Josh McDowell: You see, so many young people who are coming to Christ today within the body of Christ, over half of them, I'm convinced, are not coming to Christ because He's the way, the truth, and the life. They're coming to Christ because he's the best thing that's come along so far. And almost all faith today is self-centered, individualistic, what can it do for me? Forgiveness is only good if it takes away my guilt. Has nothing to do with god and you talk to any youth pastor as soon as something comes along that child that seems to be better, they're gone. And this is why I agree with all these gentlemen here we've got to get back to substance.
- Within our message several weeks ago right here in Colorado I spoke to 450 junior high, high school kids And I gave my testimony, and there I show how I struggled with the deity of Christ, the Scriptures, and the resurrection. And I said, you know the problem? Maybe there might be two of you here out of 450, all their parents who are in full-time Christian ministry. I said, there might be two of you who could give me any intelligent answer why I believe the Bible's true. And they all started looking at each other, and I said, tell you what. Tomorrow afternoon, last day of the conference, they were packing to go home. I said, at 4 o'clock, I'm going to be outside, blistering hot. I'll be under that tree. And if you want to come out there, I'll take one hour, not a minute more, and I'll tell you why I believe it's true.
- Jim, the next afternoon at 4 o'clock, 232 kids showed up. I literally thought it would be 25 or 30.
- Dr. James Dobson: They want to know.
- Frank Turek: They really – and they sat there and ended up being an hour and a half.
- Dr. James Dobson: We have, I think, convinced ourselves that they don't want to know, that no one wants to know. And we're intimidated to tell them or even mention the name of Jesus Christ for fear we'll offend somebody. But the truth of the matter is they're desperate for meaning.
- Dr. Del Tackett: They really do. But here is what we've done. In the postmodern worldview, we have essentially put them on a cork, put them in an ocean, and say there is no

shore. And they want a rock to stand on. If someone will come to them that says there's a rock and a shore, they want to listen to it. But you better be sincere about it from the standpoint of the fact that they can smell hypocrisy a mile away.

Dr. Erwin Lutzer: Could I say also that something contributing to the doubt that young people have is the fact that we are living in an era where we have the proliferation of other religions. Young people say to themselves, well, I'm a Christian, but there's the Muslim faith and there's the other faiths. And that's why I think it's so wonderful that even at this conference that we're having, we're actually having some breakout sessions and some sessions on various kinds of religions so that young people understand the difference. What my message is that I feel so deeply about is that we must point out that Jesus is the only qualified Savior.

Come with me to 1993 in Chicago. The Parliament of World Religions, 5,000 delegates from all over the world meeting to try to unify the religions of the world. And I was there the whole week. I went into the area where all of the literature from 100 different religions was handed out, and I went on a search for a sinless savior. So I began with the Hindus, and I said, I'm a sinner, and I need somebody who's not a part of my predicament to save me. Does Hinduism have a sinless savior? No, we don't. I went to the Buddhists, Baha'u'llah, enlightenment, but not sinlessness, and it dawned on me that Jesus is sinless. He's the only one qualified to give us the kind of righteousness that a holy God demands that we have as sinners. And therefore, he's the only one who has the qualifications of saviorhood. And we need to be able to say to young people today, other religions have gurus and prophets. Much of what they say might even be good, live this way, etc. But there's only one person who is able to credit us with the righteousness of God so that we can be in God's presence, declared as holy as God Himself is. There is no one else out there who meets those qualifications.

Dr. James Dobson: That is so good. You know, we – yeah. When I wrote *Life on the Edge*, which is written for those between 16 and 26 to help bridge that gap from childhood to adulthood, we did focus groups to see what young people in that age group were thinking. And after a good number of them, the data showed the number one issue they care about. Of all the things, making money, fame, fortune, all the things that they care about, the number one issue was meaning. They don't know why they have meaning. Nobody has told them why they have meaning. And why would they draw that conclusion? Because they're sitting in school where they tell them that they came from meaningless matter that somehow coalesced. Why would they have meaning? Only Christ can give that meaning and it's not just that they want to know how to share their faith. They want to know for sure that their own faith has meaning, and in that meaning comes their understanding of life itself.

