

THE ALL-SEEING SON OF GOD
John 2:18-25

Turn back to John 2...

Here is one of my favourite names of God: El-ro-i. – Know what it means? – “The God who sees, the all-seeing One”. – Know where it comes from?...

+ Gen 16 – the story of Hagar, Abraham & Sarah’s domestic. – She conceived a child by Abraham. – But of course that didn’t go down so well with Sarah, so Hagar got fired, kicked out of the house, and sent out into the wilderness – pregnant and destitute, with nothing.

But the Lord came to her there in the desert; she was not alone. – God promised to bless her child, who would be named Ishmael. – What a suprising, gracious comfort this was to an outcast and desperate single mom like Hagar.

She was so moved by this that she named God, “El-roi, You are the God who sees me.

There was also a well there that she named, “Beer-lahai-roi, The well of the Living One who sees me.” – El-roi, the God who sees.

This is one of the great attributes of our God – He is omniscient. – Kids, know what that means? – “Omni”, all + “scient”, knowing = “omniscient”, all knowing.

~ A.W. Pink, *Attributes of God*:

God is omniscient. He knows everything: everything possible, everything actual; all events, all creatures. God knows the past, the present and the future. He is perfectly acquainted with every detail in the life of every being in heaven, in earth and in hell. ...Nothing escapes His notice, nothing can be hidden from Him, nothing is forgotten by Him. Well may we say with the Psalmist, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (Ps. 139:6).

... How solemn is this fact: nothing can be concealed from God! "For I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them" (Ezek. 11:5). Though He be invisible to us, we are not so to Him. Neither the darkness of night, the closed curtains, nor the deepest dungeon can hide any sinner from the eyes of Omniscience.

The trees of the garden were not able to conceal our first parents. No human eye beheld Cain murder his brother, but his Maker witnessed his crime. Sarah might laugh derisively in the seclusion of her tent, yet was it heard by Jehovah.

Achan stole a wedge of gold and carefully hid it in the earth, but God brought it to light. David was at much pains to cover up his wickedness, but ere long the all-seeing God sent one of His servants to say to him, "Thou art the man!"

Now, what does have to do with John’s Gospel? – Everything!

Remember John’s whole goal for this book, what drives every passage, every verse in John’s Gospel? –

20:31, “...these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”

I.e., *to convince us that Jesus is God*. – To display the deity of Christ, the God-man, in every scene and every text.

In today's text, we especially see God's omniscience on display in Jesus. – Jesus is "El-roi", the God who sees.

He knows the future, He knows our hearts. – He reads history, and He reads humanity, like an open book before Him.

Stand, Read from vv. 13-25 (to get context again) & Pray: (2 Cor. 13, "examine yourselves to see if you're in the faith"...)

Give title...

From our all-seeing Son of God we receive here...

***TWO WARNINGS about false faith vs. true faith:**

(We'll spend most our time on #1.)

1. vv. 18-22, Beware of a SUPERSTITIOUS FAITH – *Do you demand a sign, or do you believe His Word?*

+ Recall the setting: the Herodian (2nd) Temple – all of its grandeur & glory, all that it symbolised & signified to the Jews – the one spot on the whole map of the world where they could meet with the living God & bask in His presence. – It was there they realised His great promise: "I will be your God, and you will be My people."

YET they had turned the temple into a Pick & Pay Hyperama – big business instead of true worship. – So Jesus cleaned house. – With a few strokes of His whip, all commerce came to a grinding halt.

The Jews were not impressed. – Their leaders were infuriated.

v. 18 – These men are blinder than a bat! – It's one of their classic lines in the gospels: Jesus, who-do-you-think-you-are?! –

Whenever Jesus took authority over what they thought was rightfully theirs. – 'Lord of the Sabbath, Lord of the temple', who does He think He is?!

Elsewhere in the Gospels, Jesus answers, "I tell you, something greater than the temple is here." (Matt. 12:6)

This question (v. 18) revealed both their THICK heads & their HARD hearts:

(a) A *thick-headed* question – because they had just seen a stunning sign: Jesus cleansing the temple in majestic power and omnipotent Deity, as only the Son of God could do – singlehandedly, uncontested and unopposed.

They should've seen that Jesus' temple cleansing was in direct fulfilment of Malachi 3, as I read last week, that the Lord would come into His temple and purify it.

Plus, as v. 17 showed us, Jesus' cleansing was also a fulfilment of Ps. 69, "Zeal for Your house will consume me."

HOW could they not see this? – What other sign did they need than this?...

