



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Last Days – 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: Well, welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. If you look around at the events going on in the world today, you might be asking yourself, are we living in the last days? Is Jesus coming again soon? We certainly hope so. But on today's program, Anne Graham Lotz will help us explore the signs of the times and how we should be responding to what's going on in our culture, and will be sharing with us a powerful message where she explores if we are in fact living in the last days or not.

Anne Graham Lotz is an American Christian evangelist and the daughter of the late Billy Graham. She has authored many books and is an excellent speaker. Today, we're going to hear a sermon that she presented a few years ago on this topic of understanding the end times. Now, let's go to this presentation from Anne Graham Lotz right here, right now on Family Talk.

Anne Graham Lotz: Open your bibles if you would to Joel chapter 2. Just the first 17 verses. "Blow the trumpet in Zion. Sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness like dawn spreading across the mountains, a large and mighty army comes such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come. Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them a desert waste. Nothing escapes them. They have the appearance of horses. They gallop along like calvary. With a noise like that of chariots. They leap over the mountaintops like a crackling, fire consuming stubble like a mighty army drawn up for battle."

"At the sight of them, nations are in anguish. Every face turns pale. They charge like warriors. They scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. They do not jostle each other. Each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks. They rush upon the city. They run along the wall. They climb into the houses like thieves who enter through the windows."

"Before them the earth shakes the sky trembles the sun and moon are darkened and the stars no longer shine. The Lord thunders at the head of his army. His forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the Lord is great. It is dreadful. Who can endure it? 'Even now,' declares the Lord. 'Return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.'" Render your heart, not your garments. Return to the Lord your God for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity."

"Who knows? He may turn in half pity and leave behind a blessing. Grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord, your God. Blow the trumpet and Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly. Bring together the elders. Gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. Let the priest who minister before the Lord weep between the temple porch in the altar. Let them say, 'Spare your people, oh Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples? Where is their God?'"

How many of you are a little frightened or unsettled by the harbingers? You went to bed last night, maybe it was hard to go to sleep because you're thinking about the disasters not only in the world but coming in your own life? And literally maybe you just wanted to pull the covers up over your head. But I think a lot of people, that's why they stay asleep, isn't it? They don't want to see what's going on.

They want to pretend that this is just one cycle after another cycle. And this is a bump in human history and we're going to get past it and we're going to go on and no, we're not. I believe we're coming up to the end of human history as we know it. And it's time for God's people to wake up. Judgment is coming. But in the midst of all the darkness, in the midst of all of the harbinger and the disasters, there is a light that's shining in the darkness and it's the hope that God gives us.

And just as an example, you're in North Carolina and our coast is very rugged and we have outer banks in their hidden shoals and sandbars and it's called the Graveyard of the Atlantic because ships that come past North Carolina run aground on one of those sandbars and they get stuck and then the waves, all the swirling currents break them up and they get smashed to smithereens.

So along our coast, there are lighthouses that dot our coast. The most familiar one to you perhaps is the Cape Hatteras lighthouse. It stands 210 feet tall. It looks like a barber's pole. It's wrapped in black and white stripes. The beam from that Cape Hatteras lighthouse goes for 20 miles. It can be clearly seen for 20 miles. It has never gone out, not even during the Civil War. And the purpose of the lighthouse is to for when ships are passing in the darkness and they're going through those dangerous waters.

The purpose is to let them know where they are and to give them direction so they can navigate the dangerous waters that they're in and they can come through to safety. God has given us a lighthouse. He's given us a light. He's given us hope that shows us where we are so we know where we are in human history. And then He gives us the Word to tell us how to navigate the dangerous waters that we're in. Our hope is Jesus. I mean, we know that.

But in chapter two of Joel verses 1 to 17, the hope specifically is the fact that God is on the move. He's moving. And the same God who's moving in judgment is a God who is loving. So let's look together at the fact that God is moving in our world today. I often get questions when I do interviews and the person asks me, "And how do you see God moving in the world?" I know what they're looking for. Are you seeing churches getting filled with people and people going to Bible study? Do you see people repenting of their sin? And when you give the invitation, are people just packed out at the altar and people getting it and they're wanting evidence of God's movement to be answers to prayer and blessing and miracles?

Sometimes, God moves like that, praise God. But sometimes when God moves, it's not pleasant. We never think that when disasters in the harbinger come that that's evidence that God is moving in our world. But God is moving. And so in 2:1, it says, "Blow the trumpets. Get people's attention." And I told you last night that first trumpet blast was to arouse the people, to let them know there's an invading army or there's something they need to rally to push back the enemy. It was an alarm that was going off.

