

“Jerusalem Meets Rome and Finds Babylon: A Study in Church Purity”

Fall 2022-Spring 2023

May 3, 2023

The Council of Chalcedon 451 AD

IV. Authority in the Church – Mt 20:20-28; Mk 10:35-45

A. Leadership In the Church

1. The desire to be leader was not above the Apostles or their mother – Mt 20:20-21; Mk 10:35-37
2. Leadership comes with unknown responsibility and difficulties - Mt 20:22-23a; Mk 10:38-39
3. The One who fills the position of Leadership is prepared by the Father - Mt 20:23b; Mk 10:40
4. Leadership also has to deal with other’s jealousies and judgment - Mt 20:24; Mk 10:41
5. Worldly Leadership uses power and force to accomplish its agenda - Mt 20:25; Mk 10:42
6. Worldly Leadership methodology is not the way of Christ - Mt 20:26a; Mk 10:43a
7. Service to others, following Christ’s example will determine the greatness of leaders - Mt 20:26b-28; Mk 10:43b-45

B. Who Called for the Council and who Attended.

1. Emperor Marcian
2. About 520 bishops and their representatives attended.

C. Old Business

1. Approved of the creed of Nicaea and the creed of Constantinople (Nicene Creed)
2. Approved 2 letters of Cyril of Alexandria against Nestorius (Council of Ephesus) insisting on the unity of divine and human persons in Christ.
3. Approved the Tome of Pope Leo I, confirming two distinct natures in Christ.
4. Developed their own confession of faith based on the above.

D. Purpose of the Council

1. To settle debates regarding the Nature (hypostases, reality) of Christ.
 - a. Was Christ
 - i. human or divine
 - ii. a man who became God
 - iii. God who became a man
 - b. How His humanity and divinity affected His essence and being, if at all.
2. To settle issues in leadership roles between regions (Sees)

E. What led to the Council of Chalcedon?

1. The Council of Nicaea determined that Alexandria and Jerusalem would be primary churches in their respective areas. Other primary Churches were Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome.

2. Competition between Bishops as to who had authority to dictate beliefs and rituals for all Christians.
 - a. Rome had been elevated above all others at the Council of Constantinople.
 - b. Alexandria was insulted b/c they were the home of several Christian Schools of philosophy.
 - c. Antioch was insulted in that they were the first to be called “Christian” – Acts 11:26
 - d. Jerusalem was insulted in that they were the home of the trials, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth
3. Three more heresies had sprung up that needed to be dealt with
 - a. Paulinism – Paul of Samosata (200-275)
 - i. Jesus was born of man, infused with the divine logos.
 - ii. The divine logos was the principal of rationality (taught by Plato)
 - iii. Earlier Christians had taught this b/c they did not recognize that the logos was in fact Christ in a pre-existent form of divinity.
 - iv. In this heresy, God did not become a man, but a man became God.
 - v. Though the trinity had been dealt with at the council of Nicaea, but followers of his teaching were still scattered throughout the empire.
 - b. Novatianism – Novatian (200-258)
 - i. A theologian that refused to readmit any Christian that had lapsed during the persecution of Decius (251)
 - Some bishops had sacrifices to the gods to avoid execution.
 - Their forgiveness had to await God in the final judgment.
 - ii. He believed that membership was not required for salvation, but since the church was made up of saints, readmission would threaten the community.
 - iii. His followers would not allow readmission for any mortal sin, idolatry, murder, and adultery.
 - iv. They also forbade remarriage after divorce or widowhood.
 - c. Nestorianism – Nestorius (386-450)
 - i. The Archbishop of Constantinople (428-4310)
 - ii. Rejected the elevation of Mary as Theotokos – God bearer.
 - iii. Preached Christotokos – Christ bearer.
4. In addition, an old heresy still needed to be dealt with.
 - a. Jewish-Christian communities still existed that taught conformity to the OT law for Gentiles was necessary.
 - b. In their view, Jesus was born human, but God’s revelation in Him created a man of moral excellence, He was vindicated by his death and exalted to heaven.

F. Determinations

1. The Chalcedonian Definition or the Chalcedonian Creed.

“Following, then, the holy Fathers, we all unanimously teach that our Lord Jesus Christ is to us One and the same Son, the Self-same Perfect in Godhead, the Self-same Perfect in Manhood; truly God and truly Man; the Self-same of a rational soul and body; co-essential with the Father according to the Godhead, the Self-same co-essential with us

according to the Manhood; like us in all things, sin apart; before the ages begotten of the Father as to the Godhead, but in the last days, the Self-same, for us and for our salvation (born) of Mary the Virgin Theotokos as to the Manhood; One and the Same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten; acknowledged in Two Natures unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the difference of the Natures being in no way removed because of the Union, but rather the properties of each Nature being preserved, and (both) concurring into One Person and One Hypostasis; not as though He were parted or divided into Two Persons, but One and the Self-same Son and Only-begotten God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ; even as from the beginning the prophets have taught concerning Him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself hath taught us, and as the Symbol of the Fathers hath handed down to us.”

