

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Mac Deaver

Each of us is a responsible or accountable agent before God. Each of us will give account of himself to God (11 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12). Each of us has experienced blameworthiness, and each of us has done things in life for which there is a certain amount of credit. Paul once told us, "Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor" (Rom. 13:7). Let us look at a few passages where some sort of credit was given or denied.


Matthew 12:24. Jesus healed a demon possessed man who was blind and dumb. The multitudes were amazed, but the Pharisees said, "This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons." Thus, instead of crediting God with the power whereby Jesus cast out the demon, the Pharisees ridiculously claimed that it was by Beelzebub that the Lord cast the demon out. McGarvey tells us that "Beelzebub is a corruption of Baalzebub, the god of the fly, a deity of the Ekronites (See 2 Ks. 1:2). How this old god of the fly, who was worshiped by the Philistines of Ekron to protect them from the flies and other pestiferous insects, came to be identified in the Jewish mind with Satan (see verse 26), is not known by modern scholars" (*A Commentary On Matthew And Mark*, p. 107). How absurd to ascribe such power to such a god! What men will do in order to skirt the force of truth is utterly amazing.

Acts 3:12. Peter and John had healed a lame man, a cripple from his mother's womb. The Jewish people saw him walking and praising God, and they realized that he was the beggar who sat daily at the gate of the temple. "And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? Or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk?" It was by faith in the name of Jesus that the healing power came to the crippled man. Peter and John did not want to claim credit that belonged to the Lord. They wanted the Jews to understand that "the Holy and Righteous One," whom the Jews had just killed had been raised by God from the dead. Salvation from sin was now available through the recently resurrected Christ. The power by which the lame man now walked should be ascribed to the Lord.

Acts 12:23. King Herod killed James, the brother of John (v. 2). The Jews liked that, and so Herod arrested Peter. Peter was miraculously released by an angel, and Herod then had Peter's guards put to death (v. 19). Herod then left Judaea for Caesarea, and on a certain day Herod made a speech to those of Tyre and Sidon with whom Herod was "highly displeased" (v. 20). Herod made his speech while arrayed in royal apparel and while seated on a throne. The gathered group shouted, "The voice of a god, and not of a man" (v. 22). "And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." How stupid and vain we men can be, welcoming credit and praise to which we know we have no right. Our inflated egos can get us into much trouble. Solomon, himself a king, warned us in the long ago: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18).

Acts 14:15. Paul and Barnabas came into the idolatrous town of Lystra. Paul began to speak,

and a certain cripple was listening. Paul noticing that the man had reached the point of faith said to him, "Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked" (v. 10). When the multitudes saw what had happened, they ignorantly concluded that "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men" (v. 11). They called Barnabas "Jupiter" and they called Paul "Mercury." The priest of Jupiter along with some of the people were about to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas, who seeing what was now happening, were able barely to prevent the pagan worship. They attempted to turn the minds of the Lystrans away from Jupiter and Mercury unto "a living God," the Creator (v. 15). There is, after all, a great difference between right religion and mere superstition (cf. Acts 17:22-31).

Phil.4:13. Paul wrote, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." The source of power that enables a child of God to hold sin down and to live righteously and godly in this present world is God. It is by the Holy Spirit that Christians are able to "put to death the deeds of the body" (Rom. 8:13). To the Galatian brethren Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20). 

.