In fact, in that same verse it says, "Sound the alarm." And it's just another wave of saying blow the trumpet, sound the alarm. Let the people know this is not a drill. This is the real thing. And as I understand it, when a ship has an emergency, they have one long blast of the ship's whistle and then seven short ones. It's a seven bell alarm. So we think of a seven bell alarm as an alarm. It's an emergency.

In Missouri, there was an apartment complex and had a seven bell alarm. And the firefighters got there 3:00 in the morning. They banged on the doors of the apartments, waking people up, getting them out. People, it was freezing cold. They came out in just their nightgowns pajamas. They just ran out with whatever they had on. Their apartment complex burned to the ground. Dozens of people were left homeless, but not one life was lost because when they heard the alarm, they heeded it.

Joel is saying, "Blow the trumpet, arouse the people. Sound the alarm. Let them know." This is not business as usual. This is not life the way it always has been. We are not in a cycle and a pattern that's going to get better. This is the end. We're looking at it. It's honest. So what's all the noise about? Just that. The day of the Lord is soon. The day of the Lord is coming. It's close at hand. I understand that ultimately the great and terrible day of the Lord is the end of the tribulation.

But Joel was saying the day of the Lord is close at hand and the tribulation was at least 2,600 years from him. So he wasn't talking about the end of the tribulation when he said the day of the Lord is soon. He was talking about either the invasion of the Assyrians that destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel or the Babylonians that destroyed the southern kingdom of Judah. So the day of the Lord can be a type of a judgment when God just gets fed up and he says, "That's enough," and his patience runs out.

So that happens in 70 A.D. when, I believe, God behind the Romans sent them in to destroy Jerusalem and his people and scatter them all over the world. And I believe it may happen in America and that may be simultaneous with the rapture or God may allow us to go through some judgment before the rapture. Somebody pointed out to me that when God sent the 10 plagues on Egypt and they were to force Pharaoh's hand to let God's people go, and it was for the Egyptians, but the Israelites went through the first three. And they were what's been described as nuisance plagues, but they still made life uncomfortable, didn't they?

So we can think, "Well, the rapture is coming and we're going to get out of here." What? God may allow us to go through some persecution or some judgment first. And one purpose possibly is to purify the church to get us ready to meet our bridegroom. But I think of prophecy and we'll qualify this thing that this is just the way I see it. But if you look at the Blue Ridge Mountains, they look like they're one dimensional. They look like sort of a blue scallop line.

If you look at the Smokies over here, the sort of a gray scallop line, all right? And they just look like one dimension. But if you get up close, you'll find that each scallop is a separate mountain peak and they're actually separated by miles. And so you can look at prophecy and the day of the Lord and it looks one dimensional. So Joel is talking about the Assyrians and the Babylonians. But you get closer and you say, "Oh goodness, it could be the invasion of the Romans and the destruction in 70 A.D. and you get closer." Oh my goodness, it could be in the 21st century and it could come on America. It could come on the world. And then of course the ultimate fulfillment would be the great and terrible day of the Lord.

So I just think there are patterns like that and dimensions of the day of the Lord that are broader than just one point in time because he says the day of the Lord is soon. Genesis 6, God's spirit will not always strive with man, that God's spirit restrains evil so that life can go on. But there's a certain point that he says, "I'm not going to do that anymore. You keep telling me to get out and so I'm going to back off and I'm going to not restrain evil anyway."

And you can experience what I've been protecting you from. You lose my blessing. You lose my protection. And sometimes when I watch the evening news or I catch it online, or however you get your news. If you're like me, you see something is happening and you say, "God, when are you going to do something about this?" And God answers and He says, "I am going to do

something about this." And that's the day of the Lord. So Joel says it soon and let me read some companion passages.

Isaiah 13, "Wail, for the day of the Lord is near. It will come like destruction from the almighty. The day of the Lord is coming. It's a cruel day with wrath and fierce anger to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners with it. The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be dark and the moon will not give its light."

Ezekiel 30:3, "The day of the Lord is near. It's a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations." Amos 5, "Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord. Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light. It'll be though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear. Well not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light. Pitch dark without a ray of brightness." The day of the Lord is a day of God's reckoning with sinners who are in rebellion. Blaspheming his name, profaning his name. Their obscenities in their cruelty and he just says, "I've had enough."

