

- Rev. Grant Mangold, [www.RiversideChurchIowa.com](http://www.RiversideChurchIowa.com)

## YOUR LIFE - NOW ??

What's the big deal about Jesus actually becoming a human being? As we saw last week, **Jesus IS God**. So God becoming a man is a big deal. How big? The first eighteen verses of the first chapter of the Gospel of John outlines three amazing and essential truths - which expand in the following chapters.

1 - JESUS is your eternal Creator God. We saw last week how this point forms the apex of the cross-shaped verbal picture painted by the apostle John in verses 1-18. In this Creator, "**the Word**" of God, dwells all reason and logic, wisdom and knowledge (echoed in Colossians 2:3). And John 1:4 says "**In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.**" Jesus is the source of physical life and of spiritual life. The reason life has meaning and purpose is because you are created in His image. This means you can know Him and you can know who you are and why you exist. But first, you need His light.

Verse 5 says "**The light (Jesus) shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**" That's awesome good news, because without Jesus, mankind dwells in the darkness of sin - rebellion against God. You've inherited sin and the consequences of sin from your original ancestors Adam and Eve. That's why, apart from Jesus, you live in darkness, alienated from right relationship with God, your Maker. And there's nothing you can do about it. Only God can. That's why this next point is so important.

2 - JESUS became like you. Verse 9 says the true light, Jesus, came into the world not as "light" *per se* - but as a MAN! Verse 14 begins, "**the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.**" Theologians regard this as the most incredible miracle of all - the "incarnation" of God, as the man in the manger. That's what Christmas is all about. Our Savior comes as one of US. Why is this so important? Because this is "mind-blowing" assurance that YOUR LIFE MATTERS TO GOD. He knows your situation. He cares about YOU. He became like you in order to save you. Not just coming to visit, in tangible "flesh" - but dwelling with us as a human being. In the flesh. The word-picture is "tabernacled" which recalls God's presence in the Old Testament portable tent-temple the Israelites traveled the wilderness with. But there's more.

The middle of verse 14 explodes, "**and we have seen His glory - glory as of the only Son from the Father.**" This bursts with meaning. His "glory" is what the Old Testament called the "shekinah" glory - the pure brightness of God's presence which was seen in the tabernacle. That's why the darkness can never overcome the "light" of the Word, the eternal Creator - even when God the Son comes to earth as a man!

And yet, in becoming like you, He is still very much UN-like you. That's the rest of verse 14, "**full of grace and truth.**" That's what you are not. Apart from Christ, you are full of darkness. But Jesus came to save you. He has not abandoned His creation, though mankind turned its back on Him by rebelling in sin. You continue that rebellion by sinning against God in thought, word, and deed. But God cares. God loves. God sends His Son, born of a woman, to live a perfect human life. So that Jesus can be the perfect sacrifice for sin. That's what John said in verse 29, "**Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.**" That's the word-picture of the cross-beam of the cross of Calvary, and it points to this:

3 - YOU can become like Jesus. No, you don't become God or "a god" - but like Him in the sense that you receive His life to become a RE-BORN child of God. Verse 12 says "**to all who received Him (Jesus), who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God - who were born not of the flesh...but born of God.**" Jesus, the Son of God, lived His perfect life to pay for your sin. He raised from the dead to give you His eternal spiritual resurrection life. In the flesh. But only IF you receive Him.

You receive Him by believing in Him with all your heart, mind, and will. This happens when you are "**born of God**" - being re-created through spiritual re-birth by the Holy Spirit. So believing in Jesus by receiving Him as Lord and Savior brings true spiritual **LIFE** to your life. All the fullness of life from Him who is life. Rescued from darkness. Brought to life in His marvelous light. Good news! Receive it! Live it!

Salvation, eternal spiritual life, begins the moment you believe. It matters for YOUR LIFE - **NOW**. It's not just about heaven some day. It's about here and now, being set free from the power of sin and self, so you can truly **LIVE** in the light of Jesus. By His power. The fullness of His life lived through you. And as a child of God, to become more and more like the Son of God, your re-Creator - your Savior - your Lord !

That's the cross-shaped word-picture of John 1:1-18. Jesus came to save you. Turn to Him and **LIVE** !