

Council of Nicaea & Canons

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Commemoration of the Saints

Throughout the commemoration of the saints, believers are reminded of the extraordinary individuals whose lives and sacrifices have indelibly shaped the Christian faith. Among those honored are Saint Gregory the Theologian, renowned for his eloquence and theological insights, and Saint Cyril the Pillar of the Faith, known for his steadfast defense of orthodoxy. Saint Demetrious and Saint Severus stand as unwavering champions of the faith, while Saint Athanasius's unwavering commitment to upholding the truth against heresy earned him the title "Father of Orthodoxy."

Who are all these individuals mentioned in the commemoration of the saints and why commemorate? What thoughts are invoked during the prayer?

The names of these saints should evoke a sense of awe, inspiration and gratitude reminding believers of the rich heritage and unwavering commitment that have characterized the Christian faith throughout history. The commemoration of the saints is not merely a historical exercise but a vibrant and transformative experience. It offers a glimpse into the lives of extraordinary individuals who dedicated their lives to preserving and propagating the Christian faith. Through their stories, we are reminded of the power of faith, the importance of unwavering commitment, and the beauty of a life lived in service to God and humanity.

The Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, and Ephesus also hold a prominent place in the commemoration of the saints. Why are these commemorated? These gatherings brought together prominent theologians and church leaders to address critical issues facing the early church and define essential doctrines that would shape the foundations of Christianity. By recollecting all these saints and events, our hearts are enlightened with their impact. But how do these impact us today?

Ecumenical Councils

In the year 325 AD, the Council of Nicea marked the first ecumenical council, marking a significant milestone in Christianity. This gathering of bishops and church leaders, numbering

approximately 318, was not merely another council, but rather the first ecumenical council, a distinction that set it apart from previous assemblies.

The term "ecumenical" holds great significance in the context of Christianity. Derived from the Greek word "oikoumene," meaning "the inhabited world," it denotes the pursuit of unity and cooperation among Christian churches worldwide. The Council of Nicea embodied this spirit, as it brought together representatives from different regions and denominations, united in their shared faith.

Several factors contributed to the unique status of the Council of Nicea as an ecumenical council. Firstly, its convening was authorized by the Roman Emperor Constantine I. Constantine's involvement lent an air of legitimacy and authority to the council, ensuring that its decisions would carry weight and be recognized by a broad spectrum of Christians.

Secondly, the Council of Nicea addressed matters of fundamental importance to the Christian faith. It focused on theological controversies, particularly the nature of Christ and his relationship with God the Father. The creed that emerged from the council, known as the Nicene Creed, became a foundational statement of faith for many Christian denominations.

Thirdly, the Council of Nicea established a precedent for future ecumenical councils. It set the stage for regular gatherings of church leaders to discuss and resolve doctrinal and ecclesiastical issues that affected the entire Christian community. These subsequent ecumenical councils, such as the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD and the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD, built upon the legacy of Nicea and contributed to the development of a unified Christian tradition.

In essence, the Council of Nicea marked a turning point in the history of Christianity. It showcased the potential for unity and cooperation among different Christian communities, paving the way for future ecumenical councils and shaping the course of Christian theology and practice for centuries to come.

The First Apostolic Sees

Although the Council of Nicaea, held in 325 AD, was a significant event in the history of Christianity, marking the first ecumenical council of the Church, it is important to note that the Council of Nicaea was not the first council convened by the Christian Church. Prior to the Council of Nicaea, the Church had spread throughout the Roman Empire and beyond, establishing five major apostolic sees. These sees were centers of Christian authority and leadership, each associated with one or more of the apostles of Jesus Christ.

Apostolic See	Description
Rome, Italy	Martyrdom and burial place of the apostles St. Paul and St. Peter. Rome became the center of the Western Church and the seat of the Bishop of Rome, known as the Pope
Constantinople, Turkey	Associated with the apostle Andrew. Constantine the Great designated Constantinople as the new capital of the Roman Empire in 330 AD, and the city quickly grew in importance as a center of Christianity.
Alexandria, Egypt	Home to the St. Mark the Evangelist; the Church of Alexandria became one of the most prominent in the early centuries of Christianity. Renowned for its theological school.
Antioch, Turkey	Traditionally considered to be the first see of the apostle Peter; a thriving city where the followers of Jesus were first called "Christians"
Jerusalem, Holy Land	Center of Jesus' ministry and crucifixion; the apostle St. James, the brother of Jesus, led the Church in Jerusalem after Jesus' resurrection

As the churches in each of these apostolic sees grew and developed, they faced a variety of challenges and controversies. To address these issues, local, pre-ecumenical, councils were convened to discuss and resolve theological disputes, establish church policies, and maintain unity among the Christian communities.

Pre-Ecumenical Councils: Council of Jerusalem

One notable example of a pre-ecumenical council is the Council of Jerusalem, described in Acts 15. This gathering of apostles and elders in Jerusalem was convened to address a pivotal question: Were Gentile converts to Christianity obligated to undergo circumcision and adhere to the Mosaic law? At the heart of the debate was the tension between Jewish and Gentile believers. Many Jewish Christians believed that salvation was only possible through adherence to the Mosaic law, including the rite of circumcision. They argued that Gentile converts should be required to adopt these Jewish practices to be considered full members of the Christian community. The council's decision, known as the "Apostolic Decree," affirmed that Gentile converts were not required to follow these Jewish practices.

At the Council, St. Barnabas and St. Paul told about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles and St. Peter testified that God had shown him that the

Gentiles were not to be excluded from the message of salvation (Acts 15:7–11). After, St. James, the leader of the Jerusalem Church, gave his decision (later known as the "Apostolic Decree") saying, "Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." (Acts 15:19–21)

In a letter sent to the Church of Antioch, the council expressed that the Holy Spirit had guided their decision. "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell." (Acts 15:28–29)

The council's decision represented a significant step in the development of early Christianity. It marked the recognition of the Gentiles as equal partners in the faith and paved the way for the rapid spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire. The Apostolic Decree became a foundational document for the early church, guiding the practice and beliefs of Christians for centuries to come.

The Entirety of the Pre-Ecumenical Councils

Early Christian councils, such as those held in Jerusalem, Rome, and Carthage, were instrumental in shaping the practices and beliefs of the early Christian Church. These councils brought together representatives from different Christian communities to discuss and decide on matters of doctrine, discipline, and practice.

One important function of the early Christian councils was to emphasize Christian identity. In a world dominated by paganism, it was essential for Christians to define themselves and their beliefs. Eventually, the Council of Ephesus, held in 381 AD, issued a creed known as the Nicene Creed. This creed summarized the basic beliefs of Christianity and became a standard for Christian orthodoxy. It affirmed the belief in one God, the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Trinity.

The early Christian councils played a vital role in the development of Christianity. They established guidelines for Gentile converts, emphasized Christian identity, addressed theological controversies, and helped to shape the practices and beliefs of the early Christian Church. Their decisions continue to influence Christian thought and practice today.

Council	Date	Purpose	Outcome
Council of Jerusalem	49 AD	To address the issue of whether Gentile converts should be required to observe the Law of Moses	Gentile converts were not required to observe the Law of Moses, but they should abstain from certain practices considered offensive to Jewish sensibilities.
Council of Rome	155 AD	To address the issue of Quartodecimanism, the practice of celebrating Easter on the 14th day of Nisan regardless of the day of the week	The council failed to reach a consensus, and the practice of Quartodecimanism continued in some regions for several more centuries.
Council of Ephesus	193 AD	To decree that Easter should be celebrated on Sunday, rather than Passover	This decision was made to dissociate Christianity from Judaism and establish a distinct Christian identity.
Council of Carthage	251 AD	To address the issue of Lapsi bishops, who had renounced their faith during times of persecution and later returned to the Church	Lapsi bishops could be reinstated if they demonstrated genuine repentance and underwent a period of penance.
Council of Iconium	258 AD	To confirm the decrees of the Council of Carthage and issue additional canons to address related issues	Additional canons were issued to address issues such as the treatment of lapsed Christians and the regulation of clerical discipline.
Council of Antioch	264 AD	To address the teachings of Paul of Samosata, the bishop of Antioch, who denied the full divinity of Jesus Christ	Paul's teachings were condemned as heretical, and he was deposed from his position as bishop.
Council of Arabia	246–247 AD	To address the teachings of Beryllus, the bishop of Bostra, who maintained that the soul perished after death and would eventually be resurrected with the body	Beryllus's views were condemned as heretical.

Council	Date	Purpose	Outcome
Council of Elvira	306 AD	To discuss issues of order, discipline, and conduct among the Christian community	The council adopted 81 canons that addressed topics such as the proper observance of Sunday, the prohibition of certain pagan practices, the regulation of clergy conduct, and the establishment of guidelines for the administration of penance.
Council of Ancyra	314 AD	To address the growing influence of Donatism, a schismatic movement that rejected the authority of the Roman Catholic Church	The council adopted canons that condemned Donatism and established guidelines for the reconciliation of Donatists to the Catholic Church.
Synod of Neo-Caesarea	314 AD	Sought to regulate and maintain order within the Church, emphasizing the importance of moral conduct and spiritual discipline among the clergy and laity.	Convened under the leadership of Basil, Bishop of Neo-Caesarea, established a set of 15 canons that would later gain recognition as ecumenical in 451 at the Council of Chalcedon. These canons addressed diverse aspects of church life, providing guidance on matters such as the marriages of priests, second marriages, penances for various sins, and the responsibilities of deacons.

