

Does God Have a Whipping Boy?

Whipping boys were established in the English court during the monarchies of the Early Modern Period. The purpose of a **whipping boy** was to receive the punishment that was assigned to the young prince for general misbehavior. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

Mark 8:31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and [of] the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Mark 9:12 And he answered and told them,... 'how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.'

Luke 9:22 Saying, The Son of man **must suffer** many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

Why did Jesus say that He must suffer many things? Did Jesus need to suffer?

Some suppose that Jesus needed to suffer in order to appease the raging wrath of God. They believe that because the world was so sinful, God was very angry about it and someone had to suffer for making such a mess of His creation. Justice demanded it! His law had been broken and He was extremely angry about it! But because He is loving, as well as angry, He originated the plan of salvation to shelter humanity from feeling the full brunt of His wrath. Instead of causing human beings to suffer His wrath, He decided to take His wrath out on His only begotten Son. In other words, this theological view teaches that Jesus became the world's 'whipping boy.'

The position of 'Whipping Boy' was established in feudal times at the English court during the Tudor and Stuart monarchies of the 15th and 16th centuries. The **whipping boy**, was a boy of the same age (but of lower rank) who was raised with a prince or nobleman as a playmate. The child was especially 'employed' to be whipped in the prince's place when the young royal or nobleman had misbehaved. This situation arose because of the belief that the kingly line was ordained by God, and therefore his son was too high in standing to be beaten by anyone below his father, (who was often unavailable to mete out punishment himself). A whipping boy would be beaten at times when the prince misbehaved or slacked off in his studies. In some cases, the whipping boy and the prince became close friends and so the beating of the whipping boy, could also cause the prince to suffer strong psychological punishment.

Did the Father make His Son a 'whipping boy?'

When Jesus told His disciples that 'He must suffer many things,' it was not due to the Father's supposedly, insatiable wrath. God did not ordain that His Son 'must suffer' in order to appease His anger.

The reality of why Jesus 'had to suffer' is very different from and opposite to the traditional view.

The Father and Son both foresaw the evil consequences of sin. Both divine beings know the future and at that time, They saw with prophetic vision, that Satan would cause horrendous evil to be committed against Jesus. Information about specific future events, which God saw that Satan would commit against His Son - such as the devil causing Christ to be scourged and crucified - were given by God to the prophets. These (Messianic) prophecies were necessary so that humanity could recognize the Son of God when He came to the earth as a human being.

God was not 'so angry' that He decided to whip Jesus instead of human beings.

It was in fact Satan who was insanely angry. In his attempt to usurp Christ's authority in heaven, he had lost His high position over the angelic host. If Christ's mission of mercy was not overthrown, Satan realized that he would also lose his usurped authority on the earth. He became as angry as a 'cut snake;' in fact, John the Revelator describes Satan's anger as that of a dragon.

Revelation 12:9, 17 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him....And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

It was and still is, Satan's aim to sit on God's throne (Isaiah 14:13, 14). In this attempt, he was and will be thwarted. His demonic rage over his failed grasp for power has been aimed at Father and Son.

After Satan was expelled from heaven, both divine beings were out of His reach. Still smarting from defeat and still grasping for power, Satan turned his wrath toward the human race. The inhabitants of earth became his 'whipping boy.' By injuring men, women and children, Satan was knowledgeable that he would cause both Father and Son exquisite and direct pain, but he did not expect such an amazing divine reaction to his provocative behaviour.

God is love. Divinity is love. Divine love was so great that it compelled both the Father and His Son to rescue humanity from the wrath of Satan.

Divinity is all knowing – omniscient. The Father and Son knew what the future held in store. They knew the results of selfishness, more so than Satan. Both Father and Son knew that the desperate, fallen angel would 'pull out all the stops'; that he would show no mercy; that he would be violent, that he was a murderer from the beginning (ie. when he originated sin).

Both the Father and Son also realized that the plan of salvation was for Them, a possible 'suicide mission' in that the Son would risk eternal death. They were knowledgeable that they would both have suffer to an extreme degree to save human beings from Satan's wrath for the devil was ruthless, savage and intent on murder. Disregarding the danger and with unquenchable, unselfish love, They voluntarily interposed Themselves between the violent and insane wrath of Satan and the helpless, sinful human race.

Satan's violent attacks were intended to depose God. That object being impossible for him, he decided to 're-direct his anger' onto another more accessible victim. This is the strategy that is commonly called 'kicking the cat.' A person might be angry with their boss, but they can't attack their boss and keep their job, so they go home and take out their anger by kicking a helpless creature. In a similar way, the human race became the object of Satan's violent attacks. The human race was in effect, 'the Bosses' cat.'

The Father and Son would not permit the human race to be left helpless and to suffer the psychopathic violence which Satan would inflict upon its members. With foresight to save Satan's intended victims, both Father and Son created the plan of salvation – even before Satan had caused Adam and Eve to sin. Direct, divine intervention offered immediate protection from Satan's power.

Just as a loving parent will risk their life to save a child, Christ risked His eternal life to save His earthly children/brothers. His position was not that of an abused Whipping Boy, suffering a ritualized punishment to appease His angry and violent Father. Christ's position was that of a loving Creator, rescuing His beloved creatures from certain death.

Did the 'wrath of God' motivate Christ to rescue humanity? No. It was His love which motivated the operation of the plan of salvation. It was the wrath of Satan that made the plan so urgent, so risky and so vital.

Jesus indeed suffered many things – at the hands of Satan. He suffered intensely, but it was not because of His Father's wrath – which is against violence and evil, but because of Satan's wrath.¹

What about this text?

Acts 9:16 (The spirit of God, speaking to Ananias in vision at Damascus about Saul/Paul, said), *For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*

¹ 1 Peter 2:18-23; 3:8-12 *Servants, [be] subject to [your] masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this [is] thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory [is it], if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer [for it], ye take it patiently, this [is] acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously: Finally, [be ye] all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, [be] pitiful, [be] courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord [are] over the righteous, and his ears [are open] unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord [is] against them that do evil.*

Is this text informing Ananias that God was planning tortures for Paul to suffer (because perhaps, he needed to do penance for assisting in the murders of Stephen and the early church members)?

Does God invent specific acts of suffering for His disciples to endure? Does God create special tortures to help His disciples develop their characters?

No! This is a heartless view. In reality, God simply foresees the evil that Satan and his agents create and predicts that it will occur.

In Paul's case and in all others, God warns His people that Satan will inflict torturous devices upon those who love the Lord. Rather than afflicting His people, God strengthens them to bear Satan's violent onslaughts. God does not attack His own people (repentant sinners) nor even unrepentant sinners! Through love and at great risk to Himself, He intervened to save all and any who will allow the Creator to save them.

Ezekiel 18:20

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

Jesus wasn't God's Whipping Boy, because God doesn't torture or whip boys. He doesn't need to and he doesn't desire to do so. Love is the most potent weapon available to the universe and the only weapon that the Creator uses.

