

John 2:13-22 (NIV)

“When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, ‘Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!’ His disciples remembered that it is written: ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’ The Jews then responded to him, ‘What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.’ They replied, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?’ But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.”

1. The Misunderstanding of the Jews

The Jews thought Jesus was speaking of the physical temple in Jerusalem. To them, his words sounded absurd. They failed to grasp the spiritual reality—that Jesus himself was the true temple, the dwelling place of God among men (John 1:14, *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”*).

This wasn't the first time people misunderstood Jesus' words. Over and over, he spoke of spiritual truths, but people took him literally:

- When he spoke of being “born again” (John 3:3-4), Nicodemus asked, *“Can a man enter his mother’s womb a second time?”*
- When he offered “living water” (John 4:10-11), the Samaritan woman thought he meant physical water from a well.
- When he said he was the “bread of life” (John 6:35), the crowd thought he meant literal food.

The Apostle Paul later explains why this happens: *“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Corinthians 2:14, ESV).

2. Spiritual Blindness

Jesus himself quoted Isaiah when describing this condition: *“You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes.”* (Matthew 13:14-15, NIV).

This spiritual blindness continued even to the cross. As Jesus hung dying, the crowd mocked:

“You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:40).

But their words, intended as mockery, unknowingly confirmed prophecy. Jesus *did* “destroy” the temple of his body by laying it down, and in three days God raised him from the dead (Acts 2:23-24).

3. The True Temple

The temple in Jerusalem was only a shadow. The real temple was Christ himself. He is the perfect meeting place between God and humanity (Colossians 2:9, *“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.”*).

But after his resurrection, Scripture goes further: believers themselves become the temple of God through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

- *“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?”* (1 Corinthians 6:19).
- *“In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”* (Ephesians 2:21-22).

Therefore, when Jesus cleansed the temple, he was foreshadowing the cleansing work he would accomplish in us—removing corruption and making us a holy dwelling place for God.

4. The Cost of Discipleship

Jesus made it clear: not everyone who hears his words truly understands them. Understanding belongs to his disciples—those who deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him.

Luke 14:26-27 (ESV):

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.”

Here “hate” does not mean malice or resentment, but a radical prioritization of Christ above all relationships and desires. It is about rejecting any influence—whether family, culture, or personal ambition—that opposes God’s will.

Jesus also commanded us to *count the cost* (Luke 14:28-33). Following him is not an experiment but a lifelong surrender. Like Peter, James, and John who left everything to follow him (Matthew 4:19-20), we too must be willing to lay down our attachments.

5. Hearing Spiritually

So, what does it mean to have ears that hear? It means approaching Scripture with humility, faith, and dependence on the Holy Spirit. Jesus said:

“The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you.” (John 14:26, NIV).

Without the Spirit, the Bible remains a closed book. With the Spirit, its mysteries unfold. That’s why even though many people read the same words, only disciples truly grasp their meaning.

6. A Call to Surrender

The message is simple yet costly:

- To follow Christ is to die to self (Galatians 2:20).
- To follow Christ is to embrace suffering and rejection (2 Timothy 3:12).
- To follow Christ is to surrender all and live for his glory (Philippians 3:7-8).

But the reward is greater than the cost:

“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived—the things God has prepared for those who love him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9, NIV).

Conclusion

The Jews heard Jesus but did not understand. The same danger faces us today: to hear his words but miss their meaning. Only by becoming true disciples—denying ourselves, carrying our cross, and following him—can we have ears that truly hear.

So I ask:

- Have you surrendered your life to Christ?
- Have you counted the cost of discipleship?
- Do you have ears that hear and eyes that see?

Today, give your life fully to Jesus Christ. Count the cost, take up your cross, and follow him. Then you will understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

“Whoever has ears, let them hear.” (Matthew 11:15).

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