→Do you demand a sign, or do you believe His Word?

(b) Also a *hard-hearted* question – They should've been on their faces in repentance and gratitude, instead of on their feet cross-examining Jesus. – If they were true spiritual leaders, this should've been the hardest but best day of their lives!:

'Oh Jesus, Messiah, Son of God, forgive us. You are right, we are wrong. How did we miss it?! We have turned Your house into a place of business. We have desecrated this place, we have corrupted worship, it's a stench in God's nostrils! We repent, we abase ourselves in sackcloth & ashes.'

'We did not love You. We hated You. We loved ourselves, we loved our own money, not You.'

'Forgive us Lord, cleanse us, like You just cleansed this temple, wash us clean, purify our worship.'

'Thank You, Lord, for what You've done here today. At last, the reformation we needed. At last, Someone with enough zeal and righteous indignation to put a stop to all this insanity!'

'Finally, instead of the noise of moneymaking and animals, it can be the sound of prayer and praise – what these temple courts were made for, as Your Word tells us!

But NO, no such words were heard. – Only this arrogant question: 'Who do you think you are? Prove it to us, Mister.'

Catch the IRONY here: These leaders treat Jesus like He is the stranger to this temple. – How backwards! – Jesus was no stranger there. – He could never have been more at home than in the temple, as He told His parents long ago when they found Him there (Lk. 2).

Oh no, these proud leaders – they were the real strangers there, because their greed had estranged them from God. –

Jesus was the only SON of the Temple Owner, God Himself. – This was HIS Father's Temple! – These leaders should've been on trial, not Jesus.

So, HOW will Jesus respond to their mocking? – *Here in the most authoritative place, before the most authoritative body in Israel, how would Jesus defend His own authority?....*

v. 19 – What a comeback, more like a left hook! – Nobody saw this coming.

→NB, Jesus *will not be domesticated*. – He is not some sort of stunt artist that has to win your allegiance by working another miracle. – He is not some magician that owes you more wonders from His bag of tricks.

Behold our omniscient Lord, the all-seeing Son of God: Jesus declares to them what they will do, long before they do it, before they've even thought it or planned it. – And they thought *they* were in control?!

~ Piper captures the layers of meaning in Jesus' words here (v. 19):

“Your same materialistic *deadness to spiritual reality that destroys this temple, will destroy Me*. Just like you kill worship in the temple with your consumerism and materialism, you will kill Me. I and my Father are one. If you destroy his house, you destroy Me. If you treasure money more than my Father, you will treasure My destruction—and buy it with 30 pieces of silver.”

Repeat: v. 19...

NB, Jesus gives them a deferred, delayed sign. – He gives them a cryptic, veiled answer. – It reminds us of His **parables**, given to illustrate, but also to judge (Mk 4; Isa. 6). – Jesus speaks to reveal truth to believers, but to conceal truth from His enemies and to pronounce God's judgment upon them. – And so it is here.

God had rejected these temple leader's false authority, and was replacing it with Jesus' true authority. – The old order was passing, the new had come.

→*Do you demand a sign, or do you believe His Word?*

NB, Jesus' words here in v. 19 went *viral* across Jerusalem. – It got 'tweeted, posted, blogged, what's app-ed, etc'! – These words of Jesus were broadcast probably *more than anything else Jesus ever said*. – HOW do we know?...

Because of how often it comes up again in the Gospels & in Acts:

At Jesus' trial, they twist these words & falsely accuse Him. – On the cross, the bypassers ridicule Jesus by again twisting these words of His (Mk. 15:29).

Again, for the 3rd time!, these original words of Jesus get twisted in Acts 6, when Stephen is on trial and about to be martyred.

ALL from this one prediction of Jesus. – Nothing He said was ever more controversial. – Talk about a ripple effect and sending shockwaves! – It was 'the shot heard 'round the world'.

→*Do you [twist His Word &] demand a sign, or do you believe His Word?*

NB, Jesus will do what the Father does. – Jesus is God. – God will raise Jesus. – And Jesus will raise Jesus. – I.e. He is saying to them, 'Your hands will destroy this body. My hands will raise it.'

As Jesus says in Jn. 10, "...I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." (10:17-18).

NB, Jesus' answer here is the same answer He gives twice in Matthew, when his enemies demand a sign. – Matt. 12 & Matt. 16, twice Jesus rebukes them:

“An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign”. – So all He gives them is the “sign of Jonah”, that “just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

But Jesus says that the men of Nineveh, and the Queen of the South, would rise up and condemn the Jews, because those pagans repented with *mere preaching*, no signs! – They were willing to hear God’s Word, without demanding to see more ‘stuff’.