2. The council also established 27 new canons (church laws). They later added a 28th, and some collections show 30 canons.
 - a. The canons of every Synod of the holy Fathers shall be observed.
 - b. *Whoso buys or sells an ordination, down to a Prosmonarius, shall be in danger of losing his grade. Such shall also be the case with go-betweens, if they be clerics they shall be cut off from their rank, if laymen or monks, they shall be anathematized.
 - c. Those who assume the care of secular houses should be corrected, unless perchance the law called them to the administration of those not yet come of age, from which there is no exemption. Unless further their Bishop permits them to take care of orphans and widows.
 - d. *Domestic oratories and monasteries are not to be erected contrary to the judgment of the bishop. Every monk must be subject to his bishop, and must not leave his house except at his suggestion. A slave, however, can not enter the monastic life without the consent of his master.
 - e. *Those who go from city to city shall be subject to the canon law on the subject.
 - f. *In Martyries and Monasteries ordinations are strictly forbidden. Should any one be ordained therein, his ordination shall be reputed of no effect.
 - g. If any cleric or monk arrogantly affects the military or any other dignity, let him be cursed.
 - h. Any clergyman in an almshouse or monastery must submit himself to the authority of the bishop of the city. But he who rebels against this let him pay the penalty.
 - i. *Litigious clerics shall be punished according to canon, if they despise the episcopal and resort to the secular tribunal. When a cleric has a contention with a bishop let him wait till the synod sits, and if a bishop have a contention with his metropolitan let him carry the case to Constantinople.
 - j. *No cleric shall be recorded on the clergy-list of the churches of two cities. But if he shall have strayed forth, let him be returned to his former place. But if he has been transferred, let him have no share in the affairs of his former church.
 - k. *Let the poor who stand in need of help make their journey with letters pacificatory and not commendatory: For letters commendatory should only be given to those who are open to suspicion.

- l. *One province shall not be cut into two. Whoever shall do this shall be cast out of the episcopate. Such cities as are cut off by imperial rescript shall enjoy only the honor of having a bishop settled in them: but all the rights pertaining to the true metropolis shall be preserved.
- m. No cleric shall be received to communion in another city without a letter commendatory.
- n. A Cantor or Lector alien to the sound faith, if being then married, he shall have begotten children let him bring them to communion, if they had there been baptized. But if they had not yet been baptized they shall not be baptized afterwards by the heretics.
- o. *No person shall be ordained deaconess except she be forty years of age. If she shall dishonor her ministry by contracting a marriage, let her be anathema. – **1 Ti 5:3-16**
- p. *Monks or nuns shall not contract marriage, and if they do so let them be excommunicated. – **1 Tim 3:1-7**
- q. Village and rural parishes if they have been possessed for thirty years, they shall so continue. But if within that time, the matter shall be subject to adjudication. But if by the command of the Emperor a city be renewed, the order of ecclesiastical parishes shall follow the civil and public forms.
- r. *Clerics and Monks, if they shall have dared to hold conventicles and to conspire against the bishop, shall be cast out of their rank. - **1Ti 5:19**
- s. Twice each year the Synod shall be held wherever the bishop of the Metropolis shall designate, and all matters of pressing interest shall be determined.
- t. *A clergyman of one city shall not be given a cure in another. But if he has been driven from his native place and shall go into another he shall be without blame. If any bishop receives clergymen from without his diocese he shall be excommunicated as well as the cleric he receives.
- u. *A cleric or layman making charges rashly against his bishop shall not be received. - **1Ti 5:19**
- v. Whoever seizes the goods of his deceased bishop shall be cast forth from his rank.
- w. Clerics or monks who spend much time at Constantinople contrary to the will of their bishop, and stir up seditions, shall be cast out of the city.
- x. A monastery erected with the consent of the bishop shall be immovable. And whatever pertains to it shall not be alienated. Whoever shall take upon him to do otherwise, shall not be held guiltless.
- y. Let the ordination of bishops be within three months: necessity however may make the time longer. But if anyone shall ordain counter to this decree, he shall be liable to punishment. The revenue shall remain with the *œconomus*.
- z. The *œconomus* in all churches must be chosen from the clergy. And the bishop who neglects to do this is not without blame.
- aa. *If a clergyman elope with a woman, let him be expelled from the Church. If a layman, let him be anathema. The same shall be the lot of any that assist him.
- bb. The bishop of New Rome shall enjoy the same honor as the bishop of Old Rome, on account of the removal of the Empire. For this reason the [metropolitans] of

Pontus, of Asia, and of Thrace, as well as the Barbarian bishops shall be ordained by the bishop of Constantinople.

cc. He is sacrilegious who degrades a bishop to the rank of a presbyter. For he that is guilty of crime is unworthy of the priesthood. But he that was deposed without cause, let him be [still] bishop.

dd. It is the custom of the Egyptians that none subscribe without the permission of their Archbishop. Wherefore they are not to be blamed who did not subscribe the Epistle of the holy Leo until an Archbishop had been appointed for them.

G. Consequences

1. More Schisms

a. Some thought the declaration of two natures was Nestorianism.

b. The Alexandrian church emphasized the divine nature as dominant.

i. They were labeled Monophysites (one nature) and thus heretics.

ii. They broke form the church of Rome and created the independent Coptic Church of Egypt w/ their own pope.

2. Nestorian communities continued to exist along the silk road into China and India.