

God does not have a Plan B. There is only one "plan" of salvation.

Of course. Everyone knows that.

Are you sure? Do you know that? Can we review some situations and check our understanding?

First, let's review the "one plan" concept.

Some people believe that once they enter The Kingdom, then their job is completed - no more work to do - just don't make any huge mistakes. Unfortunately, they have entered The Kingdom, but they are just standing in the doorway, still at the entrance - that's as far as they want to go!

Some think they must build The Kingdom, and their sacrifice of time and effort (and being a good person) is enough.

There are also many ways to NOT care about entering The Kingdom. Do you ever wonder how there can be so many false or inaccurate religions and philosophies? Try this metaphor: If I stand at the North Pole, any step away from that position is ... south. An infinite number of possible steps to take, but they all go the same way.

In a similar manner, if I turn away from the commands of YHVH, there are infinities of other beliefs or philosophies that I can choose, but all of them are against God - they are all rebellion. If I chose any of those - it's wrong.

This view of only two choices (God or not-God) can lead to dualism - the belief in two opposing powers, one all good and one all evil, of approximately equal power. God versus Satan. This would lead to an ultimate battle, where good would triumph. Sounds reasonable, but it is not accurate. "Evil" is the result of using free will to make the wrong choice. The evil power is often ascribed to Satan. However, the Hebrew word "satan" means adversary or accuser.

*1 Kings 11:14,23,25* Then YHVH raised up an adversary to Solomon, Hadad the Edomite, of the royal line in Edom. Then God raised up another adversary against him, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his lord King Hadad-ezer of Zobah. Rezon was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, adding to the trouble that was Hadad. He despised Israel, while he reigned over Aram.

*Numbers 22:22,32* God was angry that he was going, and the angel of YHVH took his stand in the road as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. The angel of YHVH said to him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? Behold, I came as an adversary because your way before Me is a reckless one!"

*Job 1:6-9,12* One day the sons of God came to present themselves before YHVH, and the adversary also came with them. YHVH said to the adversary, "Where have you come from?" The adversary responded to YHVH and said, "From roaming the earth and from walking on it." YHVH said to the adversary, "Did you notice my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth—a blameless and upright man, who fears God and spurns evil." Then the adversary responded to YHVH, saying, "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Then YHVH said to the adversary, "Everything he has is in your hand. Only do not extend your hand against him!" So the adversary departed from the presence of YHVH.

*Job 2:1-4,6-7* Again the day came when the sons of God came to present themselves before YHVH, and the adversary also arrived among them to present himself before YHVH. YHVH said to him, "Where are you coming from?" The adversary answered YHVH, "From roaming the earth and from walking on it." Then YHVH said to the adversary, "Have you noticed My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and spurns evil. And he still holds firmly to his integrity, though you incited Me against him to ruin him without any reason." The adversary replied to YHVH saying, "Skin for skin! A man will give up all he has for his own life." YHVH said to the adversary, "Very well, he is in your hand—only spare his life!" So the adversary departed from the presence of YHVH, and afflicted Job with painful boils, from the sole of his foot to the top of his head.

*1 Chronicles 21:1* Then an adversary stood up against Israel and incited David to count Israel.

*2 Samuel 24:1* Now the anger of YHVH again flared up against Israel, so He incited David against them saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

*Zechariah 3:1-2* Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of YHVH and the adversary, standing at his right hand to accuse him. YHVH said to the adversary, 'YHVH rebukes you, the adversary. Indeed YHVH, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you. Is not this man a brand plucked out of the fire?'

So this adversary carries out God's commands, and its primary duty is to accuse individuals of their shortcomings. The adversary showed Balaam his errors, and allowed David to disobey God's command. Did God create evil? NO. Evil is rebellion against God by not obeying His commands. Does God allow evil? YES, because we have free will: you must have freedom to make wrong choices - if you love it, let it go - or it is not love.

*Exodus 23:13* With all the things that I have said to you, take heed. Make no mention of the names of other gods, and do not let them be heard in your mouth.

In Genesis 3, we see acceptance of deception, to "be like gods" - which resulted in immediate knowledge of sin and shame and stupidity simply by entertaining the idea of "the other path, the other way" by disobedience.