→Mark this, beloved: “An evil & adulterous generation seeks a sign”. – Worldly people build a church on false claims that ‘miracles are normal’. – *Unbelief* is what drives all the phony sign ministries today that offer fake miracles, fake healing, fake tongues, and false prophecies.

True faith feeds on God’s Word, not miracles. – Miracles were never the focus. – They were only the initial platform to prove that Messiah had come and that God’s message was authentic. –

We now have His completed message in this book, and we *need nothing else*.

+ Remember Luke 16, Jesus’ parable of the rich man & Lazarus.

The rich man in agony in Hell says, ‘Send back Lazarus to my brothers. Send him back from the dead so he can tell my brothers not to come here.’

But Jesus says, ‘If they don’t believe Moses and the prophets, they won’t believe though someone is raised from the dead.’

→*An evil and adulterous generation is not satisfied with Scripture; they want a sign.*

YET, those signs are never be enough; they always want more, and more, and more....

→Remember: Miracles never create faith. – Miracles cannot save one soul. – Only one thing, and one thing alone can do that: God’s Word! –

Seeing is NOT believing. – Hearing is believing! – Rom. 10:17, “Faith comes by?...hearing” the word of Christ. –

What is the only “living & abiding seed” that can bring regeneration, the new birth? – Jam. 1, 1 Pet. 1, the word! (Cf. 2 Tim. 3, Scripture is the only power to make you wise unto salvation.)

→*Do you demand a sign, or do you believe His Word?*

BUT WHY this sign, Jesus’ resurrection? – Because it was the ultimate sign, God’s final proof of the validity of all that Jesus said & did. – Rom. 1:3, Jesus was “declared to be the Son of God with power BY?... the resurrection from the dead”. –

Throughout Acts, what is the one sign & proof they appeal to in every sermon? – The empty tomb! – E.g., Acts 17:30-31, Paul’s conclusion of his famous Mars’ Hill sermon at Athens:

“Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will

judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men BY?...raising Him from the dead.”

Repeat: Jn. 2:19...

→Do you demand a sign, or do you believe His Word?

v. 20 – I.e., probably sneering here, ‘Will YOU raise it up in 3 days, Mr. Super-Architect & Magic Builder? Gonna use Legos, or what?!’...

Their arrogance illustrates what we’ve seen already in John: “The Light shines in the darkness, but the darkness did not comprehend it. ...He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ...among you stands One whom you do not know.” (1:5,10,26)

They didn’t get it, at all. – They suffered from an acute case of *short-sightedness of the soul*. – They couldn’t see past the bricks & mortar, the stones & pillars, of their beloved temple.

v. 21 – Get ready for this theme throughout John’s Gospel: cluelessness & thick-headedness when it comes to spiritual truth!

Jesus speaks about new birth, but Nicodemus thinks it’s going back into mom’s womb (Jn. 3).

Jesus speaks about living water, and the woman is looking into the well to find it (Jn. 4).

Jesus speaks about Himself as the living bread, and the Jews are wondering how you could eat His flesh! (Jn. 6)

And on it goes throughout John’s Gospel. – And on it goes throughout *our own lives*, until God’s Spirit turns on the lights!

→Please realise: If John hadn’t added v. 21 for us, and if we didn’t have the rest of the NT, we wouldn’t get it either! – ‘Temple, huh, what temple?...’

UNTIL God’s Spirit opens our eyes, NONE OF US can grasp spiritual truth. – Apart from God’s grace illumining & enlightening us, we too would still be stumbling, groping around in blindness!
(cf. Matt. 11:25-27; 16:17; Jn. 3:27; 1 Cor. 2:10-16; 4:7, etc.)

BUT WHY this metaphor? – WHY does Jesus equate His body with “the temple”? – How on earth could He make such a bold, radical claim?...

Answer: *All that the temple signified was about to be satisfied in Jesus. –*

Recall Jn. 1:14, Jesus is now God’s “tabernacle, dwelling place”. – To meet with God, you go to Jesus. – To know God and worship God, you go to Jesus. – Jesus is God.

Jesus, Son of God, the God-man, “Immanuel”, God-with-us – God relocated, God’s new address here on earth, the new sacred place, now a Person – Jesus, the new temple. – We’ll see a lot more of this in John 4.

