

the letter to
the church at
Thyatira

Revelation 2:18-29

Map of Asia Minor





And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come.

And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'— as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

what do we notice in the format & content that's different from the previous letters?

- a change in order

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches

comes after the message to the overcomer

- where there are errors there is no appeal to repent
- the Lord's coming again is mentioned

how we shall consider this

- a look at what is said with an emphasis on the original context: the church at Thyatira
- prophetic interpretation

Thyatira - the town

a trading centre - famous for its dyeing facilities and was a centre of the purple cloth trade

the Turkish town of Akhisar stands over the site

the meaning of the name 'Thyatira' is uncertain; it could mean:

- odour of affliction
- continual affliction
- sacrifice of labour

how the Lord Jesus describes Himself

the Son of God
who has eyes like a flame of fire,
and His feet like fine brass

He stresses
His deity

this is how He is
seen in chapter 1

firmness in dealing
with sin in divine
righteousness

searching,
penetrating,
discerning
judgment

there were some who were faithful to the Lord

I know your:
works
love
faith
service
patience

there were very serious errors
(doctrines & practices) in
Thyatira

but there were some who were
faithful

they were not involved in the evil
and the Lord commends positively
on them

love, missing in Ephesus, is found
here among them

what the Lord has against them

**you allow that woman Jezebel,
who calls herself a prophetess,
to teach and seduce My servants
to commit sexual immorality
and eat things sacrificed to idols**

who was the original Jezebel?

daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians

[1 Kings 16:21]

married evil King Ahab of Israel [1 Kings 16:21]

she led him into idol worship [1 Kings 16:21]

she killed the prophets of the Lord [1 Kings 18:13]

provided for 850 idolatrous prophets during
famine [1 Kings 18:19]

threatened God's prophet Elijah with death

[1 Kings 19:2]

murdered faithful Naboth to get his vineyard

[1 Kings 21:9-10]

executed by Jehu on God's instruction

[2 Kings 9:6,7,10]

Jezebel

- calls herself a prophetess

whoever exalts himself will
be humbled [Matt 23:12]

- given liberty to teach

I do not permit a
woman to teach
[1 Tim 2:11-12]

- seduces My
servants to
commit sexual
immorality

For it seemed good
to the Holy Spirit and to us,
to lay upon you no greater burden
than these necessary things:
that you abstain from things
offered to idols, ...
and from sexual immorality.
[Acts 15:28-29]

- seduces My
servants to
eat things
sacrificed
to idols

the Lord's grace rejected

I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

a general principle:

the Lord looks for repentance

repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change in behaviour

He wants all to come to repentance:

The Lord ... is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. [2 Peter 3:9]

judgment

I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death ...

there would be great suffering for Jezebel & those who join with her in her evil

although repentance may be theoretically possible, the Lord does not appeal to them to repent

there are other churches where repentance is necessary [Ephesus, Pergamos, Sardis, Laodecia] & the Lord calls upon them to repent

Thyatira is the only one where there should be repentance but there is no appeal to repent

I search the minds & hearts

all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. I will give to each one of you according to your works.

the Lord's judgment at Thyatira should be a warning to the other churches-
the Lord looks not just at what we do, but at our desires and thoughts
He completely understands us
we can't hide anything from Him
the Lord is patient, but does not allow rebellion to go unpunished if there is no repentance

hold fast

Now to you I say, [and] to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come.

Jezebel's teaching & practice are so terrible, they are **the depths of Satan**

some have not known them

hold fast - stay true to God, don't join with the evil, keep to the truths you know

to the overcomer

And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'— as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

reward for the overcomer:

- power over the nations

If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.

