

The Bible Barn Unit 6

Chapter 30

# Letter to the Seven Churches

Revelation 2 and 3

Focus Verse: Revelation 3:20

**"Hello, campers!" Ranger Reggie greeted. "It's so good to see you! Welcome back to the Bible Barn." He looked around. "Have you seen Safari Sam? I can't seem to find him."**

**Safari Sam ran through the door and onto the stage. He was waving an envelope in the air. "Ranger Reggie! Ranger Reggie! Look what I have!"**

**"What is it?" Ranger Reggie asked.**

**"I don't know but it looks important. It says: Warning!" Safari Sam pointed to the red letters stamped on the envelope flap.**

**"Well, open it up," Ranger Reggie urged.**

**Safari Sam shook his head. "I'm not going to open it. Who knows what's inside?"**

**"We'll never find out if you don't open it," Ranger Reggie argued.**

**Safari Sam pushed it into Ranger Reggie's hands and backed up to the other side of the stage. "You open it."**

**Ranger Reggie held it out towards him. "I don't want to open your mail!"**

**"I give you permission, go ahead," Safari Sam insisted.**

**"Well...okay," Ranger Reggie started to slit the fold.**

**"Wait!" Safari Sam stepped behind a stack of hay bales. "Okay, now go."**

**"Safari Sam! It's not going to explode!" Ranger Reggie exclaimed.**

**"You don't know that," Safari Sam insisted.**

**"Fine, I'll open it," Ranger Reggie finished slitting open the top. "BOOM!"**

**Safari Sam jumped in fright and knocked over the top hay bale. "Ah! Don't do that! What's it say?"**

Ranger Reggie laughed and read the letter, "Dear Safari Sam, You have two days to submit your medical forms if you want to run in this year's Ranger Runaround Rally Race. Your friend, Ranger Drosselmeyer."

Safari Sam stepped out from behind the hay. "Is that all? Why did he have to send it in a big old scary envelope?"

Ranger Reggie shrugged. "Because he wanted to warn you."

"I know but, warnings are scary," Safari Sam said.

"No, they're not," Ranger Reggie stated. "Warnings are a good thing. People who love us send us warnings to prevent us from getting into trouble. Even God sends warnings. He loves us enough to give us a big warning when we're heading for trouble."

"I think I know what's coming. It's Mail Time!" Safari Sam opened the mailbox and picked up the Bible. He found the bookmark in Revelation. "'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'" Safari Sam stopped. "What churches? What is the Bible talking about?"

"Oh, those words are found in each of the letters to the seven churches," Ranger Reggie explained. "In John's vision, Jesus told him what to write in letters to seven different churches."

"I get it. So, what did the letters say?" Safari Sam asked with curiosity.

Ranger Reggie pulled seven envelopes from his pocket. "They included encouragements or warnings, and promised rewards in heaven for those who were faithful. Here, why don't I show you? I've got seven envelopes right here."

"Let's take a look," Safari Sam took the letters Ranger Reggie offered and opened the first one. "To the church in Smyrna, He encouraged them to not be afraid of the hard times ahead or worry that they would suffer for their faith."

"And He promised them if they stayed faithful they would get the crown of life as a reward in heaven!" Ranger Reggie added.

"That's good news!" Safari Sam said. He laid the rest of the envelopes on a table and opened the second envelope. "This one is to the church in Sardis. Jesus warned them to wake up their faith, repent and obey!"

"Jesus promised to all who repented and obeyed that He would keep their name in His book forever!" Ranger Reggie summarized. He reached for the third envelope and opened it. "And Jesus wrote to the church in Philadelphia that they were running out of strength but, if they would stay strong until the end, He would write His new name on them!"

**"That's great! Who's next?" Safari Sam asked. He reached for the fourth envelope and read the address. "The church of Ephesus! Jesus was pleased with what they had done, but now they were starting to put other things first. He warned them to return to the ways they did things when they first started to follow Jesus."**

**Ranger Reggie looked over Safari Sam's shoulder at the letter. "Look! Jesus said if they would return to obeying Him they would eat from the tree of life!"**

**"Excellent!" Safari Sam cheered. "And it looks like the fifth envelope is addressed to the church in Pergamum. They were doing good things but believing in false teachings about God! Jesus promised if they came back to His teaching, He would give them a stone with a new secret name on it and hidden manna! Is that like the bread that God sent to His people in the desert?"**