Think about it. – As the Book of Hebrews powerfully portrays, all the types & symbols & shadows of the old temple are now fulfilled in Jesus!

That great, thick temple veil has now been torn. – Jesus has made a new living way by which each one of us can enter the very Holy of Holies.

All that the temple signified is satisfied in Jesus.

+ John’s Gospel will also show us that Jesus is a better Bread than what was on that table of showbread in the temple (Jn. 6:35). – Jesus washes us (by His blood) in a way that the laver in the temple could never cleanse.

Jesus brings us a better light than that lampstand in the temple could ever provide (Jn 8:12).

All that the temple signified is satisfied in Jesus.

v. 22 – HOW did they remember? – Just b/c they got clever, or concentrated, or racked their brains until they finally got it? – NO; it was a work of God. –

As Christ promised them that night in the Upper Room on the eve of His crucifixion: The Holy Spirit will “bring to your remembrance all that I said to you” (14:26). –

ONLY the Holy Spirit could make the ‘penny drop’ and switch on the lights. – Only God’s Spirit can give spiritual understanding, and cause them to comprehend what Jesus originally meant three years earlier.

At Pentecost, it finally dawned on the Twelve disciples. – After three long years of pondering & chewing on that cryptic statement of Jesus....

At last, it made sense: ‘Aha, *that* temple, not this one! Jesus is God’s new temple! Those authorities *did* destroy the temple of His body. And Jesus really did rise again on the 3rd day. ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Now we see!’

All that the temple signified is satisfied in Jesus.

→Here’s another application from v. 22: Many truths in life are only understood later, in retrospect & hindsight. – Parents, teachers, disciplers, counsellors – don’t lose heart!

Your hearers may only realise later what you were saying, or long after you are dead. – There may be a *severe time lag between them hearing it & them getting it*. – But that day very well may come.

People like to say, ‘Ah, you can’t remember what you heard preached last week, not to mention last year, so what good is it?!’

+ YET the fireplace is being prepared, the kindling is being laid, the altar is being built. – When God’s Spirit chooses to light the match and supply the spark, that soul will be far more ready than if no efforts had been made to teach & prepare them. –

A great foundation has been laid, even if they only come to appreciate it and build on it later in life

So don’t give up! – ‘In due season you will reap’ (Gal. 6:9), ‘God’s Word will not return void’ (Isa. 55), your efforts are ‘not in vain’ (1 Cor. 15:58)!

Keep sowing that seed, keep teaching, preaching, witnessing. Reread: v. 22...

→This is why Scripture memory & catechising are SO important! (Jesus is our model Teacher & Educator & Disciple.)

Times of persecution may come, or confinement to a sick bed, when you cannot always read Scripture. – The only truths you may have available are what you’ve stored up by memory.

Or times of temptation may assault you in your most vulnerable moments, and you will be forced to choose right or wrong, long before you can open your Bible. – Your only defence will be the Scriptures and doctrines you have stored up in advance for such battles.

~ One old writer said this to encourage parents to catechise: "If ever your poor infants be driven to wildernesses, to hollow caves, to be burnt at the stake, or to sorrows of any kind, they will thank God and you that they were well catechised!"

Repeat #1.... →Do you demand a sign, or do you believe His Word?

2. vv. 23-25, Beware of a SUPERFICIAL FAITH – Does Jesus believe in your faith?

Beloved, do you realise what a plague this myth of easy-believism has been to modern Christianity? – Do you realise that a church that welcomes false converts into membership, or makes them feel like they belong, is committing *spiritual suicide*?...

v. 23 – We don’t know what miracles, but He was doing them, more than could be recorded (cf. Jn. 20:30; 21:25). –

And people believed. – How could you not? – Before your very eyes, the blind see, the lame walk, the dead are raised. – ‘Maybe this is Messiah? Let’s make Him king (cf. Jn. 6:15) so He can liberate us from Roman oppression!’

Revival was breaking out, right? – Here was Jerusalem’s first spiritual awakening in a long time, right? – Spread the news, thousands being converted, right?...

Not so fast:

v. 24a – Lit., v. 23b, “many trusted in His name...(v. 24a) But Jesus...was not trusting Himself to them”, ‘they believed in Him, but He would not believe in them’.

What? – Did we read that right?...

I.e., ‘Jesus did not trust them. He was not ready to give Himself to them. He was not ready for a true relationship with them....’ –

Jesus smelled something fishy on that day. – He can spot phonies & pretenders immediately.

~ "Man's affections may be stirred, man's intelligence informed, man's conscience convicted; but still God cannot trust him." (J. E. B.).