[2 Timothy 2:11-12]

- the Morning Star

the Bright & Morning Star

I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.
[Rev 22:16]

the Bright & Morning Star - a star that shines brightly in the sky before dawn & sunrise

it indicates that the night is coming to an end

the Lord Jesus is **the Bright & Morning Star**:

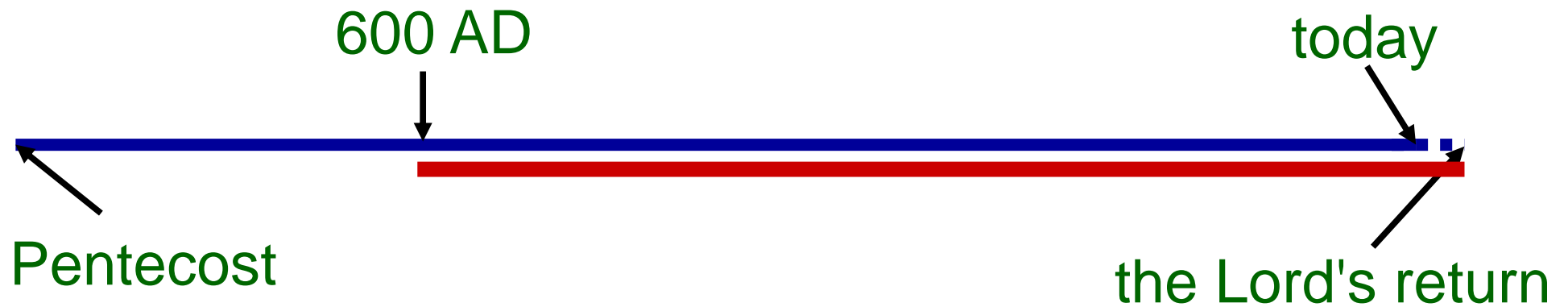
this is a picture reminding us that the night of His rejection on earth is ending & that He will soon return for those who trust in Him - 'the rapture'

& that later He will rise as **the Sun of Righteousness** to give light & warmth to the earth (in the millenium)

[Malachi 4:2]

church history

the Thyatira period can be considered to start around 600 AD and to continue until the Lord's return



how the Lord Jesus describes Himself

the Son of God

who has eyes like a flame of fire,
and His feet like fine brass

He stresses
His deity

firmness in
dealing with sin
in divine
righteousness

searching,
penetrating,
discerning
judgment

this church is steeped in sin

it is particularly necessary to stress that the

Lord Jesus is divine, and sees and judges all
nothing escapes His notice

positive comments

I know your: works, love, faith, service and patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

some clearly have had a real love for the Lord for example, Bernard of Clairvaux [1090-1153] who wrote

many have showed personal devotion, self denial & patient suffering for the Lord

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills the breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can
frame,
Nor can the mem'ry find
A sweeter sound than Thy blest name,
O Saviour of mankind!

All those who find Thee find a bliss
Nor tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but His loved ones know.

Jesus, our only joy be Thou,
As Thou our prize will be;
Jesus, be Thou our glory now,
And through eternity.

Jezebel

You allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols

Jezebel in this context could be considered to be the Roman papal system
takes upon itself the role of deciding what is right & teaching it
encourages friendship with the world & its gods
- this is spiritual immorality & idolatry

what does 'Jezebel' teach?

'Jezebel' calls herself a prophetess- she teaches

what does she teach?

this is our theme in the next few slides

in order that Roman Catholic beliefs are not misrepresented here, they are mostly quoted directly from the church's catechism

how some Roman Catholic beliefs & practices accord with Scripture

we'll consider this in the following sections:

- Rome, the pope & authority
- Christ's finished work & salvation
- after this life
- Mary
- political & military power
- suppression of scripture & persecution

how some Roman Catholic beliefs & practices accord with Scripture

- Rome, the pope & authority

the Rock

What the Lord had said:

After Peter had confessed that the Lord Jesus is **the Christ, the Son of the Living God**, Jesus said to him: **"You are Peter** [meaning stone], **and on this Rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.** [Matthew 16:18]

How does the Roman church interpret it?