Dr. Alex McFarland: I was in New Jersey over Easter weekend doing an apologetics weekend in a church. On Saturday night, we had several hundred teenagers there, and before the event, we had a dinner with the youth leaders that had organized this,

teenagers from New Jersey churches. And so we had a little Q&A time, and it was really interesting. And one young lady, she was an 11th grader named Allison, she said, "I've learned more this weekend than in three whole years of being a believer." And she said, "I'm so excited." And I said, great, you know, this is wonderful. And she raised her hand, and she made the comment. She said, "A lot of the grown-ups just think that we teens are only interested in pizza and concerts, but we want to know the deep things of God, and we are ready for it." And I said, "Whoa, hit the pause button." I said, "How many agree with that statement? You want to know the deep things of God, and even though a teen, you say, 'hey, I'm ready for it.'" And it was a whole group of youth leaders. And Dr. Lutzer's got it right. We have to pass the knowledge of Jesus Christ onto the young generation. A lot of religious leaders have claimed to represent God. Jesus claimed to be God. Some people spoke for God. Jesus spoke as God. And He validated His identity by rising from the grave, the only one in history who ever did that. And the world needs to know, especially the teens, that Jesus is real.

Dr. James Dobson: And that's what motivates you.

Dr. Alex McFarland: Yes, sir.

Dr. James Dobson: David, tell us about your conversion.

David Noebel: Well, surprisingly enough, we had Norm Geister speak over at the Summit the other day, and he said that God reached down and picked up someone who had a very filthy mouth, and within two days he was out on the street corner preaching the gospel. He got saved, and two days later he was preaching. I was thinking to myself, wow, that sounds very familiar because when I met the Lord in a camp, by the way, in Michigan, I had the filthiest mouth on the block. In fact, our neighbor, I tell the kids this, too, and I don't think any believe me, but if my mother were alive today, she'd tell you. Our neighbor was a Marine in the Second World War, and one day he got a hold of my mother and he said, "Shut that kid up." He said, "I've been through five campaigns in the Pacific and I haven't heard that language." And when I met the Lord at this camp in Michigan, you might say that the gospel doesn't change your life, but from that time on to the present time, I can't really believe that I've used God's name in vain. And that to me would be an utter miracle. And when I got home, by the way, from camp, the neighbors gave me a nickname, A.C. and B.C., before camp and after camp. They didn't know it was Christ. They just thought, hey, the kid went to camp. I wonder what's going on now. And then the windows came up in the neighborhood too.

Dr. James Dobson: Gary, Let's suppose that I'm 17 years old and I come to you and I say, I want to ask you some questions. I was raised in a church and my parents are Christians, but I'm having a real hard time believing that Christ is the Son of God who came down from heaven with a mission to save those of us who are in sin, all of us in sin. I can't accept that. Any way you can help me with my faith? Is there any evidence that that is true?

Dr. Gary Habermas: Yeah, I'd like to know where the person's coming from, but we have this common conception today where we say all religions are the same. They all teach virtually the same truth. Smooth away the rough edges, and they're saying the same thing. Jesus is the only founder of a major world religion who ever claimed to be deity. There are no other takers. I mean there are no other takers from their own lips. Jesus is the only founder of a major world religion about whom miracles are recorded within a generation. Jesus is the only founder of a major world religion who said, what you do with Me determines where you spend eternity. And this is conceded by every critical scholar who writes. Jesus is the only founder of a major world religion who said, My death is going to be essential for your salvation and Jesus is the only founder of a major world religion who not only predicted His resurrection but did it.

What I'm saying is I'm not saying as a Christian we know that these are the only ones because that's what we believe I'm saying nobody else no other major founder even claimed any of these things. Now when the person hears that they usually you know falling back to this aren't we all the same but I would go immediately to the resurrection and I would say Jesus made these incredible claims. He claimed to be the Son of Man. He claimed to be the Son of God. Then He was raised from the dead. I would like this fellow to tell me; how else can I take the evidence except as a confirmation of who he said he was? This is not a big philosophical argument, but just a real brief question for him, and that's this. If Jesus is only a man, and if the evidence shows He was raised from the dead, what happened? I think God would have to have acted upon Him. And if God acted on His dead body, that I would think the best explanation is God approved of what He said. Of everything Jesus taught, probably the two most offensive things He taught vis-a-vis the other world religions is I am deity, and what you do with Me determines where you spend eternity. Those are pretty exclusive claims. Why is he and he alone raised from the dead?

