

“Greatness:
Just Live It”

“Greatness Through Belief” Core 32

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

A. We believe in the incarnation...

“In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through Him, and nothing was created except through Him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and His life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it... So the Word became human and made His home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.” John 1:1-5,14

1. The word incarnation means “the act of being made flesh.”

“So the Word became human...”

2. It was the beginning of Jesus becoming human, not the beginning of Jesus! Prior to the incarnation, He was like the Father and the Spirit with no material substance.

“In the beginning the Word already existed.”

3. Jesus humbled Himself and became man.

“Though He was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, He gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When He appeared in human form, He humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross.” Philippians 2:6-8

4. Jesus fulfilled prophecy when being born.

“For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on His shoulders. And He will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

5. The incarnation is one of the mysteries of God.

“Here are two mysteries for the price of one — the plurality of persons within the unity of God, and the union of Godhead and manhood in the person of Jesus. . . . Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as is this truth of the Incarnation.”

-J. I. Packer

“The LORD our God has secrets known to no one.”

Deuteronomy 29:29a

6. Jesus took on human nature with flesh, body, mind, emotions, and will.

“Therefore, it was necessary for Him to be made in every respect like us, His brothers and sisters, so that He could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then He could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people.” Hebrews 2:17

“This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for He faced all of the same testings we do, yet He did not sin.”

Hebrews 4:15

7. Jesus’ primary purpose was to bring salvation to man through forgiveness.

“In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.” Hebrews 9:22

“That is why, when Christ came into the world, He said to God, ‘You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But you have given Me a body to offer.’” Hebrews 10:5

“The reward for trusting Him will be the salvation of your souls.” 1 Peter 1:9

B. The incarnation made Jesus 100% human...

1. He needed sleep.

“As they sailed across, Jesus settled down for a nap...”

Luke 8:23

2. He needed food.

“For forty days and forty nights He fasted and became very hungry.” Matthew 4:2

“In the morning, as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, He was hungry,” Matthew 21:18

3. He needed protection.

“After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. ‘Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and His mother,’ the angel said. ‘Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill Him.’” Matthew 2:13

4. He perspired.

“He prayed more fervently, and He was in such agony of spirit that His sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.” Luke 22:43

5. He bled.

“One of the soldiers, however, pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out.” John 19:34

6. He expressed joy.

“I have told you these things so that you will be filled with My joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!” John 15:11

7. He expressed sorrow.

“He took Peter and Zebedee’s two sons, James and John, and He became anguished and distressed.” Matthew 26:37

8. He expressed anger.

“He looked around at them angrily and was deeply saddened by their hard hearts.” Mark 3:5a

9. He referred to Himself as a man.

“As it is, you are looking for a way to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God.” John 8:40 NIV

C. The early church fathers’ belief in the incarnation...

The early church considered the Incarnation to be one of the most important truths of our faith. Because of this, they formulated what has come to be called the Chalcedonian Creed, a statement which sets forth what we are to believe and what we are not to believe about the Incarnation. This creed was the fruit of a large council that took place for October 8 to November 1, 451, in the city of Chalcedon and has been taken as the standard, orthodox definition of the biblical teaching on the person of Christ since that day by all the major branches of Christianity. There are five main truths with which the creed of Chalcedon summarized the biblical teaching on the Incarnation:

1. Jesus has two natures – He is God and man.
2. Each nature is full and complete...He is fully God and fully man.
3. Each nature remains distinct.
4. Christ is only one person.
5. Things that are true of only one nature are nonetheless true of the Person of Christ.

D. As we think of the incarnation, I believe*...

1. I believe God is near us.

“So the Word became human and made His home among us.”

“Come near to God and He will come near to you.” James 4:8

2. I believe God is love to us.

“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.” Romans 5:8

3. I believe God suffered for us.

“But He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.” Isaiah 53:5

E. How does your belief affect your behavior?

“But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says.

Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.” James 1:22

1. God is near. He made Himself available to us. How are you demonstrating availability to those in your world? Your family, your friends, your coworkers? Be present!
2. God loved sacrificially. How are you demonstrating your love to those in your world? Giving, listening, volunteering, sacrificing, modeling Jesus to your world? Let love guide you!
3. God suffered. Remember, your greatest growth and character building come during times of suffering. Be ready to trade success for significance and pleasure for purpose!

“Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.” Philippians 4:9