And there's a part of me that was a good correction for me in Amos. There's a part of me that longs to see that judgment fall on the bad guys. How can they get away with such... You look at ISIS. You look at those Christians that are marched out there on the beach in Libya and you think, "God, why don't you strike them all dead right now?" I mean, if lightning had come out and hit all of those ISIS, wouldn't the world wake up and say, "Maybe we're not going to be a part of ISIS? Maybe there's something going on here that... And God allows it to happen because he's patient, doesn't want any to come under judgment.

He wants all to come to repentance, but there's coming a time when His patience runs out. What disasters have been running around in your life? Has God been trying to get your attention about something and you thought there were just trouble after trouble? Health difficulty, financial difficulty, marriage difficulty, family difficulty, business difficulty. But could it be that God is moving?

Listen to the hope for a moment. Okay? The day of the Lord. Let's turn that around. It's the Lord's day. And this is the Lord who loves you, who created you to know Him in a personal relationship, who died on the cross to take away your sin so you could come into that personal relationship who even now is preparing a place for you to live with Him forever in His heavenly home. It's the Lord's day. He is in charge. He's in control. And so when these things happen to your life, Romans 8:28 says what? All things in your life. All those harbinger and those disasters and those troubles, all things work together for your good. What's your good? It's not your happiness and your prosperity, and your health. Your ultimate good is to be conformed to the image of Christ.

So He lets all things that come into your life, He works them out for His purpose. When you're called according to His will. The important thing is that you get into His will. And then these things that happen in your life, they're not wasted. He's

using them to make you like Jesus. It's the Lord's day. He's in charge. God is moving. So God is moving soon and He's moving surely, slowly maybe.

Verse two, I just took time to think about this. It's like the dawn spreading. Have you ever watched the dawn? I love the dawn. I sit up in my cabin, I watch the dawn come up over the mountains and there's just a little... It's dark and then there's a little glimmer of light and then it gets broader and broader and it's just so silent and slow. Have you ever thought about it?

God's judgment is slow, isn't it? I mean, when it falls it's going to fall. But He does it progressively. It's not all at once. And I thought about it when I've been studying kings in my devotions. And when the Assyrians laid siege to Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, they laid siege for three years before Samaria fell. And I thought, "God, why didn't you just let them take it?" And was He holding it off for three years so that waiting for Samaria to repent, waiting for Samaria to say, "God, we're through with all these idols and these golden calves and we turn to you. We remember the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and we turned to you and repent of our sin." But they didn't.

And then the southern kingdom, I put those years together. Do you know from the time the Babylonians came in until the time they just destroyed Jerusalem? So the whole city was destroyed. It was 22 years. God warning them and doing it slowly, giving them an opportunity to repent and turn to Him. Joel Rosenberg and I were talking. It was interesting that we had the same devotions this past week on Josiah who was just about that time. And God raised up a Josiah eight years old when he took the throne, who led his nation in revival.

It didn't last long, but at least it postponed the judgment zone. And I think so that's one way I'm praying is that God would raise up an America, Josiah. Maybe bring us back to revival, just postponing the judgments. Maybe sparing America from judgment before the rapture. That's a selfish prayer I guess. But we can pray that way, can't we? I don't know if this is theologically correct after the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension of Jesus. It was 40 years before the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and not one stone was left on top of another.

I know during that time that church was getting established and all of that. Would it have been possible if the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the Sanhedrin said, "Oh, we have crucified the Lord of glory. Oh God, we're sorry." And if the whole nation had gotten on their face before God repented of their sin, maybe God would've held off the Romans. And then I know at the end of human history, it's so interesting. In the book of Revelation, God's judgment is meted out as seven seals and then seven trumpets and then seven bowls.

And the whole presentation is that it's progressive. One at a time, at a time. And not until you get to the bowls, you have the feeling that it's one right after another. And there's no opportunity at that point to repent. God just pours out his wrath. But the first judgment that's open, the first seal when it's opened in Revelation 8:1, there is silence in Heaven for about half an hour. Now, I don't

know what that is, but was it a pause? God waiting to hear somebody on earth cry out to Him, say, "God, we are so sorry. We can feel the judgment coming. We've seen the harbinger. We respond to you. We repent of our sin. Please God, spare us, save us. We put our faith in you. We clinging to you."

But there's silence and then judgment falls. But God is patient. He's very reluctant to judge. He moves slowly. And I think His judgment comes slowly because He doesn't want to do it, but it's unstoppable. It comes like the dawn spreading. You can't stop the dawn, right? So I think we could delay it, we could postpone it. Maybe we could lessen it for America. But it's coming. There must be judgment for sin. That's the message of the cross.