Then Came Arius

Arius, a fourth-century priest, propounded a controversial doctrine that challenged the traditional understanding of the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. Central to his belief was the assertion that "if the Father begat the Son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence." This statement implied that there was a time when the Son did not exist, contradicting the orthodox view of the Son's eternal nature.

Arius's belief stemmed from his interpretation of several biblical passages. He cited Jesus' words in John 14:28, "If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I," as evidence that the Father possessed a higher status than the Son. Additionally, he pointed to Proverbs 8:22, "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work," to suggest that the Son was created by God. Arius also drew upon Isaiah 46:9, "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me," to emphasize the uniqueness and indivisibility of God's essence.

Arius's fundamental presupposition was that the divine essence is an indivisible unity, incapable of being divided or distributed. From this perspective, he argued that it was impossible for God to "beget" a divine Son, as such an act would involve dividing the inherently indivisible. Therefore, he concluded that the Son must have been created rather than uncreated.

Arius placed the Son within the category of creatures, although acknowledging his exalted status above all other created beings. However, he maintained that the Son could not be considered eternal in the same sense as the Father. "There was a time when he was not," Arius declared. He further asserted that if God and Christ were equal, then Christ should be called God's brother, not God's son.

Arius's teachings generated significant controversy and opposition within the Christian community, particularly from those who held to the traditional view of the Trinity. The Council of Nicaea, convened in 325 AD, condemned Arius's doctrine, reaffirming the deity of Christ and his eternal existence. The Nicene Creed, formulated at the council, declared that the Son is "begotten, not made" and "of one substance with the Father." This creed became a pivotal statement of Christian orthodoxy, solidifying the belief in the equality and divinity of the Father and the Son.

Then came Athanasius...

Athanasius was born in 295 AD in Egypt, near Alexandria. It was by the water's edge that Bishop Alexander first encountered Athanasius, recognizing his potential and inviting him to serve as his secretary. Around the year 318 AD, at approximately 25 years of age, Athanasius wrote his book titled, "On the Incarnation" which explored the profound mystery of Christ's divinity and humanity, laying the groundwork for his unwavering stance against Arianism.

In 325 AD, Athanasius attended the Council of Nicaea as deacon and the secretary of Pope Alexander. It was at this crucial gathering that he emerged as a passionate defender of the full divinity of Jesus Christ. With eloquence and conviction, he argued against the heretical teachings of Arius, who sought to diminish the divine nature of Christ. Following the departure of Pope Alexander in 328 AD, Athanasius was elevated to the position of Pope of Alexandria. For an extraordinary 48 years, he steered his flock with unwavering dedication and theological brilliance. He became a beacon of orthodoxy and a staunch opponent of Arianism, which had begun to spread like wildfire.

In his book "De Decretis," Athanasius forcefully refuted the Arian heresy, which sought to diminish the divinity of Jesus Christ. He argued eloquently against the notion that the Son was a created being, subject to change and variation like all rational creatures. Instead, he upheld the true

and natural divinity of Christ, emphasizing that He was eternally begotten of the Father and of the same essence.

Against Arianism

Arianism, a significant theological controversy in early Christianity, centered around the teachings of Arius, a presbyter from Alexandria, Egypt. According to Arius, Jesus Christ, the incarnate Logos, was not eternally existent but rather a created being. This belief challenged the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity, asserting that only the Son was directly begotten by God the Father, before all ages, and that the Son's essence or substance was distinct from, though similar to, that of the Creator. Arius's opponents argued that this view made Jesus less than fully divine and therefore heretical.

Regarding who created the Son, several refutations could be made. One such argument comes from Isaiah 43:11, which states, "I, even I, am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior." Another passage, Colossians 1:15, refers to Jesus as "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." Additionally, 1 Corinthians 8:6 emphasizes "there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live." Finally, John 17:21, presents the argument of unity, stating "they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You."

The Nicene Creed, formulated during the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, played a pivotal role in addressing Arianism. The central term used in the creed to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son is *homoousios* (Ancient Greek: ὁμοούσιος), meaning "of the same substance" or "of one being." This term affirmed the essential unity and equality of the Father and the Son, refuting the Arian notion of a distinction in substance. The Nicene Creed is an even more explicit anti-Arian statement on the Trinity. It declares that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all of the same divine essence and power, rejecting any notion of inferiority or subordination.

The primary concern of the Council of Nicaea was the exact relationship between God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and the nature of the Son of God. (Refer to Paul of Samosata, and the Synods of Antioch.) While Arius acknowledged Jesus Christ's divinity and mission for the salvation of mankind, he asserted that Jesus was not equal to God the Father in terms of rank and primordial origin. Additionally, Arius believed that the Holy Spirit, the power of God the Father, was not equal to either God the Father or the Son of God. Under Arianism, Christ was not considered to be of the same essence or being as God the Father, as Arius argued that both the Father and the Son were made of "like" essence or being, rather than identical essence or being. "The Son [then,] is a creature and a work; neither is he like in essence to the Father; neither is he the true and natural Word of the Father;

neither is he his true wisdom; but he is one of the things made and created and is called the Word and Wisdom by an abuse of terms... Wherefore he by nature subject to change and variation, as are all rational creatures." (Arius)

Terminologies

The debates during the Council of Nicaea centered around the distinction between being "born" or "created" and being "begotten." Arians, followers of Arius, viewed these terms as fundamentally equivalent, while Pope Alexander of Alexandria and his supporters disagreed. Many of the words employed in these discussions, such as "essence" (ousia), "substance" (hypostasis), "nature" (physis) and "person" (prosopon) inherited multiple meanings from pre-Christian philosophers. This led to misunderstandings and confusion until the Cappadocian Fathers, particularly St. Basil of Caesarea, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and St. Gregory of Nyssa, intervened.

Under their influence, the terminology used in the debates was clarified and standardized. They defined "hypostasis" as a distinct individual existence within the Godhead, while "ousia" referred to the shared divine essence. As a result, the phrase "three hypostases in one ousia" emerged as an accurate representation of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, asserting that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct persons but share the same divine nature.

This clarification was crucial in resolving misunderstandings and establishing a common language for theological discussions. However, the nuances and complexities of these terms continued to be debated and refined throughout the early centuries of Christianity, contributing to the development of subsequent theological concepts and doctrines.

St. Basil of Caesarea, a prominent theologian of the 4th century, argues that the terms "ousia" (essence or substance) and "hypostasis" (person or subsistence) are not synonymous and should not be used interchangeably when referring to the Godhead. He draws an analogy to the distinction between a general concept and a particular instance. For example, "animal" represents a general concept, while "a particular man" represents a specific instance of that concept. Similarly, in the context of the Godhead, St. Basil asserts that we recognize one essence or substance to avoid introducing multiple definitions of existence. However, we also acknowledge distinct hypostases or persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—to ensure clarity and prevent confusion in our understanding of each.

Nicene Conclusion

St. Athanasius delved deeply into the profound mystery of the incarnation, underscoring its pivotal purpose in reversing the corruption that had ensnared humanity. He posited that the divine Word, being immortal and one with the Father, could not directly experience death. However, recognizing that mortality was the only means to undo human corruption, the Word ingeniously assumed a mortal body.: “for the Word, realizing that in no other way would the corruption of human beings be undone except, simply, by dying, **yet being immortal** and the Son of the Father of the Word was not able to die, for this reason he takes to himself a body capable of death, **in order that it, participating in the Word who is above all, might be sufficient for death on behalf of all, and through the indwelling Word would remain incorruptible**, and so corruption might henceforth cease from all by the grace of the resurrection.”

By uniting with a body susceptible to death, the Word, who transcends all creation, enabled that body to bear the weight of death on behalf of all humanity. Crucially, the indwelling presence of the immortal Word within this mortal vessel ensured that it would remain incorruptible, even in the face of death.

The Nicene Creed of 325 therefore concluded to the following statement “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God,] Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made [both in heaven and on earth.] Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit.”

Emperor Constantine then produced an edict against the Arians stating, “in addition, if any writing composed by Arius should be found, it should be handed over to the flames, so that not only will the wickedness of his teaching be obliterated, but nothing will be left even to remind anyone of him. And I hereby make a public order, that if someone should be discovered to have hidden a writing composed by Arius, and not to have immediately brought it forward and destroyed it by fire, his penalty shall be death. As soon as he is discovered in this offense, he shall be submitted for capital punishment.”

The condemnation of Arianism at the Council of Nicaea was a significant event in the history of Christianity. It established the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, emphasizing the essential unity and equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. However, Arianism continued to influence various Christian groups, particularly in the Germanic kingdoms of the early Middle Ages. It was not until the Visigothic Kingdom of Spain officially adopted Catholicism in the 6th century that Arianism was finally eradicated from Western Europe.

The Other Results of Nicaea

The Council of Nicea, although renowned for its definitive stance against Arianism and its formulation of the Nicene Creed, the council encompassed a broader agenda aimed at fostering unity and harmony among churches across the world.

One significant matter addressed at the council was the establishment of a unified calendar for determining the date of Easter. Prior to Nicea, different regions followed varying practices, leading to confusion and inconsistencies in the observance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The controversy between those who argued for independent computations and those who argued for continued reliance on the Jewish calendar was formally resolved by the Council, which endorsed the independent procedure that had been in use for some time at Rome and Alexandria. The council decreed that Easter should be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox, ensuring a standardized approach across all Christian communities.