HOW could this be? – WHY would Jesus not receive anyone with open arms? – Why would Jesus not give Himself to them freely? –

People were coming to Him; HOW could He turn them away? Who wouldn't want to grow their ministry & reach more people?

John tells us Jesus' reason:

vv. 24c-25 – Here is why Jesus didn't just welcome any fans or followers who liked His signs and were impressed by His miracles.

Because He knew something about them – something they didn't know about themselves, and something that Jesus didn't need anybody else to inform Him about. – 2x here, “Jesus knew...man”.

HOW did Jesus know this? – Because Jesus is God (cf. 1:1ff). – He knew everything that God knew about man. –

Heb. 4:13, “Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” – Prov. 21:2, “Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts.”

→ You & I think we can read some people's hearts, some of the time. – But Christ knows exactly what is in every human heart, all of the time.

Jer. 17:10, “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind....” - 1 Kings 8:39, “You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men.”

+ Rev. 2, “And to the angel of the Church at Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire. ...I know your deeds....” – In fact, with *ALL seven* of the churches in Asia Minor, the risen Christ begins with these two words: “I KNOW...I know...I know”. –

He is the all-seeing Son of God, the omniscient Shepherd and Head of His Church.

Reread: vv. 24-25, “He knew all men...He knew what was in man.”

+ Sangomas & sorcerers, palm readers & fortune tellers, claim special knowledge & prophetic powers. – But Jesus doesn't just claim it; He actually has it, and He *proves it*.

Like we've seen already: 1:42 (with Peter)..., 1:47-48 (with Nathanael)...

As we'll see with the woman at the well: 4:18-19... (Cf. 6:64,71;

Reread: vv. 24-25, “He knew all men...He knew what was in man.”

+ Throughout the Gospels, we see that Christ is the great Heart-Searcher, the all-seeing Lord (“El-Roi”):

He sees the faith of the paralytic’s friends who lower him down, and the proud hearts of the scribes seated there (Mark 2). – He knew when the bleeding woman had touched His garments (Mk. 5). – And on & on we could go....

→Do you understand?: Christ needs no informers, no recordings, no hidden cameras, no tip offs. – Christ cannot be bought with a bribe, duped by flattery, lured by numbers, or enticed by praise.

You cannot fool Him, you cannot escape Him.

Your heart will often deceive you, but never Him. – He knows you intimately, through and through. – Every thought, every motive, every intention and desire of your heart, right now as you sit there. Nothing is hidden.

Reread: vv. 24-25, “He knew all men...He knew what was in man.”

BUT specifically here in John 2 – WHAT was Jesus’ ‘inside scoop’ on man? – What did He know about people that made Him suspicious & cautious of befriending them?...

Answer: Back to v. 23, He knew *that their faith was superficial*. – They were *unsaved believers*, false converts.

→Most today are not aware of this biblical category of false faith, non-saving faith, i.e., *unsaved believers*. – It’s one of the most deceptive & dreadful & terrifying categories in the Bible. –

I.e., all belief is not true belief. – All faith is not the same. – Some is real, some is fake; some is true, some is false. – Yet they can look very similar for a long time. –

+ Just think about **Judas**, 3 yrs with Jesus, and even at the Last Supper, none of them knew who it was that would betray Jesus. –

→Are there any Judas at this table today?...

It’s what **James** calls demon faith and dead faith, instead of a living faith that produces works. – It’s those who believe the right doctrine & information about Christ, but never truly surrender their life to him.

It’s the 2 types of **soils in Jesus’ parable**: the rocky and the thorny soils, that appear to receive the gospel seed at first, but fall away later and prove to be false converts (b/c of the tests of life & temptations of the world & persecution, etc.) (Mark 4).

It’s those that **Paul** in 1 Cor. 5 refers to as “so-called brothers”, Christian brothers in name only (“nominal”), not in reality; or in 2 Cor 11, “false brethren”...

It's those in Matt. 7 that hear from Jesus those terrifying words: After declaring, 'Lord, Lord, look what we've done in Your name. We've prophesied, cast out demons, performed many miracles in Your name.' – Yet Christ will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."

→Beloved, do you realise: *Hell right now is full of people who once 'asked Jesus in their heart', who once 'prayed the sinners' prayer', made a decision for Jesus, walked an aisle, and even got baptised & joined the church.* – There are lots of those types in Hell right now. – WHY?...