Peter was the rock

Peter was the head of the church & the church was built on him.

Peter's headship was transmitted to future generations in sequence - these heads were the popes.

What does it really mean?

The Rock is not Peter, but the One Peter confessed: **Christ, the Son of the Living God.**

Christ, not Peter, is the Head of the church. There is no succession of heads.

the primacy of Bishop of Rome

Roman Catholic teaching:

- Peter is the rock of the church
- Peter was first Bishop of Rome
- the Bishop of Rome is the leader of the church (pope or pontiff)

the pope being supreme ruler of the church was claimed & gradually accepted generally between 2nd & 4th centuries

it was accepted by churches in England at the Synod of Whitby in 664

additionally the system of human priesthood, with the distinction between clergy & laity (as seen in Pergamos), becomes even more pronounced

apostolic succession

catechism 77:

... the apostles left bishops as their successors ... the apostolic preaching... was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time

the concept of apostolic succession is never found in
Scripture

apostolic authority was passed on through the writings
of the apostles, not through a succession of leaders

Paul speaking to the elders of Ephesus said:

**I commend you to God and to the word of His grace
[Acts 20:32]**

infallibility

catechisms 890 & 891

state that 'the Church's shepherds have infallibility in matters of faith and morals' - the Pope, because of his office, and the bishops with the Pope in Ecumenical Council. Their doctrines 'must be adhered to with the obedience of faith'.

Nothing in Scripture suggests that any man or any group of people will speak infallibly (without error). The only infallible teaching comes from Scripture itself:

... the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [2 Tim 3:15-16]

The word of our God stands forever [Isaiah 40:8]

The Scripture cannot be broken [John 10:35]

the place of Scripture

catechism 82

... the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.

What the Bible says:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

[2 Tim 3:16-17]

interpretation of Scripture

catechism 100

The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him

What the Bible says:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. [Psalm 111:10]

The Anointing which you have received from Him abides in you ... the same Anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie. [1 John 2:27]

how some Roman Catholic beliefs & practices accord with Scripture

- Rome, the pope & authority
- Christ's finished work & salvation

transubstantiation

catechism 1376

... by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation

What the Bible says:

Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.'

Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine ...' [Matthew 28:26-29]

'Do this in remembrance of Me' [Luke 22:19]

Christ's finished work

catechism 1367

The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice: "The victim is one and the same ... the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner."

What the Bible says:

[Jesus] does not need daily ... to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. [Hebrews 7:27]

But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God ... For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. [Hebrews 10:12-14]

forgiveness of sins

catechism 985

Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of the forgiveness of sins: it unites us to Christ, who died and rose, and gives us the Holy Spirit.

What the Bible says:

In Him [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence [Ephesians 1:7-8]

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. [Ephesians 2:8-9]

baptism & salvation

catechism 1277

Baptism is
birth into the
new life in
Christ
... it is
necessary for
salvation

catechism 1279

The fruit of
Baptism ... includes
forgiveness of
original sin and all
personal sins ...

catechism 2020
Justification ... is
granted us
through Baptism

catechism 2798

... through Baptism, we
are incorporated and
adopted as sons of God

What the Bible says:

**For God so loved the world that He gave His only
begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not
perish but have everlasting life [John 3:16]**

**For by grace you have been saved through faith
[Ephesians 2:8]**

how some Roman Catholic beliefs & practices accord with Scripture

- Rome, the pope & authority
- Christ's finished work & salvation
- after this life

purgatory

catechism 1054

Those who die in God's grace and friendship imperfectly purified, although they are assured of their eternal salvation, undergo a purification after death, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of God.

What the Bible says:

The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin
[1 John 1:7]

For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. [Hebrews 10:14]

He Himself is the propitiation* for our sins [1 John 2:2]

* fully satisfies the righteous demands of the holy God against sin

prayers for the dead

catechism 1055

The Church commends the dead to God's mercy and offers her prayers, especially the holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, on their behalf.

