

# Revelation 2:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

## Analysis

**I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan....** This verse from Revelation's vision of letters to ephesus, smyrna, pergamon, thyatira - love lost, faithful suffering, compromise employs apocalyptic imagery rich with Old Testament allusions and symbolic meaning. The Greek text uses vivid apocalyptic language characteristic of Jewish prophetic literature, drawing heavily from Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah.

The symbolism must be interpreted within its first-century context while recognizing timeless spiritual realities. The imagery would resonate powerfully with persecuted believers facing Roman imperial cult worship, providing hope that despite present suffering, Christ reigns sovereign and will consummate His kingdom. The apocalyptic genre uses symbolic numbers (seven, twelve, 144,000), colors, beasts, and cosmic imagery to convey theological truth rather than photographic descriptions.

Christologically, Revelation consistently exalts Jesus as the victorious Lamb, the faithful witness, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Every vision ultimately points to Christ's supremacy, His finished redemptive work, and His certain return to judge the living and dead and establish the new creation.

## Historical Context

---

John received this revelation circa AD 95 during Domitian's persecution, exiled on Patmos for his testimony. The seven churches of Asia Minor faced increasing pressure to participate in emperor worship and pagan religious practices. Refusal meant economic hardship, social ostracism, and potential martyrdom. Understanding this context illuminates Revelation's encouragement to faithful endurance.

The apocalyptic genre was familiar to first-century Jewish and Christian readers. Rather than newspaper-style predictions, apocalyptic literature uses symbolic imagery to reveal spiritual realities behind earthly events, encourage the faithful, warn the unfaithful, and assert God's ultimate sovereignty over history. Parallels with Daniel, Ezekiel, and intertestamental apocalyptic writings would help original readers decode the symbols.

Rome's imperial cult demanded worship of Caesar as divine, placing Christians in impossible situations—compromise their faith or face persecution. Revelation identifies Rome as "Babylon" and assures believers that despite appearances, the Lamb conquered through His death and resurrection, and all earthly kingdoms will submit to His reign.

## Related Passages

---

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

---

1. How does Revelation 2:9 reveal God's character, particularly His sovereignty, holiness, and justice?
2. What specific encouragement or warning does this verse offer for maintaining faithful Christian witness amid cultural pressure?

3. How does this passage point to Christ's victory and the hope of new creation, and how should that shape your present priorities?

## Interlinear Text

---

Οἶδά σου τοῦ ἔργα καὶ τοῦ θλῖψιν καὶ  
**I know** **thy** **of them which** **works** **and** **of them which** **tribulation** **and**  
 G1492 G4675 G3588 G2041 G2532 G3588 G2347 G2532

τοῦ πτωχείαν πλούσιος δὲ εἰ καὶ τοῦ  
**of them which** **poverty** **rich** **(but** **thou art** **and** **of them which**  
 G3588 G4432 G4145 G1161 G1488 G2532 G3588

βλασφημίαν τοῦ λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι  
**I know the blasphemy** **of them which** **say** **Jews** **are**  
 G988 G3588 G3004 G2453 G1511

ἐαυτούς καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ συναγωγὴ τοῦ  
**they** **and** **not** **are** **but** **are the synagogue** **of them which**  
 G1438 G2532 G3756 G1526 G235 G4864 G3588

Σατανᾶ

**of Satan**  
 G4567

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Revelation 3:9** (Parallel theme): Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

**2 Corinthians 8:9** (Parallel theme): For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

**Romans 9:6** (Parallel theme): Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

**2 Corinthians 6:10** (Parallel theme): As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

**1 Timothy 6:18** (Parallel theme): That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

**Luke 4:18** (Parallel theme): The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

**Revelation 2:2** (Parallel theme): I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

**Luke 6:20** (Parallel theme): And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for your's is the kingdom of God.

**Romans 5:3** (Parallel theme): And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

**Romans 12:12** (Parallel theme): Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;