Because they only believed in Jesus because of seeing signs or having an emotional experience, not because of truly hearing & trembling at His WORD (cf. Rom. 10:17). –

They were never truly convicted of their sin, never crushed over their own personal guilt, never "cut to the heart, pierced within" (Acts 2:37). –

They never truly repented, counted the cost, and took up their cross to follow Christ (Mk. 8:27ff).

All they were was part of Jesus' fan club, just thrill-seekers, 'into Jesus' when it was cool & convenient. – Jesus was their latest bandwagon to jump on, the newest therapist in town who could enhance their life or improve their emotional well-being or relationships. –

Jesus was just a life-coach who could motivate them and give them purpose. – Jesus was just a piggybank to fill their purse, or just a Physician to improve their health. –

Just a 'Jesus of earthly benefits', not the Jesus of the Bible, the Jesus of the narrow road and the steep path and the costly life of true discipleship and following Him as Lord & Master.

+ We meet these "unsaved believers" again in John's Gospel. – Cf. Jn. 8:31 (nb, "truly disciples", vs. false disciples)...

+ If you know Bunyan's classic, *Pilgrim's Progress*, it is filled with colourful characters who claim to be Christians, but don't endure to the end and prove to be false converts. – E.G., Mr. Pliable, Mr. Talkative, Mr. By-Ends, Mr. Ignorance, etc.

→What a contrast to Jesus' attitude towards the true believer: Jn 10:14-15, "I am the good Shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep." –

What a contrast to Jn. 2:24-25...

→What a difference true faith makes in Jesus' stance toward us. We must realise: *The gospel is not just about us having a personal relationship with Jesus. – It's about Jesus having a relationship with us. – It's not just about giving your life to Jesus. – It's about Jesus giving His life to you.* –

And He only does that for those who truly believe – those who come to Him for salvation from sin and forgiveness of guilt (cf. Jn. 1:12-13), not just for life enhancement.

→Have you come to Jesus on His terms, not on yours? – Do you realise that until you have a right view of self, you cannot have a right view of the Saviour?...

+ Have you heard of “spontaneous baptisms”, a growing trend in some churches today: Factory style, hundreds at a time! – Including baptising young children who want it (sometimes even manipulating the whole thing with planted decoys who go forward at first to prompt others!)

But think of the dangers here? – HOW do you discern that someone has a credible profession? – Esp. children, who are so impressionable & untested, and generally believe what their told by their parents? – We mustn't be naive here. – We must learn from Christ's example. – Reread: vv. 24-25...

Sure, baptisms were almost immediate in Acts. – But it is very naive to think you can instantly transfer that early church context to our world today in 'Christianised' SA or America.

Baptisms in the early church came at great cost. – It was a hostile, unfriendly context, more like in Muslim contexts today. – NOT like here today where it is still relatively easy to convert.

Here, we need to be careful. – Not complicate things or delay unnecessarily. – But ensure (as best we can; never foolproof) a credible, believable conversion testimony....

Reread: vv. 24-25...

→For small groups this week: 'OK, then, how can I be sure? How can I know that Jesus definitely *does* believe in my faith?'

CONCL. – Restate 2 questions...

How precious v. 22 becomes, sandwiched between these two kinds of false faith! – Reread v. 22...

As a result of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit, and as fruit of gospel preaching and real conviction of sin & repentance & true conversion – they came to true faith. –

These apostles went on to preach & live & die for Christ – real converts, nothing superstitious or superficial at all about their faith! Reread v. 22...

NB, signs & miracles, and THE ultimate sign of an empty tomb, *didn't leave them craving more miracles*. – It only drove them to Scripture! – It left them with their nose in God's Book and clinging to Jesus' Word!...

Jesus is El-roi. – We serve an omniscient Saviour & Lord.

→This truth is a terror to the pretender.... BUT a great comfort to the sincere Christian. –

+ Like Peter in Jn 21, when Jesus restored him after denying Christ, 'Lord, You know all things, You know that I love you.' (Jn. 21)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Why are people still so obsessed with signs & wonders & false miracles today? How can we help rescue them and show them the power of the true gospel and of God's Word?
2. How does Christ's omniscience comfort you? How does it sober and challenge you?
3. What does it mean for you as a Christian that Jesus is now God's temple? What does it mean for us corporately as a church?
4. How does v. 22 encourage you to keep sowing biblical truth into others, even if it doesn't seem to do any good at present?
5. How can you be sure that Jesus does believe in your faith? (Read 1 John, James, Heb. 10-13, etc. Review last year's book, *Am I Really a Christian?*)