Bishop Melitius of Egypt played a significant role in the Council of Nicaea. He had been imprisoned with Bishop Peter during the Diocletian persecution in 305/306 AD and bravely advocated for the open practice of Christianity during times of persecution. However, he faced opposition from a rival bishop named Paulinus, and his episcopate was marked by a schism known as the Meletian Schism. Due to this schism, Melitius was exiled from Antioch on three separate occasions: 361–362, 365–366, and 371–378. His removal from Antioch aimed to resolve the schism and restore unity within the church. The Meletian Schism had a lasting impact on the Christian community in Egypt and the broader region, leading to debates and discussions about episcopal authority and the proper response to persecution.

Another matter that received considerable attention was the issue of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and the authority of bishops. The council sought to define the boundaries of each bishop's authority and establish a hierarchical structure within the church. This move aimed to prevent disputes and ensure orderly administration, as well as to maintain the unity of the faith.

Furthermore, the Council of Nicea addressed various theological and doctrinal matters, aiming to clarify and codify beliefs and practices. It condemned heretical teachings that deviated from the core doctrines of Christianity and affirmed the divinity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Additionally, the council established guidelines for the proper conduct of clergy and laypeople, emphasizing the importance of ethical behavior and moral standards. The council concluded with the following 20 canons:

Canon	Prohibition/Establishment	Purpose
1	Prohibition of Self-Castration for Clergy	Uphold the sanctity of the human body and maintain physical integrity for those serving in the church.
2	Establishment of a Minimum Term for Catechumens	Ensure catechumens have sufficient time to deepen their understanding of the faith and develop a genuine commitment to Christ.
3	Prohibition of Suspicious Female Presence in Clergy Households	Preserve the reputation and integrity of the clergy by preventing any potential temptations or misunderstandings.
4	Ordination of a Bishop	Ordination of a bishop in the presence of at least three provincial bishops, and confirmation by the metropolitan bishop.
5	Provision for 2 Annual Provincial Synods	Foster communication, collaboration, and decision-making among bishops and church leaders.
6	Confirmation of Ancient Customs giving jurisdiction over large regions to the bishops of Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch.	Recognize the historical significance and apostolic tradition of the bishops of Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch.
7	Recognition of the Honorary Rights of the See of Jerusalem	Acknowledge the special significance of Jerusalem in Christian history and emphasize its spiritual and historical importance.
8	Provision for Agreement with Novatianists	Promote unity and reconciliation by encouraging an agreement with an early Christian sect.
9-14	Mild Procedure for the Lapsed during Licinius' Persecution	Provide a mild and compassionate approach toward those who lapsed in faith under pressure, emphasizing pastoral care and reconciliation.

Canon	Prohibition/Establishment	Purpose
15-16	Prohibition of the Removal of Priests	Uphold the stability and order of the clergy by protecting the rights and dignity of priests while ensuring accountability.
17	Prohibition of Usury among the Clergy	Maintain ethical standards and prevent exploitation by forbidding clergy members from engaging in usury.
18	Precedence of Bishops and Presbyters, before deacons, in Receiving the Eucharist	Establish the hierarchical order by ensuring bishops and presbyters receive the Eucharist before deacons.
19	Declaration of the Invalidity of Baptism by Paulian Heretics	Safeguard the integrity and authenticity of the baptismal sacrament by declaring baptism performed by Paulian heretics to be invalid.
20	Prohibition of Kneeling on Sundays and during Pentecost, the fifty days commencing on Easter.	Maintain uniformity in worship and highlight the festive nature of these periods by prohibiting kneeling.



Review Questions

1. There are 22 Canons in the Orthodox church to follow.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
2. Arianism was fought against by Emperor Constantine.
 - a. **True**
 - b. False
3. What was the debate about Arianism?
 - a. The difference between being “born” or “created” and being “begotten”**
 - b. The existence of God
 - c. The role of the Holy Spirit
 - d. The authority of the Bible
4. The Council of Nicea was the first ecumenical council.
 - a. True**
 - b. False
5. Athanasius argues against Arianism.
 - a. True**
 - b. False
6. What were other outcomes of the Nicean Council?
 - a. Easter to be celebrated on Sunday independent of the Jewish calendar
 - b. the Meletian Schism
 - c. the development of the 20 Canons
 - d. All of the above**
7. Which of the following are Pre-ecumenical councils?
 - a. Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus
 - b. Councils of Chalcedon, Ephesus, Rome
 - c. Councils of Jerusalem, Antioch, Iconium**
8. What did Arius believe?
 - a. The Son of God was created by the Father**
 - b. The Son of God is co-eternal with the Father
 - c. The Son of God is greater than the Father
 - d. The Son of God is subordinate to the Father
9. Which cities were the first Apostolic Sees?
 - a. London, Paris, Berlin, Madrid, and Rome
 - b. Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Thebes, and Delphi
 - c. Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople**
 - d. Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus, Amman, and Jerusalem
10. One of Bishop Melitius’ achievements is that he advocated for the practice of Christianity in times of persecution.
 - a. True**

b. False



Books & References

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Council of Constantinople & Canons

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Upholding the Unity of the Church

The Council of Constantinople, convened in 381 AD by Roman Emperor Theodosius I in Constantinople, served as an important gathering of Christian bishops. The council primarily focused on addressing two notable heresies that had emerged within the Church at the time. The first heresy, known as Macedonianism, challenged the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The second heresy, proclaimed by Apollinarius, claimed that Jesus Christ was not in need of a soul.

Approximately 150 bishops attended the Council of Constantinople, representing various Christian communities across the Roman Empire. These bishops engaged in theological discussions, scriptural analysis, and debates to address the prevailing heresies and reaffirm the orthodox beliefs of the Church. The council's deliberations resulted in the condemnation of Arianism and Macedonianism. The expanded Nicene Creed, incorporating these condemnations, became a cornerstone of Christian doctrine and remains an essential statement of faith to this day.

The Council of Constantinople played a crucial role in upholding the unity of the Church by providing a forum for theological reflection and consensus building. It fortified the Church's understanding of the Trinity and contributed to the ongoing development of Christian theology. The council's decisions had a profound impact, shaping the beliefs and practices of Christians for centuries to come.

Historical Background

The Arian heresy, which denied the full divinity of Jesus Christ, persisted after the Council of Nicaea in 325. Despite the condemnation of Arianism by the council, it continued to gain adherents, particularly in the Eastern Roman Empire. This was largely due to the support of Emperor Constantius II, who succeeded his father Constantine the Great in 337 and was sympathetic to the Arian cause. Constantius's patronage of Arianism enabled its proponents to spread their beliefs more freely and to gain influence within the Church.

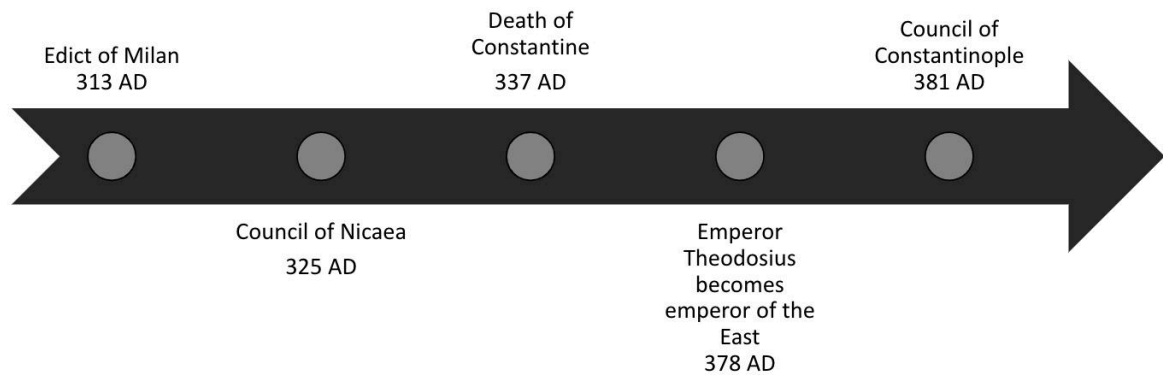
Around 360 AD, theological debates shifted from the divinity of the Son to the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The Council of Nicaea, though recognizing the Trinity, had not explicitly addressed the nature of the Holy Spirit, leaving room for interpretation. This resulted in the emergence of a new group of heretics known as the Macedonians, who denied the full divinity of the Holy Spirit. Their beliefs, known as Pneumatomachianism, posed a significant challenge to the Church's understanding of the Trinity.

In 380, Emperor Theodosius I ascended to the imperial throne and initiated a campaign to restore the Eastern Church to Nicene Christianity. Theodosius sought to unify the entire empire behind the orthodox faith and recognized the need for a church council to address outstanding matters of faith and discipline. He worked closely with St. Gregory Nazianzus, a prominent theologian and bishop, who shared Theodosius's desire for unity within Christianity.

In the spring of 381, the Second Ecumenical Council was convened in Constantinople. This council brought together bishops and theologians from across the Eastern Roman Empire to address the Arian heresy and the Pneumatomachianism of the Macedonians. After extensive debate and discussion, the council fathers reaffirmed the Nicene Creed and clarified the divinity of the Holy Spirit, declaring that the Spirit is fully God and equal in essence with the Father and the Son. This council played a pivotal role in establishing the orthodox understanding of the Trinity, which is still held by the Christian Church today.

