

Revelation 3:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

The 'synagogue of Satan' refers to Jews who rejected Christ, claiming Abraham's lineage while denying the Messiah. Christ's authority to identify true Israel rests on His fulfillment of covenant promises. This echoes Romans 2:28-29—true Jews are those circumcised in heart, believing in Christ. The promise that persecutors will 'worship before thy feet' and 'know that I have loved thee' anticipates eschatological vindication. Reformed theology affirms that God's covenant promises find fulfillment in the elect, composed of believing Jews and Gentiles in Christ.

Historical Context

Philadelphia faced opposition from the local Jewish community who denied Christians were true Israel. This likely involved synagogue excommunication and reporting Christians to Roman authorities. The promise of reversal—opponents acknowledging Christ's love for the church—would deeply encourage persecuted believers maintaining their claim as God's covenant people.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's authority to define who belongs to God's people challenge modern religious claims based on lineage or tradition rather than faith?
2. What comfort does the promise of ultimate vindication offer when facing religious opposition or marginalization?

Interlinear Text

ἰδού, διδωμι ἐκ τῶν συναγωγῆς τῶν Σατανᾶ τῶν
Behold I will make them of which the synagogue which of Satan which
G2400 G1325 G1537 G3588 G4864 G3588 G4567 G3588

λεγόντων ἔαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ
say they Jews are and not are but
G3004 G1438 G2453 G1511 G2532 G3756 G1526 G235

ψεύδονται ιδού, ποιήσω αὐτοὺς ἵνα ἥξωσιν καὶ
do lie Behold I will make them to come and
G5574 G2400 G4160 G846 G2443 G2240 G2532

προσκυνήσωσιν ἐνώπιον τῶν ποδῶν σου καὶ γνῶσιν
worship before which feet thy and to know
G4352 G1799 G3588 G4228 G4675 G2532 G1097

ὅτι ἔγώ ἡγάπησά σε
that I have loved thee
G3754 G1473 G25 G4571

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 2:9 (Parallel theme): 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.

Isaiah 60:14 (Parallel theme): The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 49:23 (Parallel theme): And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

Isaiah 45:14 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God.

Isaiah 43:4 (Love): Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

Esther 8:17 (Parallel theme): And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.