

December 12, 2021

What Is Man's Responsibility To God? Part I

Does God exist? There is no question more profound or more far reaching in its implications. If, indeed, there is a God, then the fact that God “*is*” (Heb. 11:6) necessarily provides the answers for the existence of the universe, as well as our own existence. On the other hand, **if** there is no God, **then** we are all adrift upon the sea of life with neither chart nor compass. Indeed, apart from believing in the existence of God, we do not have the foggiest notion of **who** we are, **why** we are here, how we got here, or **where** we are going!

The purpose of this article is not to delve into the multitudinous reasons concerning why fair-minded, intelligent people are mentally forced to one inescapable conclusion, namely this: **there is a God!** Much space could be devoted to the fact that “*the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork*” (Ps. 19:1). We could observe that even as “*every house is built by someone,*” then “*He who built all things is God*” (Heb. 3:6). No sane person would argue that a three-bedroom, two-bath house with a beautifully manicured lawn at the end of a cul-de-sac just built itself, or that over a few billion years it simply evolved itself into existence. Yes, friend, in view of the existence of the universe and the intricate design of everything therein (cf. Rom. 1:20), we must conclude that no one but “*the fool* (who) *has said in his heart, there is no God*” (Ps. 14:1).

Is man a product of the creative power of God? Or did he simply evolve? If we can mentally accept the premise that God exists, **then** we have no choice but to regard God as the first Cause that caused everything else! And that is the approach taken by the Bible — that blessed book which towers far above every other book in the world, and which for a multitude of reasons, has proven to be “**the book** of books.” According to the Bible, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” (Gen. 1:1). And, yes, from the same source, we discover that “**God created man in His Own image**” (Gen. 1:27).

By this point, it should be evident that (1) **if** God exists, (2) and **if** God created man, (3) **then** man is amenable to God. In a very real sense God is the “*Potter,*” man is the “*clay,*” and the Potter has “*power over the clay*” (Rom. 9:21). In the material realm everything designed and made by man exists for one reason — that being to serve the purpose of the designer and maker. This same is true in the spiritual realm. We were not put here just to do our “own thing.” It is “*not in man who walks to direct his own steps*” (Jer. 10:23). The glorious ones before the heavenly throne put it succinctly when they adoringly said, “*You are worthy, O Lord to receive the glory and honor and power: For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created*” (Rev. 4:11).

Yes, **if** God exists, and **if** man was created by God, **then** man has certain responsibilities to God. And if this is true, then no person is really a success until he glorifies his Maker and serves the purpose of that omniscient, omnipotent One Who conceived and brought forth his existence.

But what is man's responsibility to God? In a nutshell, this question was answered by Solomon long ago. After citing the many things he had done to find meaning and purpose to "*life under the sun,*" each time concluding that "*all is vanity and vexation of spirit,*" Solomon, by inspiration, then said, "*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man***" (Eccl. 12:13).

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What Is Man's Responsibility To God? Part II

In the previous article, after acknowledging that the very fact that man was created by God, and, yes, made in the very "*image*" of God (Gen. 1:27), proves that man is amenable to God. Simply put, we quoted the words of the inspired Solomon who said, "*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; **Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man***" (Eccl. 12:13). Yes, man's responsibility to God is two-fold: (1) "**fear God**" and (2) "**keep His commandments.**"

But what does it mean to "*fear God,*" and what "*commandments*" must we "*keep?*" The verb "*fear,*" when applied to man's obligation to God, denotes a reverential awe of God as the controlling motive of life in matters both spiritual and moral. This kind of fear was evidenced in the life of Abraham as is indicated in the 22nd chapter of Genesis. According to this chapter, God tested the faith of Abraham by commanding him to go to the land of Moriah and there offer Isaac his son as a burnt offering. With neither hesitation nor equivocation, early the next morning Abraham set out on this three-day journey, fully intending to obey this most difficult command. Upon arriving at the proper place, Abraham built an altar, bound Isaac his son, laid him thereon, and took his knife, fully intending to both slay Isaac and offer him as a burnt offering. At that precise moment the angel of the Lord intervened and Isaac was spared. Then God said to Abraham, "*Now I know that you **fear God,** since you have not withheld your son...from me*" (Gen. 22:12). It was this reverential fear, this holy awe of God, that prompted Abraham to do whatever God asked him to do, regardless of the personal sacrifice or difficulty the command entailed.

But what "*commandments*" must we "*keep?*" In answer to this question, we state that the Bible consists of two major divisions — the Old Testament and the New Testament. Those of us who live on this side of the cross of Christ must submit to the requirements of the New Testament. We know this to be a fact because: (1) By reason of Christ's death, the Old Law was fulfilled, blotted out, and nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14-17), and (2) according to Heb. 9:15 Jesus is "*the Mediator of the New Testament.*" And according to Heb. 5:9, He is "*the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.*" Inasmuch as no one can come to God except it be through Jesus Christ (John 14:6), then we obey God when we obey Jesus.

According to the New Testament of Jesus Christ, one must **believe** the gospel (Mark 16:16), **repent** of his sins (Acts 17:30), **confess** faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Acts 8:37), and be **baptized** "*in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*" (Acts 2:38). When a person thus obeys the gospel he then becomes a part of the "*saved*"

whom God adds to the church (Acts 2:47).

However, the obligation to “*fear God and keep His commandments*” is an **on-going** responsibility. Once one obeys the gospel and thereby becomes a child of God, he must continue to work out his “*own salvation with fear and trembling*” (Phil. 2:12), always presenting his body unto God as “*a living sacrifice*” (Rom. 12:1), striving to be “*the light of the world*” in his manner of life (Matt. 5:16), and consistently seeking to worship God “*in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24), endeavoring to seek and save the lost (2 Tim. 2:2), and “*always abounding in the work of the Lord,*” always encouraged and comforted by the realization that his “*labor is not in vain in the Lord*” (I Cor. 15:58).

Yes, friend, if we mentally accept the fact of God’s existence we have no logical choice but to “***fear God and keep His commandments.***” By so doing, we obtain forgiveness of sins here and heaven hereafter!

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