Events Leading Up

When Abba Petros II, the patriarch of Alexandria, passed away, the mantle of leadership fell upon Timotheos, a disciple of the revered St. Athanasius. Timotheos thus became the twenty-second successor of St. Mark the Apostle, an illustrious line of patriarchs who had safeguarded the Christian faith in Alexandria since apostolic times. However, this period was not without its challenges, as a new heresy emerged, propagated by Macedonius, the bishop of Constantinople.



Macedonius proclaimed his denial of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. This grave theological deviation sent shockwaves through the Church, prompting deep concern among the bishops. They recognized their sacred duty as custodians of the apostolic legacy and felt an urgent responsibility to address this matter.

Through extensive deliberations and exchanges of views, the bishops arrived at the solemn conclusion that convening another ecumenical council was imperative. Such a gathering would provide a platform for discussing and resolving theological disputes, reaffirming the true faith, and preserving the unity of the Church.

Recognizing the profound significance of the issue at hand, Emperor Theodosius himself shared the conviction of the bishops regarding the necessity of such an assembly. He extended an invitation to all bishops to gather in Constantinople in May of 381 A.D. The response to his invitation was overwhelming, as one hundred and fifty bishops responded enthusiastically, eager to participate in this momentous event.

The gathering, subsequently known as the 2nd Ecumenical Council, marked another pivotal moment in Christianity. Its significance was amplified by the presence of Emperor Theodosius, who attended the inaugural session and graced the assembly with a heartfelt address. In his speech, he warmly welcomed the members and expressed his profound joy at their gathering. His presence underscored the gravity of the situation and the importance that both the Church and the Empire attached to the matter.

The 2nd Ecumenical Council stands as a testament to the collective wisdom and dedication of the bishops in safeguarding the purity of Christian doctrine. Through their deliberations, discussions, and resolutions, they sought to uphold the true faith and ensure the preservation of apostolic teachings for generations to come. Their efforts resulted in the reaffirmation of the divinity of the Holy

Spirit, the condemnation of Macedonius and his followers, and the adoption of a creed known as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which remains a foundational statement of Christian belief to this day.

The 2nd Ecumenical Council was another triumph of orthodoxy over heresy, a testament to the enduring power of the Holy Spirit, and a reminder of the Church's commitment to safeguarding the integrity of the Christian faith for all eternity.

The First Heresy

The Council of Constantinople convened in 381 AD to discuss a number of matters. Among the matters discussed and addressed by the Council, the examination and condemnation of the Macedonian heresy took center stage as a top priority. Macedonianism, also known as the Pneumatomachian heresy, posed a significant challenge to the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. Its proponents, led by Macedonius, Bishop of Constantinople, denied the full personhood and divinity of the Holy Spirit. According to this heretical teaching, the Holy Spirit was created by the Son and was thus subordinate to the Father and the Son. Pneumatomachians arrived but were said to have refused to even accept the Nicene creed.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus presided over the council yet resigned from the position due to the conflict that arose: "Let me be as the Prophet Jonah! I was responsible for the storm, but I would sacrifice myself for the salvation of the ship. Seize me and throw me... I was not happy when I ascended the throne, and gladly would I descend it."

After careful deliberation and analysis, the Council unanimously condemned Macedonianism. As a consequence of this condemnation, the council expanded the Nicene Creed, which had been established in the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, by adding to it the clause concerning the Holy Spirit which is still upheld by all Orthodox Churches to the present day. Furthermore, the Council expanded the Nicene Creed to include other important affirmations of faith. It declared the belief in the universal church, the oneness of baptism and in awaiting the resurrection of the dead and eternal life.

The expanded Nicene Creed, as formulated by the Council of Constantinople, has endured to the present day and is upheld by all Orthodox Churches. It serves as a foundational statement of faith, outlining the core beliefs and doctrines of Christianity. The Council's condemnation of Macedonianism and its subsequent expansion of the Nicene Creed ensured the preservation of orthodox beliefs and the unity of the Church. The Creed was expanded with the following:

“Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son, is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets. And in one holy, catholic, and apostolic church. We confess one baptism, for the remission of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.”

The added clause begins with a resounding affirmation of belief in the Holy Spirit, acknowledging him as the Lord and the Giver of Life. It emphasizes the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, emphasizing his distinct but inseparable relationship with God the Father. Furthermore, the clause affirms that the Holy Spirit is to be worshiped and glorified alongside the Father and the Son, recognizing his equal status within the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is also acknowledged as the source of divine inspiration, having spoken through the prophets of old.

The Second Heresy

The Council of Constantinople addressed yet another heresy that had emerged within the Christian community. This heresy was proclaimed by Apollinarius, the Bishop of Laodicea, who held unorthodox beliefs regarding the nature of Jesus Christ.

Apollinarius acknowledged the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, but did not believe in His complete human nature. He considered that the human nature of Christ was not in need of a soul and thus He was without a soul because God the Logos provided the needed life. This implied that the human nature of Christ was incomplete, lacking an essential component for human existence. The Holy Ecumenical council of Constantinople condemned Apollinarius and rejected his idea declaring it a heresy. The Apollinarus movement may have been an overreaction of Arianism.

The Council emphasized that the Savior must possess both complete divine nature and complete human nature. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, embodying the perfect union of divine and human attributes. This understanding preserves the essential mystery of the Incarnation, where God became man to redeem humanity.

Canonical Outcomes

At the council, a key principle that was brought up and reaffirmed was the prohibition against transferring a bishop from the diocese where they were initially ordained to a different diocese. The canon's text makes it clear that "The bishops are not to go beyond their dioceses to churches lying

outside of their bounds, nor bring confusion on the churches; but let the Bishop of Alexandria, according to the canons, alone administer the affairs of Egypt; and let the bishops of the East manage the East alone, the privileges of the Church in Antioch, which are mentioned in the canons of Nice, being preserved; and let the bishops of the Asian Diocese administer the Asian affairs only; and the Pontic bishops only Pontic matters; and the Thracian bishops only Thracian affairs. And let not bishops go beyond their dioceses for ordination or any other ecclesiastical ministrations, unless they be invited."

The canon further emphasizes that the decision to transfer a bishop should not be made lightly or based solely on the bishop's personal desires or preferences. It requires careful consideration of the broader implications for both dioceses and the well-being of the faithful. Numerous bishops must come together to evaluate the situation, assess the potential benefits and drawbacks, and ultimately make a decision that is in the best interests of both dioceses and the church as a whole.

The canons of Constantinople can be summarized as follows:

Canon	Description
1	Condemns Arianism, Macedonianism, and Apollinarianism.
2	Renews the Nicene legislation imposing diocesan and patriarchal limits on bishops.
3	Declares that the Bishop of Constantinople should have a pre-eminence of honour after the Bishop of Rome.
4	Declares the consecration of Maximus the Cynic as Bishop of Constantinople invalid.

As the council concluded, Saint Timothy, alongside his delegation, embarked on their return journey to Alexandria. The reign of Emperor Theodosius brought forth a tranquil environment, allowing St. Timothy and his followers to bask in the peace it offered. Amidst this peaceful atmosphere, he devoted himself to the construction of numerous churches, endeavoring to restore Orthodoxy among many who had strayed towards Arianism. His prolific writing included several epistles, most of which have unfortunately been lost to time. Additionally, St. Timothy dedicated himself to chronicling the lives of numerous saintly monks, preserving their remarkable stories for posterity. His unwavering dedication to his faith and his role as a spiritual leader left an enduring mark on Christianity, shaping the course of religious thought and practice in Alexandria and beyond.



Review Questions

1. The Council of Constantinople fought against three heresies.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
2. The second heresy claimed and accepted the Divine Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, but did not believe in His complete human nature.
 - a. True**
 - b. False
3. When the council came to an end, St. Timothy and his delegation returned to Jerusalem.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
4. Constantine's son, Constantius II, was an Arian-leaning emperor.
 - a. True**
 - b. False
5. The Arian heresy had ended after the council of Nicea in 325.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
6. What was the name of the first heresy addressed by the Council of Constantinople?
 - a. Arian heresy
 - b. Nestorian heresy
 - c. Apollinarian heresy
 - d. Macedonian heresy**
7. Who started the second heresy?
 - a. Arias
 - b. Nestorius
 - c. Apollinarius**
 - d. Macedonius
8. What was the purpose of the addition to the Nicene Creed?
 - a. To affirm the divinity of Christ
 - b. To emphasize the humanity of Christ
 - c. To clarify the relationship between the Father and the Son
 - d. To affirm the divinity of the Holy Spirit**
9. What is another outcome of the Council of Constantinople?
 - a. Forbidding the transfer of a bishop from his See to another**
 - b. Excommunication of Arius
 - c. Establishment of the papacy
 - d. Canonization of saints
10. When did the Council of Constantinople first convene?
 - a. 325 AD
 - b. 381 AD**
 - c. 451 AD
 - d. 553 AD



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Council of Ephesus & Canons

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Nestorius

Nestorius was the Patriarch of Constantinople, who was originally from Antioch in Syria, (like St. John Chrysostom.) He was born in 386, and became patriarch in 428 AD, by Emperor Theodosius II, of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Nestorius was originally from the ancient city of Antioch in Syria, where he was born in the year 386 AD. His birthplace shared a rich religious heritage with that of St. John Chrysostom, whose theological prowess had left an indelible mark on the Church. Nestorius, driven by an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and a profound love for the scriptures, immersed himself in theological studies at an early age. His intellectual pursuits led him to Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, where he gained prominence as a gifted preacher and theologian. His eloquence and erudition captivated the hearts and minds of the faithful, earning him widespread recognition and respect.

