

The Passion of Our Lord

NOT SO

Luke 22:14-23:56

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Analysis by Stephan K. Turnbull

DIAGNOSIS: Not Followers

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *Not So Much Like Jesus*

As Jesus travels to the cross, his “followers” begin to jockey for position at the top of the organization (22:24). Hearing this, Jesus tells them that power-hungry Gentile rulers act like that, but “not so among you.” Jesus explains that among his followers, the greatest will act like the least and the leaders like servants. But truth be told, it was not so among them nor is it with us. We are not upside down in the blessed way Jesus describes. It may be doubted, in fact, whether we should even be called “followers” of Jesus as Jesus teaches thus, walking his path to the cross.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *Not So Quick Learners*

Even though they have been recently instructed by Jesus, his would-be followers respond instinctively to crisis as if he had never spoken or led. Opposition arrives, one disciple’s sword is drawn, and blood is spilled. No matter what the sign over Jesus’ cross says, he is not our King. The heat of the moment shows that our hearts are otherwise bent. It is not so—that Jesus’ followers behave unlike the world.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : A Just Verdict

Unfortunately for our eternal hopes, the bleating of voices crying out “Lord, Lord” will rightly fall on deaf divine ears. “We followed you,” we may argue. But the verdict comes down justly: “Not so.”

PROGNOSIS: Not Guilty

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : A New Reality

But King Jesus looks at our apparent state and speaks the same divinely-rendered words, “Not so,” fundamentally redefining them. Those words spoken over us fundamentally redefine our reality. Jesus’ followers look like sinners. They (we) crucified the Lord of glory and stand convicted awaiting their sentence. But it is not so: “Father, forgive them” he says in the midst of his own betrayal, and fundamentally redefines sinners’ status with God.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) : A New Heart

And in the wake of this world-altering declaration of forgiveness, our hearts awaken to the realization that what we previously thought about Jesus is simply not so. We had rejected him in one way or another, perhaps forthrightly or perhaps cleverly in our piously-garbed disobedience. But now we join the centurion whose reappraisal of Jesus happened at the foot of the cross and led to the praise of God (23:47).

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) : Doxologically Reprogrammed

And finally this worship of God replaces the worship of self that has continued to plague Jesus’ struggling followers in all the years since they first began fighting for places of honor and power next to Jesus. And Jesus’ words now begin to come true. Leaders begin to serve. The greatest become like the least. The powerful of this world may trample the weak, but “it is not so among you.”