

Rot in Hell

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NOTE: The voices of the ZEALOT and the MAN should be quite distinct, so the last voice-over is recognizable.

ONE:

Split screen:

On the left: A collage of images showing both the public nature of religion and the enthusiasm of those who proselytize:

- exterior view of churches of all kinds
- tv evangelists
- door-to-door Jehovah's Witnesses
- Gideon Bibles in hotel rooms
- billboards saying "Repent - Jesus will save you!" or some such
- prayer being said in school and town council meetings
- nativity scenes in public places

On the right: Ordinary people going about their lives

TWO:

On the left side of a no-longer split screen, a ZEALOT stands on a soapbox on a street corner; he is in mid-rant.

ZEALOT

And He will forgive you, yes He will. God loves you, and He knows you, He knows everything and with Him all things are possible. He -

An ordinary MAN walks toward him from the right, sets his own soapbox onto the sidewalk about ten feet away, and stands on it.

MAN

How do you know that?

ZEALOT

(welcoming the
chance to
dialogue and
convert yet
another poor
sinner)

Why, the Bible tells me so!

He raises his Bible.

ZEALOT (CONT'D)

"With God all things are
possible." Matthew 19:26.

MAN

And yet he couldn't drive out
the people in that valley -
because they had chariots of
iron. Judges 1:19.

ZEALOT

(getting angry)
You are trying to anger me, but
I will not be angered. I
follow in my Lord's footsteps
and offer love and peace.

(turning to the
people
presumably
listening to
him)

John 14:27. "Peace I leave
with you, my peace I give unto
you" saith the Lord.

MAN

Except when he said "I came not
to send peace, but a sword."
Matthew 10:34.

ZEALOT

(barely
containing his
anger; his
words
contradict his
demeanor)

I see you are a man without
faith. I urge you to look into
your heart. I know in my heart
there's a god.

MAN

Well, I know in my head -

ZEALOT

(losing it)
You will rot in Hell, sir.
(in a
threatening
tone)
I know.

MAN

Right then. And why should I
believe you? I mean, you can't
just stand there and say
whatever you want without
anything to back it up. Well,
you can, but why would anyone
believe you? Do you have some
expertise in the area of -
epistemology and the
supernatural?

ZEALOT

I speak for God.

MAN

Ah. Do you have an affidavit
or something from God
authorizing you to speak on his
behalf?

ZEALOT

I am a minister of the Lord, I
have been chosen -

MAN

Yes, yes, but how do I know
you've been chosen - you could
be -

ZEALOT

He speaks to me!!

MAN

Could be a brain tumour.
Happens, you know. Auditory
hallucinations.

ZEALOT

You are a sinner, sir, and you
will rot in Hell!

MAN

Yes, you keep saying that, but
all I'm after is a little
evidence, some proof -

ZEALOT

I have all the evidence I need,
sir. Right here.

He holds his Bible aloft.

MAN

A book? That's it? Wait, I've
got a book too.

He pulls a book out of his pocket; no title is visible;
he hastily scribbles something on a piece of paper he
also pulls out of his pocket, then puts the sheet of
paper inside the book.

MAN (CONT'D)

Look!

(he opens the
book and reads)

It says "There's a Great Big
Pig in the sky - with diamonds"
- and, um, it's "making a list"
-

ZEALOT

You just put that in there. I
saw you. You wrote it
yourself. What is written by
the hand of men is fallible and

-

MAN

But all the books in the Bible were written by the hands of men. Primitive men. Men who had practically just discovered fire. And things were put in, or taken out, all the time. For example, in 1880, the American Bible Society decided to cut 14 whole books from the King James Version.

ZEALOT

It is heathens like you, sir, that brought the Katrina upon us. And the Tsunami. And all the plagues and pestilence of the Earth.

MAN

All my fault? Those people died because God was mad at me?! Not very fair, your god.

ZEALOT

How dare you question the ways of the Lord! He is omniscient, he is omnipotent, he is beneficent -

MAN

Well, he can't be all three. Babies are being tortured and he doesn't stop it. So either he doesn't know about it or he doesn't want to stop it or he can't.

Beat.

MAN (CONT'D)

Or he doesn't exist.

ZEALOT

Then who created you? Who created the Earth, the Universe? Everything needs a creator!

MAN

Well if everything needs a creator, then who created God?

ZEALOT

He always was.

MAN

Then why couldn't the universe have always been?

ZEALOT

(ignoring that
and carrying
right on)

My son, of course God exists!
God is everywhere!

MAN

Where exactly? I'd like to see him.

ZEALOT

His presence is everywhere.

MAN

Okay. I'd like to feel him.
His presence.

ZEALOT

Open your heart -

MAN

(losing
patience)
Open your mind!

Beat.

MAN (CONT'D)

There is no evidence he exists!

ZEALOT

Evidence? You want evidence?
Look around you, how the sun
nourishes the flowers, how the
animals provide for us.
Everything on this beautiful
earth shows his hand, his
divine design, it fits together
like -

MAN

Oh please. Anything that
didn't fit died. Became
extinct.

ZEALOT

(his turn to
become angry,
again)

Repent! Else you will rot in
Hell!

MAN

Yeah, you keep saying that.
But if Hell is a place of
eternal flame, things wouldn't
rot so much as burn. 'Course I
guess with god all things are
possible.

FADE OUT

POLICE OFFICER (V.O.)

Come with us sir, You're under
arrest, breach of the peace and
disorderly conduct...

MAN (V.O.)

Me? You're taking me in?