**Who Gets the Credit? (Acts 12:20-25)**

 No one other than God is worthy of receiving worship.

 Greetings dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we return to the study of various facets of the Christian life. God is worthy of all praise and honor. But what would happen if people considered themselves as equal to God or received worship? In truth, this already happens – and sooner or later, sometimes even immediately, death comes to such people as it did to Herod and brings them down to the level of all other human beings. Therefore, today we’re going to speak about the worthiness of God. Again, God and only God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the sender of the Holy Spirit (after Jesus’ Ascension), is the only One worthy to receive worship. Otherwise, the consequences lead to death. Let’s speak, for a moment then, about the event in question.

 Pride is dangerous; but humility brings us closer to God. The account told in the Scriptures read is found in two places in ancient writings: one is in the writings of Josephus, a Hebrew historian of that time period, and the other is Luke the Evangelist, who wrote both Luke and Acts in the Bible. Herod had reached the apex of his reign when this event occurred. Not only had he received a huge amount of land to rule over as a King from Caesar, but he had even been able to pressure nearby city-states into submission. Specifically, he did the latter with Tyre and Sidon (modern day Lebanese cities also known as Sur and Saida). When the yearly games in honor of Caesar would take place, especially that year which is believed to have been 44AD, it was customary for the local king to come out to the games. Herod wore a silver outfit on that occasion, and apparently showed up as the sun was shining exactly on where he would be sitting. The people, (according to Josephus), were so mesmerized by the shining garment (perhaps?) that they said that a god was speaking. Tragically, Herod did not have even an ounce of humility within him and did not reject their acclamation. Josephus tells us again that the king was bedridden for five days and died from horrible abdominal pains, thought to be worms (either tapeworms or large roundworms). Clearly, it was the same person that both Joseph and Luke were describing. And, as Luke said, this happened because Herod did not give God the praise that belonged to Him.

 Today there are many people that allow worship toward their person. These receive their punishments in various ways for their idolatry. The first two of the Ten Commandments are: “*I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out of land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery”;* and “*You shall have no other gods before Me.”* (Exodus 20:2-3) Even not-rejecting praise as being a god is equal to worship.

For this reason, what we are called to do is simultaneously a protection for us from falling into the above temptation and also a help for our minds and spirits to grow (in the Lord).

What is it, then, that we are called to do to make sure the worship goes to God? First, we need to get accustomed to giving the Lord the praise throughout the day for simple blessings. We need to get used to giving God praise when we are successful at our jobs or at a task. We are called to (redirect people to) give God the praise when people are heaping up praises upon us. We are called to make an effort to give others the “showy” jobs – those tasks that are conspicuous rather than hidden – based on what gifts those around us have, of course. We need to get used to remembering God’s greatness and our dependency on Him. We are also called to avoid praising our own achievements. If we do these things, we will protect ourselves from receiving the glory due God. Because God alone is the only and true God, and aside from Him, every other being is an animate or inanimate creation. Pride is dangerous, but humility will bring us closer to God. No one other than God is worthy of receiving worship.

May the Lord keep us humble; may He help us to praise Him. God Bless You all. Amen.