What the Bible says:

It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment [Hebrews 9:27]

how some Roman Catholic beliefs & practices accord with Scripture

- Rome, the pope & authority
- Christ's finished work & salvation
- after this life
- Mary

Mary

catechism
508

Mary ... from the first instant of her conception, she was totally preserved from the stain of original sin and she remained pure from all personal sin throughout her life.

catechism 974

The Most Blessed Virgin Mary ... was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven

catechism 2162

Blasphemy is the use of the name of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, and of the saints in an offensive way.

There is no indication or implication in Scripture that Mary was immaculately conceived, was sinless, was taken up bodily into heaven; she should not put in any way on a level with God.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

[Romans 3:23]

Mary said: 'My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour' [Luke 1:46-47]

praying to Mary

catechism 2682
the Church loves ...
to entrust supplications and
praises to her.

Pope Paul VI said in 1970:
"If we want to be Christian, we
must also be Marian — that is, we must
recognize the essential, vital, providential
bond which unites Our Lady to Jesus and
which opens to us the way that leads
us to him."

What the Bible says:

**Jesus said to him [Thomas], 'I am the way, the truth,
and the life. No one comes to the Father except
through Me.'** [John 14:6]

**We do not have a High Priest [the Lord Jesus Christ] who
cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all
points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us
therefore come boldly to the throne of grace.
[Hebrews 4:15-16]**

how some Roman Catholic beliefs & practices accord with Scripture

- Rome, the pope & authority
- Christ's finished work & salvation
- after this life
- Mary
- political & military power

political & military power

it is generally accepted that the nearly all the popes from around 500 AD to after 1000 AD were appointed (or at least, confirmed) by political rulers (emperors, kings, counts, etc)

later popes were so powerful that they crowned & deposed political rulers

from the 8th century until 1870 the papacy directly controlled major areas of Italy known as the Papal States

What the Bible says:

[Adulterers and] adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. [James 4:4]

how some Roman Catholic beliefs & practices accord with Scripture

- Rome, the pope & authority
- Christ's finished work & salvation
- after this life
- Mary
- political & military power
- suppression of scripture & persecution

effect of rejecting, modifying
& adding to God's word

rejecting, modifying & adding to God's
word

leads to appalling doctrinal error
&, flowing from that, ghastly practices
& cruelty

suppression of Bible

The Roman Catholic church had for centuries tried to prevent God's Word being read & understood by the people.

Attempts to translate into languages other than Latin were suppressed.

From a Papal Encyclical by Pope Gregory XVI in 1844 on Bible Societies:

Regarding the translation of the Bible into the vernacular ...

Bishops ... had to exercise greater vigilance when they became aware that such translations were being read in secret gatherings ...

Later even more care was required when the Lutherans and Calvinists dared to oppose the changeless doctrine of the faith with an almost incredible variety of errors.

They left no means untried to deceive the faithful with perverse explanations of the sacred books, which were published by their adherents with new interpretations in the vernacular. ...

placed in the Index of forbidden books ...

Anyone who joins one of these [Bible] societies, or aids it, or favours it in any way will be guilty of a grievous crime.⁴⁷

suppression of scripture

John Wycliffe and his followers produced full English versions of the Bible in the late 14th century.

After he died, the Council of Constance declared on 4 May 1415:

John Wyclif was a notorious and obstinate heretic who died in heresy, and it anathematizes him and condemns his memory.

It decrees and orders that his body and bones are to be exhumed, if they can be identified among the corpses of the faithful, and to be scattered far from a burial place of the church.

William Tyndale translated the New Testament from Greek into English. 3000 copies were printed in 1526. The bishop of London seized every copy he could & publicly burnt them.

In 1536 Tyndale was condemned as a heretic & burnt at the stake.



inquisition

The Inquisition was a group of institutions within the government system of the Roman Catholic Church whose aim was to combat heresy. It began in 12th century.