In 428 AD, at the direction of Emperor Theodosius II, Nestorius ascended as Patriarch of Constantinople. As patriarch, he assumed spiritual leadership over one of the most influential Christian sees of the time. Nestorius's reign as patriarch was marked by controversy. He held firmly to the belief that the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ existed separately, a view that sparked intense debate and ultimately led to the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD.

A Twofold Heresy

In Christianity, there has been numerous dialogues about the two natures of Christ, known as the Human Person and the Divine Person. While the Coptic Church understands that they coexist as one entity, Nestorius proposed a different interpretation. Nestorius asserted that Christ possessed two distinct and separate natures—a divine nature and a human nature. This view, known as Nestorianism, significantly diverged from the established understanding of Christ's nature.

Nestorius argued that the Divine Christ, representing the divine nature, could not suffer or experience mortality. He believed that it was only the Human Christ, associated with the human

nature, who underwent suffering and crucifixion. This separation between the divine and human aspects of Christ challenged the traditional understanding of Christ's unified nature. Nestorius further argued that since Jesus Christ existed as two separate persons: one human and one divine, Mary should only be referred to as the "Mother of Christ," or "Christotokos," rather than the "Mother of God," or "Theotokos." He emphasized that God the Father was without a mother and father, as He was eternally existing.

The Church strongly opposed his ideas, considering them heretical at the Council of Ephesus, convened in 431 AD, where they officially condemned Nestorianism as contrary to the orthodox faith. The council affirmed that Christ possessed a single, unified nature, encompassing both divine and human elements. The rejection of Nestorianism emphasized the importance of recognizing Christ's divinity and humanity as inseparable aspects of his being. The Church's stance on this issue aimed to safeguard the doctrine of the Incarnation, which asserts that God became fully human in the person of Jesus Christ. Nestorianism's influence persisted despite its condemnation, and it left a lasting impact on Christian thought. However, the overwhelming consensus within Christianity remained that Christ had a single, unified nature, embodying both divine and human characteristics.

St. Cyril; the Pillar of the Faith

Nestorius' teachings faced significant opposition from St. Cyril of Alexandria, who emerged as a staunch defender of the Christian faith against Nestorianism. Born around 376 AD, St. Cyril was the nephew of St. Theophilus, who served as the previous Patriarch of Alexandria. From a young age, St. Cyril received an extensive education encompassing philosophy, rhetoric, and theology. At the age of 36, in 412 AD, he succeeded his uncle as Patriarch of Alexandria, a testament to his remarkable capabilities and unwavering dedication to the faith.

Before assuming the patriarchate, St. Cyril had already gained recognition for his contributions to the Church. Initially, he embraced monasticism, spending time at the St. Macarius monastery in the Scetis (Shiheet) desert, where he devoted himself to prayer, contemplation, and the study of Scripture. Following his time in the monastery, he served as a priest in Alexandria, earning the esteemed title "Pillar of Faith."

While Nestorianism sought to undermine the unity and divinity of Christ, asserting that Jesus had two distinct natures, St. Cyril vehemently opposed this teaching, arguing that such a view compromised the integrity of Christ's personhood and contradicted the fundamental belief in the Incarnation. During the council, St. Cyril played a central role in condemning Nestorianism as a heresy

and affirming the orthodox position that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human, united in one person.

St. Cyril's legacy extends beyond his opposition to Nestorianism. He is revered for his extensive writings, including commentaries on Scripture, theological treatises, and homilies. His works provide valuable insights into the early Church's understanding of Christology, the Trinity, and other core doctrines. St. Cyril's contributions have significantly influenced Christian thought and spirituality, and he continues to be recognized as a Pillar in the Orthodox Faith.

Events Leading Up to the Council

In the year 428, Nestorius, the newly appointed Patriarch of Constantinople, delivered a series of sermons that would ignite this heated theological controversy. Nestorius's sermons primarily centered around his opposition to the use of the term "Theotokos" (God-bearer) to refer to the Virgin Mary, arguing that it implied that Mary had given birth to the divine nature of Christ rather than simply his human nature. This stance directly challenged the prevailing understanding and veneration of Mary within the Christian community.

Nestorius's claims were met with swift opposition from several individuals. Eusebius, a prominent layman and future bishop of Dorylaeum, was the first to refute Nestorius's arguments. Eusebius eloquently defended the traditional view of Mary as the Theotokos, arguing that her role in Christ's incarnation was essential and inseparable from his divinity.

Joining Eusebius in their condemnation of Nestorius were two priests from Constantinople, Philip and Proclus. Both Philip and Proclus had previously been candidates for the patriarchal position in Constantinople and were well-respected theologians in their own right. They accused Nestorius of heresy and composed refutations against his teachings. While Philip's refutation was unfortunately lost to history, Proclus's work remains preserved in Christian archives, offering valuable insights into the theological debates of the time.

The controversy surrounding Nestorius's teachings quickly spread throughout Constantinople, and the city's inhabitants, who were initially receptive to their foreign Patriarch, began to harbor doubts and suspicions about his beliefs. It is worth considering the potential impact if Nestorius had preached his ideas in his hometown of Antioch. Given his charisma and influence, there is a possibility that his teachings could have gained wider acceptance and caused a profound rift within Christianity.

As the heresy gained notoriety, Pope Celestine, the patriarch of Rome, added his voice to the growing chorus of opposition. He denounced Nestorius's views and urged Christians to remain

steadfast in their faith. St. Cyril, the patriarch of Alexandria, embarked on a mission to combat the spread of Nestorianism. He composed and circulated refutations of Nestorius's teachings, initially without naming him directly. However, recognizing the importance of confronting the issue head-on, St. Cyril later wrote directly to Nestorius, rebuking his theological positions.

Nestorius responded to St. Cyril's letter, accusing him of unfairly attacking his character and questioning his motives. St. Cyril, in turn, clarified that his intent was not to personally attack Nestorius but to fulfill his pastoral duty to protect his flock from doctrinal deviations. He went on to explain why Nestorius's ideas were heretical, emphasizing that Christ was not merely a human being but fully divine and that Mary, as the Theotokos, had a crucial role in his incarnation: "...you have no power to fight against God Who was crucified for us in truth; and died in the body, although He is continually living in the power of His Godhead; it is He who sits at the Right Hand of the Father while the angels, principalities and powers worship Him."

Despite St. Cyril's efforts and the growing criticism from various quarters, Nestorius refused to retract his teachings. He sought the support of Emperor Theodosius II, who attempted to intimidate St. Cyril by threatening him. However, by this time, the Christian world had largely turned against Nestorius and his beliefs. The controversy culminated in the convening of the Council of Ephesus in 431, where Nestorius was officially condemned and deposed as patriarch.

The 1st Alexandrine Council

St. Cyril convened a local council in Alexandria, gathering the bishops of Egypt to address a pressing theological matter. During the council, the assembled fathers reaffirmed their commitment to the Nicene Creed, which served as the foundational statement of Christian faith. Additionally, they approved an Introduction to the Creed, authored by St. Cyril himself. This introduction, recited to this day, serves as a preliminary statement that precedes the testimony of faith ("We exalt You").

Following the council, the bishops wrote letters to other heads of churches, seeking their support and approval of the decisions made in Alexandria. The letters were addressed to the Bishop of Antioch, the Bishop of Jerusalem, the Bishop of Rome, and the Bishop of Aleppo. Each bishop responded in writing, expressing their approval and agreement with the actions taken by the council.

After receiving the positive response from Pope Celestine, the bishop of Rome, St. Cyril felt emboldened to take further steps. He wrote letters directly to the Emperor in Rome, the Empress, and the Emperor's three sisters. In his letters, St. Cyril meticulously explained the subtle deviations from Orthodox teachings present in the Nestorian concept. He appealed to the Emperor to intervene and convince Nestorius of his theological errors.

In his letters to the Empress and the Emperor's sisters, St. Cyril emphasized the importance of their influence in preserving Orthodoxy. He urged them to use their positions to safeguard the unity and integrity of the Christian faith. Additionally, he included a list of verses from both the Old and New Testaments that spoke of Jesus Christ as God incarnate, emphasizing the absence of any separateness or division within His divine nature. To conclude his efforts, St. Cyril then convened again for a second council in Alexandria.

The 2nd Alexandrine Council

The Second Council of Alexandria convened with the intent of once again attempting to persuade Nestorius to recognize and rectify his theological errors. To accomplish this, the council resolved to compose another letter to him. This letter would comprise two distinct parts. The first part was to be an exposition of the Nicene Creed, which served as a foundational document for Christian doctrine. By presenting a detailed explanation of the creed, the council sought to provide Nestorius with a clear understanding of the orthodox beliefs regarding the nature of Christ. This exposition aimed to demonstrate how Nestorius's views deviated from the established teachings of the Church.

