

Anne Graham Lotz: 'My Father's Death May Be a Shot Across the Bow From Heaven'

When I was a girl growing up, Mother led us in family devotions every day. She read the Bible, prayed and that was that. When Daddy was home, he led in family devotions. But when he read the Bible, he would stop and make a comment, ask a question and lead us in discussion. So, my mother taught me by her example to love reading my Bible every day, and my daddy taught me by his example to think about what I was reading. A little over 10 years ago when my mother went to heaven, my daddy started asking me to read him the Bible. At first, it was very intimidating. And then it became such a joy. Because he was hard of hearing, there were times I would sit in front of Daddy, knee to knee, and he would ask me to give him a full 60-minute message. He never took his eyes off my face. Once in a while, he would interrupt me, ask a question or we would discuss what I was saying. But he loved to hear God's Word.

As he got weaker, we went from 60 minutes to five or 10 minutes. But the pattern was always the same—whichever was in the house was called to gather around him whether he was at the kitchen table, or sitting in his study chair or more recently when he was in his bedroom. But before I read a passage of Scripture, I would explain why I had chosen it. Then I would read the passage to him. I would always end by telling Daddy I loved him.

At Daddy's funeral service, with 2500 people in front of me, and millions more watching the live broadcasts, for the last time I led in "family devotions." The passage of Scripture I chose was 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. The reason is this: I believe from heaven's perspective that my father's death was

as significant as his life. I know that Feb. 21, 2018, was the date God had preordained to take my father home. Why? What was significant about that day? When I did a web search, I discovered that Feb. 21, 2018, was the day when the Scripture reading for Jews focused on the death of Moses.

Moses was the great liberator. He brought millions of people out of bondage to slavery, got them to the edge of the promised land and then God took him to heaven. At that point, God brought Joshua to lead them into the promised land—to take them home.

Like Moses, my father also was a great liberator. He brought millions of people out of bondage to sin, and he has gotten us to the edge of the promised land—heaven. Then God called him home. Could it be that God is now going to bring Joshua to lead us into the promised land? To lead us to heaven? To take us home? And do you know what the New Testament name is for Joshua? It's Jesus!

I believe my father's death may be a shot across the bow from heaven. Is God saying, "Wake up, church. Wake up, world. Wake up, Anne. Jesus is coming!"? Jesus said in Matthew 24:14 when the gospel is preached to the whole world—as it was during my father's funeral service, as it is through churches, missionaries, ministries—then the end.

First Thessalonians, Chapter 4 beginning with verse 13 says this: I will write it out for you the way my mother taught me by putting my name in, to make it personal. Then I'll write it out the way my daddy taught me, with a few comments:

"I do not want you to be ignorant, Anne, concerning those who have fallen asleep." "Fallen asleep" is just the biblical term for when God's children die. It's when you close your eyes to this life, and you open them to the face of Jesus. It's when your faith becomes sight. So ... "I don't want you to be ignorant, Anne, concerning those who have fallen asleep,

lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if you believe that Jesus died and rose again,” and I do! I believe Jesus has risen from the dead! He’s alive! “If you believe, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the Word of the Lord.”

This is God’s Word. It’s not fantasy. It’s not a wish. It’s not a hope-so. “This we say to you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself—Joshua, Yeshua, Jesus—will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.” That’s my daddy. That’s my mother. That’s my husband. “Then you and I who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

And this is the comfort. There is hope for tomorrow. This life is not all there is. The best is yet to come. So on the day of my father’s funeral service, I chose to make a pledge that in view of the soon appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in front of all those watching and listening, I will preach the Word. I will do the work of an evangelist—I will share the gospel. I will run my race and live my life, so that five minutes before I see Jesus I have no regrets—I will live my life to exalt and glorify the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I challenge you to make the same choice, until the whole world hears and Jesus returns! {eoa}

This article was adapted from the message Anne gave at her father’s funeral service, March 2, 2018. It originally appeared at .