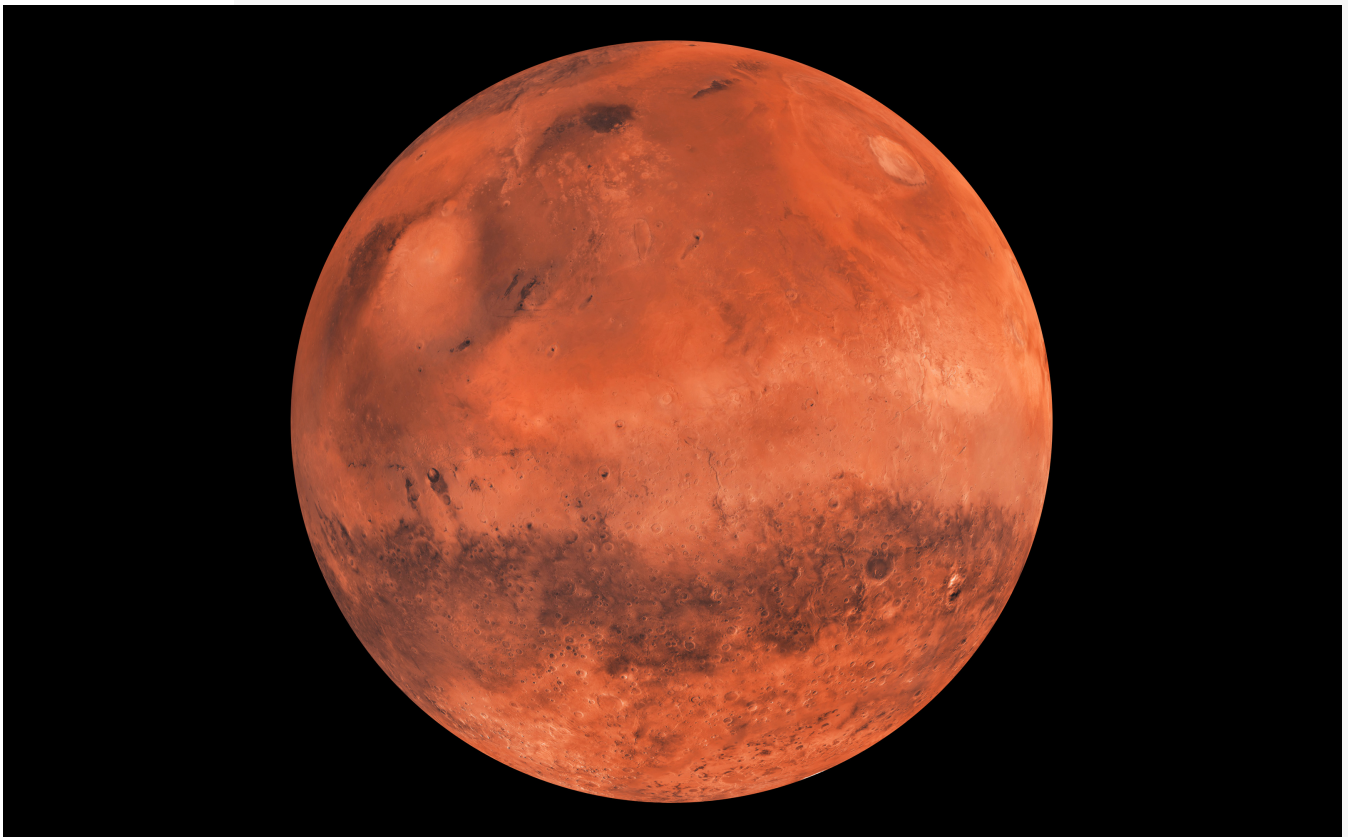


GEMS

1 JOHN 3:1-3

EXTRATERRESTRIAL LOVE



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Many have a strange fascination with all things extraterrestrial, with aliens, with unidentified flying objects. There's a whole genre of literature, movies, and websites, about aliens, UFO's, and life on other planets. What explains that? Why the obsession?

Some of it it reveals a deep longing in the human heart for something above and beyond this world, something out of this world. Or there's a sense that there is something beyond us out there, but we don't know what it is yet. Or, as the movies indicate, there's the fear that if there is something out there, something alien, something extraterrestrial, it is hostile, it is an enemy, and therefore to be feared and fought. **What's out there and how should we respond to it?** Believe it or not, the Apostle John answers that question.