"Conforming to the faith of the fathers, we declare that the unique Logos of God has taken the flesh of the Virgin. Has made this flesh His own, submitting Himself to human birth, passed out of the Virgin's womb as a child without ceasing to be what He is and remaining in the body as He is, namely Very God by nature. The flesh was not changed into the nature of the divine, just as the divine Logos was not changed into the nature of the flesh for It was not submitted to any change. Being yet a child, and even while in the tomb of His Mother, the Logos filled the entire world, He governed it conjointly with His Father and the Holy Spirit, for divinity knows no limit. The Logos is united to the flesh hypostatically. We therefore believe in one single Son and Lord, Jesus Christ; we separate not the man from the God; we do not believe that He is simply united under the semblance of dignity and power; these are new words alien to the faith. If we, too, say, as did St. Paul in Colossians 2:9 that in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, we see that God dwells not in Him as He dwells in His saints. But that the divine and the human were united in our Lord Jesus Christ in the fashion that the soul is united to the body in a human being. There is, therefore, one Christ, one Son, one Lord." If he were really 'Orthodox' as he had claimed, Nestorius was asked to prove it by signing both the letter and the anathema. Thus he would vindicate himself and clarify his attitude before all believers."

The second part of the letter was intended to serve as an affirmation of the true faith, as defined by the council. This section would expound upon the correct understanding of the person and work of Christ, emphasizing the unity of His divine and human natures. The council intended to articulate the orthodox position in such a way that it would leave no room for misinterpretation or ambiguity.

In addition to the exposition and affirmation, the letter would also include twelve anathemas. These anathemas were designed to condemn specific heretical teachings attributed to Nestorius. Each anathema would target a particular aspect of Nestorius's theology that the council deemed to be in contradiction with the true faith. By issuing these anathemas, the council sought to definitively reject and repudiate Nestorius's views, making it clear that his teachings were incompatible with Christian orthodoxy.

The Twelve Anathema

- 1 If anyone does not confess that Emmanuel is God in truth, and therefore that the holy virgin is the mother of God ... let him be **anathema**.
- 2 If anyone does not confess that the Word from God the Father has been united by hypostasis ... is therefore God and man together, let him be **anathema**.
- 3 If anyone divides in the one Christ the hypostases after the union ... let him be **anathema**.
- 4 If anyone distinguishes between the two persons or hypostases the expressions used either in the gospels or in the apostolic writings ... let him be **anathema**.
- 5 If anyone dares to say that Christ was a God-bearing man and not rather God in truth, ... let him be **anathema**.
- 6 If anyone says that the Word from God the Father was the God or master of Christ, and does not rather confess the same both God and man, the Word having become flesh, according to the scriptures, let him be **anathema**.
- 7 If anyone says that as man Jesus was activated by the Word of God and was clothed with the glory of the Only-begotten, as a being separate from him, let him be **anathema**.
- 8 If anyone dares to say that Christ's human nature should be worshiped separately from His divine nature ... , let him be **anathema**.
- 9 If anyone says that the one Lord Jesus Christ was empowered by an external Spirit, rather than by His own Spirit, to perform miracles and overcome evil, ... let him be **anathema**.
- 10 If anyone claims that it was not the very Word of God who became our high priest and apostle as a man, but someone separate from Him, or says that He offered sacrifice for Himself and not solely for us ... , let him be **anathema**.
- 11 If anyone does not confess that the flesh of the Lord is life-giving and belongs to the Word from God the Father, but maintains that it belongs to another besides him, united with him in dignity or as enjoying a mere divine indwelling, ... , let him be **anathema**.
- 12 If anyone does not confess that the Word of God suffered in the flesh and was crucified in the flesh and tasted death in the flesh and became the first born of the dead, although as God he is life and life-giving, let him be **anathema**.

Through this carefully crafted letter, the Second Council of Alexandria aimed to provide Nestorius with a comprehensive presentation of the true faith, as well as a clear condemnation of his erroneous beliefs. The council hoped that by engaging with Nestorius in this manner, they might persuade him to abandon his misguided ideas and embrace the orthodox teachings of the Church.

Alongside the second letter addressed to Nestorius, the Council of Ephesus dispatched two additional letters simultaneously. The first letter was directed to the priests, deacons, and people of Constantinople, while the second was intended for the monks residing in the city. In both letters, the Council implored Nestorius to sign a document acknowledging his agreement with the Council's position. However, Nestorius adamantly refused to comply, prompting him to seek assistance from the Emperor of the East. Subsequently, the Emperor threatened Saint Cyril in an attempt to influence the Council's proceedings and protect Nestorius. This act of interference by the Emperor further escalated the tensions between the Council of Ephesus and Nestorius, leading to a prolonged conflict.

The Ecumenical Council

As opposition to the heresy of Nestorianism intensified, the people of Constantinople urged Emperor Theodosius II to call a council to address the matter. The Emperor, realizing the urgency, had no choice but to send out invitations to all the bishops of the Christian world, asking them to convene in Ephesus during the summer of 431 AD. The date of the council, the day after Pentecost, has been traditionally used for the Holy Synod to convene to this day. Upon receiving the letter, St. Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, organized a group of clergy to sail with him to Ephesus. Among them was the fiery St. Shenouda the Archimandrite of Akhmim, known for his unwavering commitment to the Nicene Creed.

Approximately 200 bishops descended upon Ephesus, each representing their respective dioceses and eager to stand up for the Nicene Creed, which had been challenged by Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Nestorius, accompanied by 40 of his followers, also arrived in Ephesus. He was joined by a large group of armed men under the command of a nobleman named Candidian, who had been designated as the Emperor's representative at the council. Candidian, however, instead of remaining neutral, decided to support Nestorius fully. Unfortunately, the representative from Antioch was delayed in his arrival. Although he was a friend of Nestorius, he sent two of his bishops ahead to inform the council not to wait for him.

On June 22, the council convened in the church of "The Mother of God" in Ephesus. A meeting was established, and St. Cyril was voted to preside over the council proceedings. The council members

sent three different summons to Nestorius, requesting his presence. Despite being in the city, Nestorius refused to attend. Consequently, the council proceeded with its deliberations without him. The Council of Ephesus consisted of seven sessions, each dedicated to addressing various aspects of the Nestorian heresy and reaffirming the Nicene Creed.

The Seven Sessions of Ephesus

The Council of Ephesus, convened in 431 AD, comprised a series of significant sessions that addressed various matters pertaining to the church and its doctrines.

1st Session:

The first session of the council commenced with the recitation of the Creed, followed by discussions on Nestorius's heresy. St. Cyril's letters and Anathemas were presented, along with Nestorius's reply. After careful deliberation, the council came to a unanimous decision that Nestorius should be excommunicated, degraded, and deposed from his position. Subsequently, a letter was dispatched to the clergy and church members, informing them of the council's resolution.

2nd Session:

The second session witnessed the arrival of John of Antioch, but he was intercepted by the emperor's army and compelled to hold a separate council. In this rival council, St. Cyril and Memnon of Ephesus were deposed in retaliation. Nestorius, in collaboration with the emperor, attempted to overthrow the Bishop of Ephesus and install a new leader. Additionally, they prohibited the council from conducting liturgies, prompting an uprising among the people of Ephesus. However, the timely arrival of the Bishop of Rome and his representatives bolstered the council's decision to excommunicate Nestorius.

3rd Session:

During the third session, the council reviewed the decision with the delegates from Rome who arrived later. A consensus was reached, with both the Eastern and Western churches officially excommunicating Nestorius and his followers. A letter conveying this decision was sent to the emperor and the people of Constantinople, urging the emperor to reconsider his earlier stance.

4th Session:

The fourth session convened in the church to address the emperor's decision to depose St. Cyril and Memnon, the Bishop of Ephesus. The council sought the attendance of John of Antioch, but

he declined. Notably, St. Cyril and Memnon intentionally absented themselves to ensure unbiased deliberations. As a result, the council resolved, as a church, not to depose or excommunicate the two bishops.

5th Session:

The fifth session revisited the matter of St. Cyril and Memnon of Ephesus, once again requesting John of Antioch's attendance. His continued refusal prompted the council to make a solemn decision, declaring John of Antioch excommunicated and no longer in communion with the Christian church at large. This resolution required the emperor's endorsement, and a letter was dispatched to him seeking his approval.

6th Session:

Five days later, the council convened for the sixth session, presided over by St. Cyril. After scrutinizing doctrinal teachings, the council reaffirmed its adherence to the Creed of Nicea and Constantinople. They denounced any alteration, either by addition or omission, of words from the Creed, issuing an anathema against those who deviated from its original form.

7th Session:

The final session, the seventh, was held the following day and focused on resolving an administrative issue related to the church of Cyprus. The council granted independence to the church of Cyprus, ensuring its autonomy. Additionally, six canons were established, addressing matters of discipline within the church.

The Canons

The resulting canons outlined the proper responses to doctrinal deviations and the authority of bishops and clergy, establishing clear guidelines for handling heresies and maintaining ecclesiastical order. The canons reflect the council's efforts to defend the integrity of Christological doctrine and enforce ecclesiastical discipline, aiming to preserve church unity and orthodoxy amidst widespread controversy.

Canon	Summary
1	Any Metropolitan who joined or joins apostates, or accepts heretical doctrines (e.g., Celestius), loses all ecclesiastical authority and is subject to local orthodox bishops.
2	Provincial bishops absent from the Synod who joined apostates, or supported Nestorius after rejecting him, are to be deposed from the priesthood.