Frank Turek: Frank, any last thing you want to say? Well, I was just going to say I came to faith back in 1985. I was in Sacramento, California, in flight school, and I had a roommate who was the son of a Methodist minister, and I had all sorts of skeptical questions. And one day, it was having to be a Sunday morning, we're sitting over breakfast, and I said to him, "Mark, I just can't believe that there is a good God with all this evil." We discussed that before. "And I really just can't believe Jesus is the only way. I just think that's way too narrow." And he said, "Well, I believe what the Bible says. 'I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except through me.'" And then I go, "That's so narrow." So I looked at my watch and I said, "Well, if we're going to go to church, we better get going." We didn't even know where the church was. Somehow, we found the church. We were walking in, and we noticed that the church had already been in session. And we sat down, and there was a preacher on a riser, and all he had was a Bible in his hand. And we sat down, and two minutes later, the preacher said, "And then Jesus said, 'I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except through me.'" So Mark gives me the elbow. And he goes, "Some people think that's narrow." So then he gives me the real elbow,

you know? And he said, "But the truth is narrow." He said, "If I want to call my friend John here in the front row, I have to put 10 numbers in exact order. If I get one number wrong, I don't get John, I get a wrong number." He said, "The truth is very narrow. But as soon as I became a believer, the dictum that Augustine said, "believe and then you will understand," really became true in my life, and I learned a lot more. Now, I still have questions. I still don't have all the answers. But right now, I think it takes a lot more faith to be an unbeliever than it does to be a believer. That's why I wrote the book; *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*."

Dr. James Dobson: There are people who have been listening to us through these discussions who are drawn to Christ by what you all have had to say. Talk directly to that person.

Dr. Alex McFarland: Dr. Dobson, years ago, G.K. Chesterton said this, that an open mind is like an open mouth. Its purpose is to close down on something solid. Otherwise, it becomes like an open sewer, rejecting nothing. And the search is what a lot of people revel in and glory in. It's just the journey, not the destination. But eventually, people have to come to that point where they say, I volitionally, I willfully choose to respond to what God has revealed to me. The fact is that, yes, Jesus is who He claimed to be. In love, He went to a windswept hill outside Jerusalem to a cross. And here's love. The very wood upon which He hung, the iron spikes that held Him there, while Christ hung, shouldered the sin debt of the world, the guilt of Alex McFarland, the very instruments of his torture, the cross on which he was crucified, not only was He hanging there, He was sustaining it all in love. And He died as a substitute for me, for everyone, rose again. And He makes this offer. He says it's a gift, complete forgiveness, restoration, healing, salvation. It's yours simply for the taking. And so I would challenge every listener, if you know about God but don't yet have a relationship with God this day, pray and say, yes, Jesus, I choose You.

Dr. James Dobson: God's blessings to you all. Thank you for taking the time to be with us.

Panel: Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Dobson.

Roger Marsh: The greatest questions of our faith aren't meant to leave us searching forever. They're actually meant, as G.K. Chesterton put it, to finally close down on something solid. And that solid ground is a person, Jesus Christ. You've been listening to a classic edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, one featuring Dr. Dobson and a remarkable panel of Christian thinkers, including Josh McDowell, Lee Strobel, Dr. Frank Turek, Dr. Gary Habermas, Dr. Erwin Lutzer, Doctor's good friend, Dr. Del Tackett, and Dr. Alex McFarland. Now, if you'd like to hear this conversation again or pass it along to a friend who is wrestling with the big questions of life and faith, You'll find today's broadcast audio link at drjamesdobson.org. And if it's easier, just type in those initials jdfi.org. That'll take you to the same place.

You know, a program like the one you heard today exists for only one reason above all else, and that's to introduce as many people as possible to the gospel

of Jesus Christ. That is at the very center of who we are here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Alongside it, we work to strengthen marriages and families, upholding biblical principles that they are built upon and standing for truth in a culture that has literally lost its way. When you donate to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, you help carry these conversations across more than 1500 radio station outlets nationwide and into the hearts of people searching for real answers. Your gift of any amount makes a genuine difference and we invite you to partner with us today. You can send your tax-deductible donation to our ministry mailing address, which is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949. You can also speak with a member of our constituent care team. That number is 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. Or if it's easier, you can make a secure donation online when you go to Dr. James Dobson.

And while you're on our website, take a moment to sign up for one of our free email series designed to encourage you right where you are. One favorite is our 10 day series based on Dr. Dobson's best-selling book, *Bringing Up Boys*. It's full of practical wisdom for raising sons with courage and conviction. To begin your free 10 day email series, just go to drjamesdobson.org and search for that title, "Bringing Up Boys." Again, drjamesdobson.org or jdfi.org for short.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh, and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, thanks so much for joining us today. Be sure to tune in again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

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