BACKGROUND

John was ministering to a culture that had been influenced by Gnostic ideas of higher beings of different ranks. Although out of reach of most people, they could be reached and befriended by an elite few with special knowledge or abilities.

The apostle John also brings before us something alien, something extraterrestrial, something out of this world. But this is not something to be feared. It is not a force of hostility. Rather it is a force full of adopting love. If you were to translate literally the first words of 1 John 3:1 it would be something like this: "Behold what foreign love is this, what out-of-this-world love is this, what extraterrestrial love is this." John here invites us to behold (which means to study, to investigate, to dig deep, to research) this love. Let's do that so that we can respond rightly.



Before we look at what's out there, we need to ask, who are we here?



1. WE ARE ALIENS (1)

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God (1).

Experts tell us that there are five factors in people's decision about what child to adopt: genes, environment, education, record, and prospects.

Our genes

When someone adopts a child they want to know who the natural parents are. Is there any genetic history or problem they should be aware of?

What about our spiritual genes? The Bible tells us that we sinners from conception (Ps. 51:5). When Jesus spoke to sinners in his own day, he said, "You are of your father, the devil" (John 8:44). These are not good genes. This is a bad start in life.

Our environment

There are some countries that cannot get their children adopted because their country has a terrible record of pollution and all the associated health problems.

We are spiritually polluted. Like these children, we too suffer the effects of the sin-environment we are brought up in. We are infected with the virus of sin.

Our education

Education can repair so much damage, can't it? Even with bad genes and a bad environment, a good education can recover much that's been lost or damaged.

We are educated in the ways of sin, and we didn't need our parents to teach us. When it comes to sinning, we're self-taught, self-directed learners. We get straight A's in sin subjects.

Our record

In the UK, a couple sued the local council adoption agency for not revealing to them the nature of their adopted child's behavioral problems. They said, "This is unfair; if we had known the contents of this report, we would never have adopted this child."

What's our report like? Remember God knows everything about every child he adopts.

Our prospects

The fifth factor is the result of the previous four factors. What kind of future will this child have based on what we already know.

The Bible tells us our prospects are eternal death. We have one horizon when we are born into this world, and it is hell. That is our prospect.



CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Ask to be adopted. "I've been baptized," you say. That's not enough. In baptism, your parents are putting you up for adoption. They've looked at your spiritual genes, environment, education, record, and prospects, and recognized you have spiritual needs they cannot meet. They're saying, "We can give our kids a loving family with many material and spiritual blessings, but we cannot save them. God please take our child into your family." But you have to ask for it yourself too. There's a big difference between being put up for adoption and being adopted. But baptism gets you to the front of the line. It gives you a huge advantage. So, ask for adoption!

Be amazed at your adoption? John is staggered at his adoption by God. God adopted this kind of 'we,' and this kind of 'us'? It goes against everything this world knows about love. It goes against everything terrestrial, natural, and logical. We check none of the adoption boxes, but God says, "You shall be my child." Where does this love come from? Not from this world, but from above and beyond it. It's extra-terrestrial love, alien love, Behold it, stand in amazement, fall in worship. Let it excite and thrill you that there is something such as this above this world, that has visited this world, and it's loving not hostile.

ALIEN LOVE IS AMAZING LOVE



Who can love unloveable aliens



2. GOD LOVES ALIENS (16)

Let's look at the character and love of the adoptive father in this case.

Our Father's Character

Our Father is Gracious: Many adoptive parents are looking for the loveable, for those who deserve love and are easy to love. But our heavenly Father adopts the unloveable, those who do not deserve love and are hard to love. Therefore if you want to be adopted, don't try to make yourself loveable. He passes by those who think they deserve love to adopt those who know they don't.

Our Father is Wise: If you ask a child, "What kind of dad would you like," she will say, "I'd like a daddy with lots of money." Well, our heavenly Father has more wealth than anyone but he's also got wisdom, an extremely rare combination. He has everything and could give every one of his children everything they ever wanted, but he doesn't. He knows what to give and what not to give, and knows when to take back what he has given.

Our Father is Gentle: An American Christian woman was hosting friends, when news came that her husband had been killed in the Vietnam War. She quietly left the company and disappeared upstairs. After a while, her friends got concerned about her and one of them went up to the door of her bedroom, which was closed, and listened. This is what she heard: "Oh Father, oh Father, oh my Father!" The man who told this story said this: "The now widowed lady buried herself into the arms of her heavenly Father. This was not a sudden desperate reaction to tragedy. Those comforting arms were well-known to her from a past experience of lesser troubles." Our gentle father feels for us and at the same time helps us. His sympathy is matched by his ability and willingness to strengthen us. As soon as we cry, "Abba, Father!" he hears in heaven and races to the scene with his gentle greatness and great gentleness.