Each of us is individually responsible for our actions, and each of us individually lives with the consequences of our actions. We also cause consequences to others for our actions - and their actions cause consequences for us. That's a complex mess!

*Deuteronomy 24:16* Fathers are not to be put to death for children, and children are not to be put to death for fathers - each one is to be put to death for his own sin.

We can avoid the mess by obeying God's command in Genesis.

*Genesis 4:7* You know that if you do what is right, I will accept you. But if you don't, sin is ready to attack you. That sin will want to control you, but you must control it.

When we sin, then we are not just rebelling against Him, but we are trying to live as though we can change the laws of nature - the rules of the universe: what goes up must come down. What is done that is wrong will hurt someone or something and can't be undone but only corrected.

In our sin we submit to the desire to be like those around us, all walking the same way, the same path, fellow travelers, so we can fit in with a situation that WE want.

As a metaphor, we get into a car seat, strap into it, set the transmission, start the ignition - never thinking about rebelling against that sequence and saying "I want this process to work differently, I just want to yell at the car "Giddy up" and beat on the steering wheel until it gets me where I want" -

so our objections to the operations of the moral side of the universe are just as silly conceptually.

Every day we choose poorly - no one else is responsible for our choice - the devil did not make us do it.

When many people are going the wrong way, it means EACH of them has individually chosen that way, that path. It does NOT mean someone else is responsible for their choice. They are just fellow travelers on the same road to destruction. This includes individual people and individual angels - both have free will, and can make wrong choices. There is no such thing as social justice or group salvation.

*Ephesians 6:12* For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the worldly forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

We are fighting against our urge to be like gods - so yes, that is not flesh and blood, it is in our mind and heart where we fight this battle. SELF is the false god that we most often follow. Genesis 4:7 says we must control that urge, we must fight that evil. The armor we need must protect us from ourselves; we must battle our desire to be like gods - to be totally in control. Only God's Word will keep use protected as we study it and obey it.

At some point each of us has sinned, and thus each of us needs to return to God.

We have free will, so this returning is optional - but the consequences are not optional. Either we follow God and His word, or we turn away from it and go our own way. Returning to Him, to draw near, requires a sacrifice, a covering, and that includes the blood of that sacrifice. Ultimately all sacrifices are vicarious actions pointing to the ultimate sacrifice of Yeshua,

In Genesis 3:7, it is clear that we can not cover (atone for) our sin. Instead, in verse 21, God Himself showed that sin is covered (atoned for) by another life (blood of the animals whose skin became a covering).

Gen 3:21 first sacrifice - skins to cover our sin - death DID result, at first death of fellow creation and associated loss of blood, later a gradual deterioration toward the end of life

It is the trust - faith - that God will provide a substitute, a ransom to redeem me, which will take my place for the sins of my life. That faith was the rescue, the salvation, of those who lived before Yeshua came as one of us. Read it again:

*Leviticus 1:4* The person must lay his hand on the animal's head to identify with the animal that serves as a substitute, and the Lord will accept it to cover (atone for) the person's sin.

Why would you do that - put to death one of the best of your herd, one that would improve your income in the future?

Why do that, unless you believed that the covering of your sin was more important than your income?

And why would you do that when you knew that you would eventually sin again?

You wouldn't, UNLESS you trusted that somehow God would sometime provide an ultimate substitute for your sins.

His love toward us is constant, even when it is the painful necessity of justice and its consequences. Yet He knowingly began the process right then in the Garden of Eden that would eventually result in His redeeming us by paying the ransom for our sin with His own life, as one of us.

Love. That is the underlying makeup, the foundation, the binding solvent that holds all of our rescue process together. But love without justice is licentiousness. So, our freedom comes at a great price.

Before creation - before time began - God loved you, and knew He would come as Yeshua to redeem you. Not everybody, not all people - you. Just you. That is how much He loves you. And like a good parent, He will not let you get away with actions and lifestyle that are destructive to you, so He gives you the information you need to avoid that

destruction. He connects to us with His Spirit and through that Word to guide us. That Word became flesh, and that Word died for you - in your place - as a substitute for your death from sin.

