**Welcome to *Faith Bible Church!***

April 14, 2019

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**Order of Service:­­­­­**

Opening Hymn: *Virginia Grosskurth*

Invocation

Scripture Reading: II Corinthians 5:14-21

Announcements

Pastoral Prayer

Hymn: *Virginia Grosskurth*

Message:*Don’t We Have to Follow the Great Commission?*

 (Matthew 28:18-20)

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

**Announcements:**

**Jeremy and Sarah Bilka** welcomed their daughter Chloe into the world last Friday. *Congratulations!*

**Free books!** *Berean Bible Society* is giving away free copies of Pastor Stam’s book *The Author’s Choice.* We’re out, but we’ll have more next week!

**Midweek Bible Study:** Wednesday at 7 but call Steve first

**Our offering box** is located just left of the kitchen door.

**Pick up** today’s cross reference sheet & silence your phone

**Revelation 1:4** *Are the Letters to the Seven Churches*

 *Written to Us?*

It’s important to know that the letters in Revelation 2,3 are *not* written to us, for John says of his readers that he is their “companion” *in the Tribulation* (Rev.1:9), and you don’t want any part of the Tribulation! He was their companion *in the spirit,* of course (1:10). The Lord’s day there is the Tribulation (Isa.13:6,9). The Spirit took the prophets to the future in a virtual reality sort of way (Ezek.37:1) and then asked them to write what they saw in the Bible (Rev.1:19).

Many teachers think that the things that “are” (1:19) means things that *are* happening today, and so they think the 7 letters are to us. But the Lord was telling John to write the visions he saw *and what they represent* (v.20), as when the Lord said “this *is* My body” (Mt.26:26). Teachers also think Rev.1-3 “are” about us and then the rapture comes in 4:1. But in 4:1,2 John wasn’t being raptured to heaven, he was being show a vision of the future in heaven. No, Revelation is all “prophecy” (1:3), and we live in the dispensation of the *mystery,* a time when no Bible prophecy is being fulfilled.

Notice the Lord didn’t tell John to write the churches *directly*, but through their angels (2:1), because God dealt with Israel through angels (Acts 7:53). But not us, so that’s proof the letters aren’t to us. He mentions “works” to each church (2:2) because salvation for Israel was by faith plus works, but not for us! He mentions “patience” twice (2:2,3) because they had to have patience *to be saved* (Lu.21:19), patiently waiting for the Lord to end their persecution in the Tribulation at His coming rather than impatiently taking the mark of the beast. He mentions *overcoming* to each church (2:7) because they had to overcome the temptation to take that mark if they wanted to eat of “the tree of life” *and live forever* (2:7 cf. Gen.3:22), but we don’t have to overcome that temptation or eat anything to be saved!

The next church was warned about false Jews (2:8,9), for salvation was “of the Jews” when the Lord was here (John 4:22) and will be again in the Tribulation. But for us there is “no difference” between Jews and Gentiles (Rom.10:22).

And we don’t have to be faithful to death to be crowned with eternal life either (2:10 cf. James 1:12).

The next church is told not to eat things sacrificed to idols (Rev.2:12,14) cuz they were under the law (Ex.34:15), but we’re not (Rom.6:14) so we can eat such things (ICor.10:19-25). But if they, do they’ll be guilty of spiritual “fornication” (2:14) with the “whore” of Babylon (Rev.17:1,4).

The letter to the next church gives historical evidence that these churches are future churches, for there is no historical or archeological record of a church in Thyatira (2:18). They are told they’ll rule the nations with a rod of iron (2:26,27) with the Lord (Rev.19:11-15), but we’ll be in heaven ruling angels (ICor.6:3)!

The next church is told they looked spiritually alive but were dead (3:1) because they did works (3:2), but they weren’t perfect works! Under the law, works perfected faith (James 2:21,22) and faith perfected works, *but not today.*

The next church was told they hadn’t denied the Lord’s name (3:7,8) so were saved (Mt.10:32,33). But denying the Lord *today* doesn’t mean you’re not saved (IITim.2:13).

John tells the last church to buy white raiment (3:14,18), i.e., *righteousness* (Rev.19:8 cf. Ps.132:9; Isa.61:10). Under the kingdom, program you *bought* righteousness by selling all and giving to the poor (Lu.18:18-23), *but not under grace.*

It is often taught that the letters to the 7 churches represent 7 stages of church history. And it’s true that the first church left their first love (Rev.3:4) as did the early church (IITim.1:15). But the church which is the Body of Christ was *a mystery* and so can’t be part of John’s “prophecy.” Also, Titus was told to be looking for the rapture (Tit.2:13), something that couldn’t have come if 7 stages of church history had to unfold before it came! It is also argued that we are in the last “lukewarm” stage of church history (3:15,16) because the church today is so apathetic, but that’s only in this country where persecution is rare. Christians aren’t lukewarm in many other countries though!

Faith Bible Church

www.faithbiblechurch.weebly.com

April 14, 2019

Sunday School: 9:30 a.m.

*Thornton Harrison, Dave Stewart*

Morning Service: 10:45 a.m.

*Pastor Ricky Kurth*

Junior Church: 10:45 a.m.

*Myrtle Harrison*

Wednesday Night Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.

*Assistant Pastor Steve Schwieger*

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