Our Father is Willing: The numbers of people willing to adopt in the western world is reducing by 15% every year. Has God's willingness to adopt ever declined by even one percent? Never! It is no less today than it was when John wrote these words. And his will is so strong that he never gives up on those he adopts. In some countries, one in every five adoptions fail, and the children are returned. God has never failed in an adoption? He's never taken on a child and got to the point when He said, "No more; I can't take it. Never! He is patient, and He has never failed. He will not give up on you."



Our Father's Love

The initiative of this love: We love him. Why? Because he first loved us (1 Jn 4:19). He took the initiative. If you are a child of God, the initiative of this love should fill you with thankful worship because you know that you would never have taken the initiative. It was his decision, not yours. He took the first move, not you.

The speed of this love: Adoption processes can be long and lengthy (12-36 months). There are so many steps, forms, interviews, tests, etc. How long does it take God to adopt a child? It's as fast as the full stop at the end of this sentence. As soon as you believe in the Son of God, you too are a son of God (John 1:12-13)

The size of this love: In the USA, there are 50,000 adoptions every year. But that leaves 100,000 unadopted every year. Is there any limit on God? Does he ever reach a quota? Never! His love is large enough for everyone who wants it.

The end of this love: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." This is what we are. But there is still a future, because he goes on: "What we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is" (2).

The cost of this love: The average international adoption today costs about \$35,000. But that's nothing compared to the cost involved in your adoption as a child of God. It cost the blood of God; it cost his life and his death.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Seek this love. Because this is out-of-this-world love, it can only be found by looking above this world and into heaven. Don't you want to be loved like this? You can be. There's no reason for anyone here to remain an orphan for a moment longer.

Study this love. "Behold," research, saturate yourself in this foreign, extra-terrestrial, and amazing adopting love. The more you examine it, the more you'll be excited by it.

Soak in this love. Bury yourself in this Father's arms. Stay there, look at yourself, look at his eyes, feel his beating heart. Enjoy it, delight in it.

Be stunned by this love. Be stunned at the 'we,' at the 'Father,' and at the 'love.'

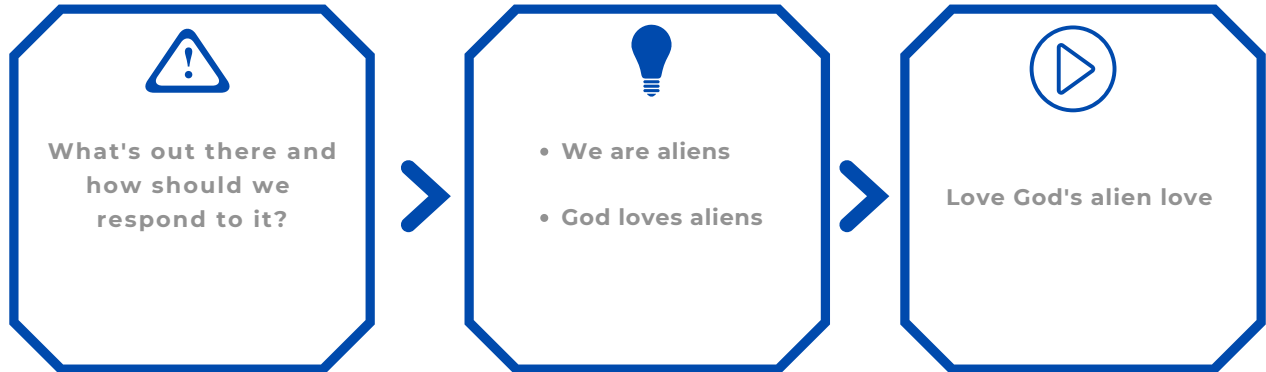
Speak of this love: When adopted by God, we want others to share in it too, We tell of his love to share his love,

IF YOU EVER UNDERSTAND GOD'S LOVE
YOU'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD IT.

Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story



CONCLUSION



PRAYER: Out-of-this-world God, I thank you for your out-of-this-world love, that you've brought into my world in such a wonderful world-changing way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think there's so much fascination with life from other planets, UFO's, etc?
2. What's your best argument for adoption by God?
3. What plans do you have to study and research God's adopting love?
4. What amazes you most about God's love?
5. How have you experienced God's love recently?
6. Who do you know that needs to hear about God's amazing love? How will you share it with them this week?

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