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- 3 Clergy banned by Nestorius for their orthodoxy are to be restored. Orthodox clergy must not submit to apostate bishops.
 - 4 Clergy who support the doctrines of Nestorius or Celestius are to be deposed.
 - 5 Anyone restored to their rank by Nestorius, after being condemned, remains deposed; Nestorius' actions to restore them are invalid.
 - 6 Those attempting to oppose Synod decisions shall lose their office if clergy, and be excommunicated if laypersons.
 - 7 No new or altered faith statements are allowed. Those who create or teach heretical doctrines (like Nestorius' doctrines) will be deposed if clergy, and anathematized if laypersons.
 - 8 The Synod reaffirms the independence of Cyprus and other provinces to ordain their own bishops without external interference, following ancient custom. Violations against this rule are invalid.

One Nature of Christ

The one nature of Christ is a fundamental tenet of Orthodoxy, and it is not open to dispute. The Gospel of John explicitly states that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14), emphasizing that Jesus Christ possessed both human and divine aspects. This profound mystery of godliness is further affirmed in the First Epistle of Timothy, which declares, "great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16).

Despite the challenges posed by various heresies, such as those propagated by Nestorius, the Church has remained steadfast in its faith in the one nature of Christ. The words of the archangel Gabriel to St. Mary, as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, provide a powerful affirmation of this truth: "for you have found favor with God...therefore also the Holy One which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:30-35).

This passage underscores the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ and His unique identity as both the Son of God and the Son of Man. The union of His human and divine natures in one person is essential to understanding the significance of His life, ministry, death, and resurrection. Through His humanity, Jesus was able to fully experience the human condition, including suffering and temptation. Yet, He remained sinless and consistently demonstrated His divine power and authority.⁴

The one nature of Christ is crucial for our salvation. His sacrificial death on the cross, as the perfect and sinless Lamb of God, provided the necessary atonement for the sins of humanity. By His resurrection, He conquered death and secured eternal life for all who believe in Him.

Throughout history, the Church has consistently upheld the doctrine of the one nature of Christ against various heretical teachings. This unwavering commitment to the truth has been instrumental in preserving the integrity of the Christian faith and ensuring that future generations of believers can continue to experience the transformative power of knowing and following Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God.



Review Questions

1. Nestorius created two heresies.
 - a. **True**
 - b. False
2. One such heresy claimed Christ had one nature and his humanity was not real.
 - a. True
 - b. **False**
3. Who refuted Nestorius' heresy?
 - a. **Cyril of Alexandria**
 - b. Athanasius of Alexandria
 - c. John Chrysostom
 - d. Gregory of Nazianzus
4. How many sessions did the Council of Ephesus convene for?
 - a. 1
 - b. 3
 - c. **7**
 - d. 8
5. Cite a verse regarding Christ's singular nature. (A: John 1:14)
6. How many canons were instated during the Council of Ephesus?
 - a. 6
 - b. **8**
 - c. 7
 - d. 9



Books & References

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Council of Chalcedon

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Christianity in the 5th Century

As Christianity grew through the first few centuries, five apostolic Sees led the way: Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and Constantinople. These Sees were important centers of Christianity and played a significant role in the development of Christian thought and practice.

Likewise, the Roman Empire had two capitals: the western capital of Rome and the eastern capital of Constantinople. Rome was the traditional capital of the Roman Empire, while Constantinople was founded by Emperor Constantine I in 330 AD as a new capital for the eastern part of the empire.

All had one faith was confirmed by the three councils against many heresies. These ecumenical councils were gatherings of bishops and other church leaders who met to discuss and resolve theological disputes. The three councils were:

- Nicea 325 AD: This council condemned the heresy of Arius, who taught that the Son of God was not equal to the Father. The council affirmed the Nicene Creed, which declared that the Son is "begotten, not made" and is "of one substance with the Father."
- Constantinople 381 AD: This council condemned the heresies of Macedonius, who denied that the Holy Spirit is God, and Apollinarius, who taught that Christ was more Divine than human. The council affirmed the Nicene Creed and declared that the Holy Spirit is "co-eternal and co-equal with the Father and the Son."
- Ephesus 431 AD: This council condemned the heresy of Nestorius, who taught that the two natures of Christ, divine and human, are separate. The council affirmed that Christ is one person with two natures and declared that St. Mary is the Mother of God, not just the Mother of Christ.

These three councils were instrumental in shaping the Orthodox Christian faith and in condemning various heretical teachings that threatened the unity of the church.

Events Leading Up to Chalcedon

The Church of Alexandria played a pivotal role in the early Ecumenical Councils, leaving an enduring mark on Christian history. St. Athanasius of Alexandria staunchly defended the doctrine of the Trinity at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. His unwavering stance against Arianism, which threatened to divide the Church, earned him the title "Father of Orthodoxy."

Another influential Alexandrian bishop was Pope Timothy I presided over the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 381 AD. This council condemned the heresy of Apollinarianism, which denied the full humanity of Christ. Pope Timothy's leadership was instrumental in reaffirming the orthodox teaching on the dual nature of Christ, both divine and human.

The Church of Alexandria's prominence continued with St. Cyril of Alexandria, who presided over the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus in 431 AD. This council dealt with the Nestorian heresy, which separated the divine and human natures of Christ. Pope Cyril championed the concept of the hypostatic union, asserting that Christ was one nature out of two natures, divine and human. His efforts were crucial in preserving the unity of the Church and upholding the orthodox understanding of Christology.

Beyond the Ecumenical Councils, Alexandria housed the renowned School of Theology, attracting scholars and students from far and wide. This institution became a hub of theological inquiry and learning, producing some of the most influential theologians in Christian history, such as Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and Didymus the Blind. The Alexandrian School's focus on exegesis, philosophy, and apologetics shaped Christian thought and contributed significantly to the development of early Christian theology.

The intellectual prowess and leadership of the Alexandrian Archbishops earned them great respect and authority. They were often consulted on matters of faith and doctrine by other Christian communities and presided councils for this reason. Their ability to convene and preside over councils further solidified Alexandria's position as a prominent center of Christianity. However, this prominence also aroused envy and strife from other Sees, leading to occasional tensions and rivalries.

The Heresy of Eutyches

About two years after St. Cyril of Alexandria's death in 444AD, in combating this assertion of Patriarch Nestorius, the teachings of Eutyches took wind. Eutyches, an influential abbot of a prominent monastery in Constantinople, gained notoriety for his unorthodox beliefs regarding the nature of Christ. He steadfastly maintained that the human nature was absorbed and dissolved in the Divine nature as a drop of vinegar in the ocean. In this way, he denied the human nature of Christ.

This theological stance, known as Monophysitism, deviated significantly from the widely accepted teachings of the Church, which emphasized the dual nature of Christ, both divine and human.

In response to the growing influence of Eutyches and his followers, Flavianus, the bishop of Constantinople, convened a local council in Ephesus in the year 448 AD. The council, attended by prominent theologians and church officials, thoroughly examined Eutyches' beliefs and ultimately reached a decision. After careful deliberation, the council excommunicated Eutyches from the Church, declaring his teachings to be heretical and incompatible with orthodox Christian doctrine.

However, Eutyches felt deeply aggrieved by the council's decision. He believed that he had not been given a fair opportunity to present his case and defend his beliefs adequately. He maintained that the excommunication was unjust and that he had not been granted a proper platform to engage in a meaningful debate before such a drastic measure was taken against him. In an attempt to rectify the situation and seek redress, Eutyches composed a series of letters. These letters were addressed to influential figures within the Church hierarchy, including Pope Leo I of Rome. In these communications, Eutyches passionately defended his theological positions, arguing that they were based on sound scriptural interpretation and were in alignment with the teachings of the early Church Fathers. He implored the recipients of his letters to reconsider the council's decision and to grant him a fair hearing.

Eutyches' letters shed light on his unwavering commitment to his beliefs and his deep sense of injustice at being excommunicated without due process. They also provide valuable insights into the theological debates and controversies of the early Christian Church, particularly regarding the nature of Christ and the relationship between the divine and human elements within him.

The 2nd Council of Ephesus [Ephesus II of 449AD]

In the year 449 AD, news reached Emperor Theodosius II, a ruler who held the church of Alexandria in high regard and devotion. The Emperor, seeking to resolve a theological dispute, entrusted Pope Dioscorus, the patriarch of Alexandria, with the responsibility of overseeing a second council in Ephesus to hear the case of Eutyches, a monk who had been accused of heresy.

The second local council of Ephesus convened with Pope Dioscorus presiding as the president. The local council of Ephesus II (449AD) granted Eutyches an opportunity to repent and renounce his alleged heretical beliefs. Eutyches, under pressure from the council, submitted a written statement in which he acknowledged his errors and reaffirmed his adherence to the true faith.

The council, convinced by Eutyches' apparent repentance, readmitted him into the ranks of the clergy. However, in a controversial move, they also took punitive action against Pope Flavian of Constantinople and several other bishops who had supported him. The council accused Pope Flavian and his allies of political scheming and deposed them from their positions.

The events of the second council of Ephesus highlight the complex interplay between religious and political power in the Byzantine Empire. The Emperor's involvement in ecclesiastical matters underscores the extent to which the state and the church were intertwined. The council's actions against Pope Flavian and his supporters demonstrate the readiness of the church to use its authority to silence dissenting voices and consolidate its power.

The council's decision to reinstate Eutyches and depose Pope Flavian sparked outrage among many Christians, who believed that Eutyches' heretical views had not been adequately addressed. This controversy laid the foundation for further disputes and divisions within the church, contributing to the turbulent religious landscape of the Byzantine Empire in the years that followed.

