

## Q1059-1: Jim Jones Declares Himself God

### Summary

*“For some unexplained set of reasons, I happened to be selected to be God.”* This sermon by Jim Jones opens with this sentence, and returns to the theme throughout, with some of the most detailed articulation of his perceptions of his powers as God. As examples:

- “I have to tell you, that the universe would not run without me.”
- He details some of the miracles he has performed for members of the church, and later in the sermon when some newcomers apparently tire of him and leave, warn that people who leave the church will not have his protection. In addition, he warns of the evil that will befall his enemies, including those he knows are in the audience that night.
- He expands upon that theme to claim credit for other miracles they don’t know about. “[Y]ou may not believe, but I’ll tell you, there was never a miracle done in the world, ‘less I did it.”
- Taking his power through his personification as the “Principle [of] Divine Socialism,” he says: “Someway I am intrinsically involved with every good person’s wishes, with every hope and ambition, whether it’d be in the Irish Republic for freedom, whether it’d be in Biafra for freedom, whether it’d be over in Vietnam or Wounded Knee, wherever there’s people struggling for justice and righteousness, there I am, and there I am involved.” Later he says he has saved people who didn’t know who did it or how it happened, including three criminals slated for execution and the Indians at Wounded Knee; he also promises that his power will keep Daniel Ellsberg out of jail.
- He questions the goodness of a Skygod who would let children starve and evil prevail. “If I was out there... if I had all the power you say he’s got,” he says, he would prevent all the floods, earthquakes and natural disasters that kill poor people; he would’ve stopped the bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He later criticizes a God that requires people to have faith in Him. In contrast, he says, “I don’t care whether you got any faith in me or not, I want to help you.” He returns to that point later on, as he promises that his followers will have his powers if they think like him. As opposed to “a God that you gotta pray to, a God that you gotta worship... [y]ou don’t need to worship me. All I want from you is to do right. Feed my children. Do something about the misery around you.”
- Even as he criticizes those who follow the Skygod, he puts his own power in Christian terms. “I happen to know I’m the Messiah,” he says. Then, to counter those who might say he is delusional, he continues: “It’s only a complex when you’re confused. It’s only a complex when you have some kind of neurotic compulsions... Honey, I don’t have any conflict about it whatsoever. I’m not in conflict at all. I know ... that I am God the Messiah.” At another point, his discussion of Jesus switches in mid-sentences from the third person to the first person.

Jones says there is no logical explanation for his powers — it is a matter of faith — and chastises those who would try to define him in intellectual terms. “You can’t explain Father Jones, so there’s no way an intellectual can deal with me.” Although he chastises intellectuals several times, he also praises those who are “not afraid to get up and lose [their] intellectualism.”

The commitment Jones gives to his followers, though, he demands in return. He saved a woman who gave a quarter of her income to the church — her generosity was what led to the miracle, he implies —

and says those who give all they have will rid themselves of the sin of capitalism. "You've got to work out your salvation with your money." He later offers a warning to those who do not make a full commitment to him. "[T]hose that have followed me and those that have embraced my teachings, they have had perfect success, perfect prosperity and perfect deliverance." Later in the service, he asks people to fill out forms detailing what volunteer work they will do and what money they have. It's important, he says, because "[w]hen the day comes ... to be saved, I'm sending only the buses to those that are sincere and conscientious, and when you tell me it's none of my business, you must change this, or leave the church." At still another point, he cites the biblical imperative — Mark 10:21 — to "sell everything" to become part of the church.

Jones says that he does not run the country yet, but that he eventually will.

[The selection presented here contains the first 13:00 minutes of the tape.]