But just making it personal. Have you mistaken His patience in your life for toleration? I think our culture is doing that. I think God is so patient, so loving, so compassionate, so unwilling to bring judgments that He's delaying. And our culture thinks that He's either too old to act or He's indifferent to what's going on, or there's really not any God up there anyway. And we've just all evolved and we don't have to give an account to anybody.

So they are making a fatal mistake of thinking that God's indifferent, that He's neglecting, that He's blind, that He's deaf, that He's indifferent or He is not there at all. God is there. He sees everything. And in my study of Kings, again, it was interesting. He told the prophets to tell the nation, "I'm going to bring such disaster that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle."

And then He said, "I'm going to destroy Israel and remove them from my presence." And then He said about Judah, He said, "I'm going to wipe them clean like you would wipe a dish and turn it upside down. I want to get them out of my sight." And if God would say that to Israel and Judah, why would He not say that to America? So don't mistake His patience for toleration. And you think, "I got by with my sin yesterday and I get by with my sin today. I'll get by with it tomorrow."

You're pushing God to the limits of His patience. Don't do it. You can choose to sin, but you can't choose your consequences. And before the consequences set in that our life scarring, life altering, repent, turnaround. Turn to God. His judgment is soon, it's sure, and it's severe. Let's look at it. This is the Locust plague. But you understand the locust plague is a harbinger, okay? And so the harbinger is giving us a description of judgment that's coming.

Not necessarily the final great day of the Lord, but this is what I see on the horizon coming like the dawn spreading. It's seeping in even now. I can feel it. When I read this, it sent chills down my spine because I see it, I feel it. This is what's coming. It's already in our world.

All right. Verse 2. It's dark. It's a day of darkness. And just think of what the light is. The light is truth, and goodness, and love, and hope. Darkness is lies,

deception, falsity. It's if truth is goodness, darkness is evil. And the whole world filled with darkness, hate, falsity, deception, hopelessness, despair, agitation, anger. It's dark. Verse 3, the judgment is detailed.

Nothing escapes them. It affects every area of our lives at every level. Education, medicine, the economy, religion, business, family, marriage, relationships, race. Nothing is missed. Reminds me of a tank moving and just grinding everything in its path. Dreadful. In verse 6, "At the sight of the nations are in anguish, and every face turns pale is demonic. I look at ISIS. I'm so tired of seeing pictures of these black garb figures with their machine guns pointing in the air, their faces wrapped.

I know they're trying to intimidate and scare us, but they look like demons because I think they are demonic. Can you imagine if that's creeping into the whole world. We can see ISIS. But I think the demons are flooding our earth right now. And the interesting thing God allows that. God uses demons. God uses the devil. So don't forget God is in charge. And this day of judgment is dark. It's detailed. It's dreadful. Verse 7 and 8, it's determined where it says they charge like warriors. They scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. It's systematic. It's organized. They're well financed. They have a great military. They have all the political machine. They overcome all obstacles. And you feel it.

I just think in back of some of the stuff going on in our world today, there's got to be something in back of it. Now, I thought, who's calling the shots? Who's coordinating all this? And maybe there is some little group and little committee somewhere that's up there. But in back of that is the devil and in back of him is God.

Roger Marsh:

Well, that certainly was a lot of food for thought from Anne Graham Lotz today here on Family Talk. If you enjoyed today's dynamic presentation, be sure to join us again tomorrow when we'll hear the conclusion of her sermon. Now, to share today's program with a friend or family member, remember you can do so quite easily using the Family Talk app on your smartphone or by visiting drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. And if you haven't yet heard the news, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute has launched the new Dobson Culture Center. The purpose of the DCC, as we call it, is to help families and individuals live spiritually rooted lives and to engage culture with a biblical worldview, exposing darkness and exalting the light of Christ.

With that, I also want to introduce the newest member of the JDFI team, senior director of the Dobson Culture Center, Dr. Owen Strachan. He'll be a new voice occasionally here on the Family Talk Program and he'll also be blogging and podcasting as well. We are sure that you'll enjoy his humility and his strength in fighting for biblical values. Learn more about the Dobson Culture Center when you go to drjamesdobson.org and click on the link for it. You'll see a picture of Dr. Strachan right there. And also you can sign up to start receiving his free weekly newsletter called "Lighting Up Culture" when you go there as well.

Again, drjamesdobson.org and click on the link for the new Dobson Culture Center.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks so much for listening today. May God continue to richly bless you and your family as you grow stronger and deeper in your relationship with him. And be sure to join us again tomorrow for part two of a powerful presentation from Anne Graham Lotz about the last days. That's right here on Family Talk.

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