A papal bull promulgated in 1252 by Pope Innocent IV authorized the use of torture for eliciting confessions from 'heretics'.

Movements opposed to the Roman system were suppressed: e.g. the Waldensians in southern France & northern Italy.

The Waldensians rejected unscriptural Roman Catholic teaching & practices.

In 1211 more than 80 Waldensians were burned as heretics at Strasbourg. In 1215 Pope Innocent III officially declared the Waldensians as heretics; several centuries of persecution followed. Thousands were killed in the 1545 massacres.

Many others who rejected teaching & practices of the Roman church were tortured & executed, often by burning.

returning now to the
letter to the church
at Thyatira in
Revelation 2

judgment

I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death ...

there has been no repentance
and God WILL judge

God's judgment is described in Revelation
17 and 18

judgment

Revelation 17 & 18 describe judgment on **Babylon the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth.**

She was drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

Her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

During the Tribulation period God will use the 10 leaders (who will give their authority to the 'Beast') to destroy her.

There will be joy in heaven: John heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, 'Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honour and power belong to the Lord our God!

For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.' [Rev 19:1-2]

hold fast

Now to you I say, [and] to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come.

some believers in this system have not understood the depths of the sinfulness of 'Jezebel' they are to hold fast to the Lord

here the Lord's return is mentioned for the first time in these letters

so this church system will continue until the Lord comes again

to he who overcomes

And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'— as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.

power over the nations:

the Roman church desired & worked for power over the nations, but eventually the nations will destroy this false church

the overcomer will receive power over the nations & will reign with Christ

the Morning Star:

a reminder of the Lord's return for His own

change in order

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches

this exhortation to hear the call of the Spirit is no longer addressed to the whole church (as it is in the letters to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos)

but here it follows the promises to the overcomers & is only addressed to them only the overcomers could be expected to hear & consider what the Spirit has to say

timeline

approximate dates

0 30 pentecost

primacy of Rome
accepted
2nd to 4th centuries

313 Christianity decriminalised
380 official religion of Roman Empire

500

Synod of Whitby 664

500s penance commuted by payment
558 Mary's perpetual virginity
c600 Thyatira period begins

1000

Waldensians burnt 1211

1100s start of inquisition
1215 transubstantiation
1245 purgatory
1252 torture for 'heretics' official policy

Wycliffe bible late 1300s
Wycliffe 'heretic' 1415
printed bible (Latin) 1450s

1500

Luther's theses 1517
Tyndale burnt 1536
Waldensian massacres 1545

1506 St Peters rebuilt from indulgence sales

1844 encyclical against translations
1854 immaculate conception of Mary
1870 papal infallibility
1950 assumption of Mary

2000

the true bride

Paul writes to the
believers at Corinth:

**I have betrothed you to
one husband, that I
may present you as a
chaste virgin to Christ
[2 Cor 11:2]**

to the Ephesians, Paul
writes about the
relationship between
husbands & wives, but
adds:

**but I speak concerning
Christ and the church
[Eph 5:32]**

Jezebel

Satan's attempts to corrupt
the church has resulted in
the Roman religious system
- Satan's counterfeit of
the true bride of Christ

This system can be identified
with: **the great harlot who
corrupted the earth with
her fornication**

In the bible fornication &
adultery give a picture of
turning from the Lord to
other gods - idolatry

some of the privileges we have

we have God's infallible word which is complete, it needs no additions & is for all - not just the religious & the educated

[God's word is intended to be read & understood by everyone; it should be in the vernacular - ordinary easily understandable language of the people]

the Lord Jesus Christ died for us once for all so that all who trust in Him have all their sins forgiven forever

what Christ did for the forgiveness of our sins is utterly complete

we are freely accepted by God in Christ

we have direct access to God the Father through Christ

we have the certainty of a heavenly home

the Lord Jesus Christ is the Bright & Morning Star- He is coming back for us

we will reign with Christ