But you have to take and accept that gift. You must lay your own personal hands on that sacrifice, and acknowledge that YOU put that sacrifice to death, to pay for your sins with His blood, His life. AND then you prove that you made that choice by following Him in obedience to His Torah.

*John 14:15,21,23-24* If you love Me, you will keep My commands. Whoever has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me, and the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him. If someone loves me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Someone who doesn't love me doesn't keep my words.

What commands? ALL of them, since He was the One who gave us the commands at Mount Sinai. .

However, we know we will probably stumble.

*James 1:14-15* Each one is tempted when he is dragged away and enticed by his own desire. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is full grown, it brings forth death.

He knows we are imperfect and that complete obedience out of love for Him is a long journey.

*1 John 1:8-9, 2:3-6* If we claim not to have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, then, since He is trustworthy and just, He will forgive them and purify us from all wrongdoing. The way we can be sure we know him is if we are obeying his commands. Anyone who says, "I know Him," but isn't obeying His commands is a liar - the truth is not in him. But if someone keeps doing what He says, then truly love for God has been brought to its goal in him. This is how we are sure that we are united with Him. A person who claims to be continuing in union with Him ought to conduct his life the way He did.

If you fail, and fall to sin, just get up, confess and repent, dust yourself off, and move on! So it's 2 steps forward and 1 step back, stumbling along, but the important thing is to get back up on the Way and keep going!

The Creator of the universe, long before you existed, set in motion a plan to give you freedom - you can choose death or you can choose life.

*Deuteronomy 30:19-20* I call on heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have presented you with life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life, so that you will live, you and your descendants, loving YHVH your God, paying attention to what he says and clinging to him - for that is the purpose of your life!

Rejecting or ignoring God's commands and then expecting good things is just plain crazy!

We seek our own selfish desires, foolishly thinking that we will be happier doing our own thing instead of what God intended for each of us. THAT is "original sin" - which we all eventually accomplish - the rebellion against God's universe because we think we know better than God what we need - "you will be like gods" is the bait.

Not only that, but by leaving the true path to go our own way, we (each of us) get hurt and we hurt others, we get abused and we abuse others - because we are banging our heads against the stone wall of creation itself. That barrier is not meant to be an obstruction, but to be the border of the road for us to travel safely. Instead we slipped off it and are now at the bottom of the concrete-lined ditch next to the road, such that the side of the road appears to us as a wall, and we are scrabbling to out of the ditch and climb that wall back to the top, to get back on the road, like a mouse or spider in a very dry and slick bathtub and trying to get out.

Once we turn away from God, we have sinned, and now we come back to that need to cover (atone) our sin, and have a substitute for our condemnation - a sacrifice that gives us blood to cover our sin AND take our place in that ultimate death, which is permanent separation from God.

"The life is in the blood" - think about this - if we have an insufficient amount of blood, then we function poorly, or even die. If infected, our bodies don't work correctly. Blood is amazing - not just ours, but that of all living animals (non-plants). It carries away waste products from the cells of our body, and carries to the cells life-giving nutrients and oxygen.

The sacrifice offerings of animals in the Tanach were temporary - the blood released the life and the skins covered the sin - that was sufficient for the moment, but we all sin again, and as explained in the book of Hebrews, those sacrifices over and over did not make the FINAL atonement. That was what Yeshua gave us.

The law - Torah - reveals the holiness of God and our utter emptiness, our need for grace, and encouraged us to partake of the initial temporary redemption provided through the sacrifices and related rituals which pointed toward the ultimate substitution by God through His Son.

Circumcision represents the cutting out of our rebellious nature, but we are unable to succeed in removing our own sin. The Bible repeatedly calls us to a spiritual circumcision of our hearts, to obey God. Now that Yeshua has become our

redemption, we can grasp that redemption through our trust in God and His love for us as we see it in the life (and death and resurrection) of Yeshua.

Yeshua is our sacrifice for ALL the offerings explained in the Torah. Since He became human, He could only die once as a sacrifice, so He had to be THE perfect sacrifice.

NOW is the time to accept His offer and begin your walk in obedience.