**"It is! Give us this day our daily bread!" Ranger Reggie responded and reached for the sixth envelope. "Next is the church in Thyatira! Jesus encouraged them for their love and good deeds, but warned them about following false teachings."**

**It was Safari Sam's turn to look over Ranger Reggie's shoulder at the letter in his hand. "But, Jesus promised that those who stayed away from sin would rule other nations."**

**Ranger Reggie put the letter away and picked up the seventh letter. "Well, here's one last letter—it's to the church in Laodicea. Safari Sam, would you like to open it?"**

**"Sure," Safari Sam agreed. "It says, Jesus told them they were lukewarm. Hmm...I don't know what that means."**

**"Well, sometimes when we first decide to follow Jesus, we are so excited that our hearts feel like they are on fire!" Ranger Reggie explained. "We want to be with Him and talk about Him all the time. Sometimes, after a while, people cool off a little and put other things first."**

**Safari Sam looked down at the letter and read it again. "Oh, so Jesus wants us to stay close to Him and if we do, He invites us to sit with Him on His throne!" Safari Sam put the letter down and said thoughtfully, "Say, that reminds me of the letter Orville showed me! Hey campers, let's call Orville? Are you ready?"**

**"Hey Orville, come on down!" the children and counselors called out. Orville swooped down from his nest and dropped a message egg onto the table.**

**Safari Sam opened the egg and read the letter. "Jesus says, 'Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in.'"**

**Ranger Reggie smiled. "He knocks at the door of everyone's heart—we can invite Him to come in and be our Lord forever."**

**"And anyone who believes in Jesus, gets to be close with Him forever here on earth and later in heaven," Safari Sam added.**

**"Right," Ranger Reggie agreed. "And did you know that even after we believe in Him, Jesus is knocking on the door to our hearts?"**

**"Why's that?" Safari Sam asked.**

**"He's there with forgiveness, love, warnings, power, and second chances!" Ranger Reggie listed excitedly.**

**Safari Sam thought for a minute. "Well, when I think about all those warnings, I feel like they are all things that I have done."**

**"Right," Ranger Reggie replied. "The letters help us all! Many of us have suffered hard times, and we all disobey God sometimes."**

**"We may feel as though we have run out of strength and sometimes we don't put Jesus first," Safari Sam suggested.**

**"And sometimes we believe false teachings, or have lukewarm faith. But Jesus loves us enough to warn us and give us another chance! He always stands at the door of our hearts and knocks, remember?" Ranger Reggie asked.**

**Safari Sam nodded his reply. "If we invite Him in, Jesus helps us do things His way."**

**"And if we are faithful to Him, look at all these rewards we could get in heaven!" Ranger Reggie exclaimed.**

**"That is awesome!" Safari Sam agreed. "There's only one thing I don't understand. What does God mean when He says, 'He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the spirit says...?' Don't we all have ears?"**

**"We do but I think our featured creature can help us figure it out! It's Creature Feature time!" Ranger Reggie looked around. "Wild William, give us a clue!"**

**Wild William peered around the corner of the horse stalls and into the Bible Barn. "His legs are thick, his ears are grand, largest animal on land."**

**"I know, I know! It's an elephant!" Safari Sam guessed immediately.**

**Ranger Reggie's eyes grew big with worry. At the first sight of the elephant lumbering down the aisle, he jumped behind the hay bales. But it was too late, the elephant had spotted him and wrapped his big gray trunk around Ranger Reggie's waist. The elephant lifted Ranger Reggie effortlessly into the air. "Help! Help! Mad elephant on the loose!"**

**Safari Sam leaped into action. "Oh no! Down Jumbo! Get back!" He held out a palm full of peanuts. The elephant dropped Ranger Reggie on the floor and followed Safari Sam and the peanuts back down the aisle. Safari Sam returned to the stage. "Ranger Reggie! Are you all right?"**

Ranger Reggie brushed hay and peanut shells from his clothes. "Now I'm going to smell like peanuts all day!"

"Wow, your screams sure must have sounded super loud to that elephant. Did you see how big his ears are?" Safari Sam asked.

"That's it Safari Sam!" Ranger Reggie exclaimed. "That's the elephant was today's featured creature. God is showing us that if we listen with super ears and hear His warnings we will always do what's right!"

Safari Sam grinned. "That's a reward I can live with!"

Ranger Reggie also grinned. "Now let's all go out to the campfire together and sing our Camp Critter song. Then we can have a special time of worship around the campfire; and we can listen for Jesus to knock on the door to our hearts!"