Pope Leo I of Rome

In the year 449 AD, when the 2nd Council of Ephesus convened, Pope Leo the Great, the Bishop of Rome, did not attend personally. Instead, he dispatched delegates carrying his renowned document, known as 'The Tome of Leo.' The document was written in Latin, despite the fact that Greek was the predominant language of the Eastern Church.

Shortly after the council, Emperor Theodosius II, who had initially denied Pope Leo's request for another council, passed away. His sister, Pulcheria, succeeded him as Empress. Recognizing the opportunity, Pope Leo traveled to Constantinople to congratulate Pulcheria and to present his case regarding the Tome of Leo and the position of the Church of Rome. Pope Leo argued that the Church of Rome, as the apostolic see founded by Saint Peter, held a unique and elevated position among the Christian churches. He emphasized the importance of unity and orthodoxy in matters of faith and doctrine.

Pulcheria, convinced by Pope Leo's arguments, agreed to convene a new council to replace the previous two Eutychian councils. Pope Leo had previously attempted to persuade Emperor Theodosius to call for such a council, but his request had been denied. However, with Pulcheria's support, the path was now clear for a new council to address the theological controversies that had plagued the Church.

Chalcedon – 451 AD

In the midst of a significant gathering, several notable absences marked the Council of Chalcedon – first, that of Pope Leo. Rather than attending in person, he chose to send delegates to represent him, accompanied by a significant document known as the Tome. This Tome held great importance, carrying within its pages profound theological concepts that would shape the course of Christian history.

Many historians hold the belief that this council was not convened with the intention of introducing new doctrines or teachings into the Christian faith. Instead, it is widely regarded as a strategic maneuver orchestrated to ensnare Pope Dioscorus, who had taken a controversial stance during the previous council. Over 520 bishops were given a seat at the council, Pope Dioscorus was not. Emperor Marcian summoned Dioscorus to answer for his actions of Ephesus II and to discuss his views on Christology at Chalcedon in 451 A.D. The Romans quickly mustered a massive army of bishops from the West to join the East European prelates at Chalcedon in Asia Minor, while Dioscorus was detained by the imperial guard under a kind of house arrest, and the Council summarily condemned and exiled him to the island of Gangra in Paphlagonia near the southern shores of the Black Sea where he died a few years later.

The Tome, a document carefully crafted in Latin, was presented to Pope Dioscorus for his perusal. However, he perceived the Tome as promoting a Nestorian ideology, which posited that Christ possessed two distinct and separate natures – human and divine. This interpretation led Pope Dioscorus to declare Pope Leo excommunicated, an act that provoked strong opposition from the rest of the council.

The Council of Chalcedon became a stage for a dramatic confrontation between the Egyptian contingent and the rest of the attendees. The Egyptians found themselves isolated and outnumbered, as the majority of the council vehemently opposed their stance. This opposition ultimately led to the reaffirmation of Pope Leo's position and the condemnation of Nestorianism as heretical.

Pope Dioscorus

In a bold move to assert her authority, Empress Theodora exiled Pope Dioscorus, the reigning patriarch of Alexandria. This decision was met with mixed reactions, further dividing the church in Alexandria. The empress, determined to maintain her control over religious matters, swiftly appointed a new patriarch for Alexandria. This move caused a slight schism within the church, as the new See established by the empress, known as the Melkites, continued to exist even to this day. The term

"Melkites," which translates to "of the king," signifies the patriarch's appointment by the palace, highlighting the empress's influence over religious affairs. In response to the empress's actions, the Church of Alexandria, unwavering in its autonomy, appointed their archbishop, Timothy II, as the legitimate patriarch. This act of defiance further solidified the split between the two factions within the church of Alexandria. The appointment of Timothy II reinforced the church's commitment to its own authority and its refusal to yield to imperial pressure. The schism that ensued from these events left a lasting impact on the unity of the church in Alexandria, creating two distinct branches that operated independently from one another.

Chalcedon vs Non-Chalcedon

The Council of Chalcedon split the Christians into two groups. From that day on, we were incorrectly labeled as Eutychians, or Monophysites. We comprise the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and our current sister churches are the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, the Armenian Orthodox Church, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, (Indian Orthodox Church), the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, and finally, the Eritrean Orthodox Church.

The Council of Chalcedon, convened in 451 AD, was a pivotal moment in the history of Christianity. It sought to address the theological dispute surrounding the nature of Christ, specifically, whether He possessed one or two natures. The council's declaration, known as the Chalcedonian Creed, affirmed the dual nature of Christ, both human and divine, in one person.

However, a significant number of Christians, including many in the Eastern regions of the Roman Empire, rejected the Chalcedonian Creed. They argued that Christ had only one nature out of two, divine and human nature. These Christians became known as Miaphysites. The rejection of the Chalcedonian Creed by the Miaphysites led to a division within Christianity. The ōn-Chalcedonian churches, also known today as the Oriental Orthodox Churches, maintained their theological convictions and separated from the Chalcedonian churches. The Oriental Orthodox Churches include:

1. The Coptic Orthodox Church: Traces its roots back to the earliest days of Christianity, with a lineage that extends to the evangelization of Egypt by Saint Mark the Apostle in the 1st century AD. The term "Coptic" derives from the Greek word "Aigypptos," meaning Egypt, signifying the church's deep connection to the land and its people.
2. The Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch: Rooted in the ancient patriarchate of Antioch, this church has a rich heritage of Syriac Christianity and is primarily present in Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, and the Middle East.
3. The Armenian Orthodox Church: An ancient and independent church, the Armenian Orthodox Church is rooted in the Armenian Apostolic Tradition and is primarily present in Armenia, Georgia, and the Middle East.
4. The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (Indian Orthodox Church): Based in India, this

church traces its origins to Saint Thomas the Apostle and has a strong presence in Kerala and other parts of India.

5. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church: One of the oldest Christian churches in the world, with roots dating back to the 1st century AD, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church is the largest Oriental Orthodox Church and is primarily present in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the Middle East.
6. The Eritrean Orthodox Church: A relatively new church, the Eritrean Orthodox Church became independent in 1993 when it split from the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. It is primarily present in Eritrea and the Middle East.

These churches collectively form the Oriental Orthodox communion, also known as the Miaphysite communion, and have maintained their unique theological perspective on the nature of Christ while preserving their own distinctive traditions and liturgies.

What Happened?

During these early centuries of Christianity, a significant struggle for power emerged, characterized by unlawful political influence on religious matters. Pride played a detrimental role, affecting both Christian and non-Christian individuals. One of the prominent barriers experienced during this conflict was the difference in language between the parties involved, making communication and understanding challenging.

Looking back at the 20th century, the split within the church became evident. However, despite these divisions, churches have affirmed that there is a shared belief in the core tenets of faith. However, the political and social differences that have arisen will require careful consideration and resolution.

Miaphysites hold a unique belief regarding the nature of Christ. The belief that Christ possesses a single nature, which is of both Divine and Human aspects, merged into one indivisible entity. This understanding of Christ's nature differs from other Christian denominations and contributes to the ongoing theological discussions. The Eastern church speak of two nature united in one hypostasis.

The complexities of the conflict extend beyond theological disagreements. The unlawful political influence on religion resulted in a power struggle, where individuals and institutions sought to gain control and dominance. This interference distorted the purity of faith and hindered the true spiritual growth of believers.

Takeaways for Service

This lesson warns of the dangers of pride and self-seeking, however our Lord is merciful and strives to bring back the lost sheep of the Church. We must put Christ before politics time and again. There will always be a need for Biblical conflict resolution: “moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” (Matthew 18:15-17) Our God is merciful and we must honor Him, as well as interpret His Word corrected to live a pious life: “so then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19-20)

This serves as a cautionary reminder of the perils associated with pride and self-seeking services. It emphasizes the merciful nature of our Lord, who strives to bring back the lost sheep of the Church. It stresses the importance of prioritizing Christ over political matters, recognizing that conflicts will inevitably arise.

The passage from Matthew 18:15-17 provides a framework for resolving conflicts within the Church. It advocates for direct communication with the offending brother, seeking resolution privately. There will always be a need for Biblical conflict resolution: “moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” (Matthew 18:15-17)

Our God is merciful and we must honor Him, as well as interpret His Word corrected to live a pious life: “so then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19-20) These passages highlight the importance of God's mercy and the responsibility of believers to honor Him by interpreting His Word correctly. It encourages individuals to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, recognizing that human anger does not align with the righteousness of God.



Review Questions

1. What language was the Tome written in?

- a. English
 - b. Latin**
 - c. Greek
 - d. Aramaic
2. Who was not present at Chalcedon in 451 AD?
 - a. Pope Leo I**
 - b. Emperor Marcian
 - c. Saint Cyril of Alexandria
 - d. Saint Augustine of Hippo
3. Who were two people, from the Church of Alexandria, who played a great role in the events leading up to Chalcedon?
 - a. Cyril and Dioscorus
 - b. Athanasius and Pope Timothy I**
 - c. Nestorius and Eutyches
 - d. John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia
4. Who did the Empress exile?
 - a. Pope Leo
 - b. Pope Athanasius
 - c. Pope Dioscorus**
 - d. Pope Timothy
5. What is a takeaway from this lesson? (A: Be careful of the dangers of pride.)



Books & References

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