



The Eastern Church & The Iconoclastic Controversy

Continued Battles Over Christology

Introduction

- The Eastern Orthodox Church developed on an entirely different trajectory compared to the Western Catholic Church of the Middle Ages.
 - They were still technically one church until AD 1054.
- The Chalcedonian Creed 451 did not bring peace to the East.
 - Theological controversy will continue for centuries.
- Justinian the Great brings order to the chaos and ushers in the high point of Byzantine power and culture.
- Once the Christological controversies were finally resolved, a new controversy called Iconoclasm will take center stage.



The Byzantine Empire and Theological Disputes

- After the Council of Chalcedon in 451, where the church set forth the magnificent Chalcedonian Creed, historians call the Eastern half the Roman Empire the Byzantine Empire.
- The Western half was soon to fall anyway, and would be replaced by new Europe with a Gothic flavor.
- In the 7th Century, the Persian Empire conquered much of the Byzantine Empire.
 - From 622-628, the Byzantines made a comeback. They effectively reconquered the lost territory and then took the fight to the heart of Persia in Nineveh.
 - They destroyed the Persian empire once and for all. Unfortunately, this then created an easy vacuum for the Muslims to fill, which certainly increased their strength.
- The Chalcedonian Creed (451) did not settle the Christological controversies in the East.
 - In the East, there would be 230 more years of controversy over this.
- There were four religious parties in the aftermath of the Council: the Monophysites, the Dyophysities, the Cyrillian Chalcedonians, and the Origenists.

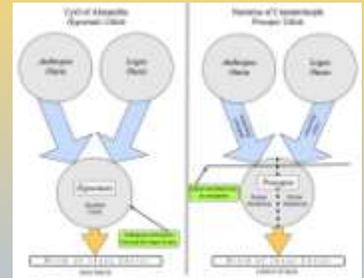


Monophysites

- The Monophysites would not submit to the creed. They were the largest group in Egypt and Syria.
 - They insisted upon the language of Cyril of Alexandria. He taught there was one nature, not two for the incarnated Logos. That is why they were called Monophysites.
 - They argued that you cannot make the distinction between person and nature in the way that the Chalcedonian creed says you can.
- There were moderate and extreme versions of this. The moderate folks understood nature like the orthodox understand person. They weren't far off from each other. It was more a debate of nomenclature.
 - They still accepted the full humanity of Christ, but they would not abandon the language of the writings of their beloved teacher Cyril. These moderate Monophysites produced some phenomenal theologians, and even some Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch. Had they not been Monophysites, church history would have recorded them as great Church Fathers.
- There were extreme Monophysites that were similar to the condemned heretic Eutyches—claiming that the divine and human natures of Christ blended into a mixture.
 - The moderates, as well as the Chalcedonians, rejected this vehemently.
- Regardless of the disagreements between the extreme and moderate versions of Monophysitism, they agreed in their rejection of the Chalcedonian Creed because they saw two natures as being Nestorianism.

The Dyophysites

- A much smaller party was Dyophysite party.
- They exerted a large influence in the early years after the creed.
 - Part of the reason for their early popularity was their effective opposition to the Monophysites. People at first thought they represented Chalcedonian orthodoxy.
- They argued fiercely for the two natures of Christ, but their position amounted to what we call Nestorianism.
- They were clear that Christ was fully God and fully man, but they were ambiguous on the oneness of the person.
 - They seemed to argue that it was only the human Christ that suffered on the cross.
 - They too had some Patriarchates for a while.
- The Monophysites opposed them. They argued that a person acts and feels through his nature, and therefore if Christ has a divine nature, it too suffered on the cross.
 - The Monophysites believed the Dyophysites represented the Chalcedonian Creed, which simply reinforced their belief that they were Nestorians.



Cyrillian Chalcedonians

- The biggest party was the Cyrillian Chalcedonians. They held sway over the whole Byzantine Empire except for Egypt and Syria.
- They accepted the Christology of Cyril, but they argued that person and nature (hypostasis and physis) are not the same.
 - They argued that that Cyril really held their view, but lacked the language to articulate it.
 - Had he lived long enough, he would have agreed with the Chalcedonian Creed since his theology is in alignment with it.
- Their opposition to the Monophysites was on two grounds.
- First, Monophysites claimed that the two natures blended into a single divine-human nature (one person one divine-human nature).
 - The Cyrillian Chalcedonians claimed the two natures remain separate, but both subsist in the one person.
- Second, the Monophysites claimed the Chalcedonian Creed betrayed their revered Cyril. The Chalcedonians argued that it did not. They even championed Cyril's formula, "One of the Holy Trinity suffered in the flesh."
 - This proved they were not Nestorians.

The Origenist Party

- Finally, you had a small Origenist party.
 - They held the troubling view that Jesus was an eternal human soul that in the incarnation was united to the Logos, thus it was not the Logos that became flesh, but the eternal human soul of Jesus.
- The theological battling between these groups tore the Eastern Church apart with effects that last even until today.
- So with the theological positions of these parties, we can now look at how the battle lines played out in history.



Instant Opposition to the Chalcedonian Creed

- After the Chalcedonian Creed was accepted, Emperor Marcian appointed a Chalcedonian bishop as the Patriarch of Alexandria.
 - The majority Monophysites rioted, and the Emperor put it down with troops.
 - After Marcian died, however, the Monophysites murdered the Patriarch at the communion table.
 - They replaced him with a Monophysite bishop called Timothy the Cat (or weasel because he was short).
- The new Byzantine Emperor, Leo I, exiled Timothy the Cat in 459.
 - More riots ensued, and so again, only imperial troops could keep Monophysite Egypt in line.
- In Syria, similar things happened. The fiercely Monophysite population deposed the Chalcedonian Patriarch of Antioch and replaced him with a Monophysite in 469.
 - Emperor Leo banished him in 471.
- The Monophysite opposition was blending with Egyptian and Syrian nationalism.
 - For most of the Eastern Empire (Greece and Asia Minor, the language and culture was Greek.
 - Monophysite Egypt and Syria spoke Semitic languages (Coptic and Syriac). They referred to the Byzantine Greek church as "Imperial." They were forced into compliance by the army alone.



Failed Compromises

- The next Emperor, Zeno, offered a compromise where the only test of orthodoxy was the first three ecumenical councils (Nicaea, Constantinople, and Ephesus), and Nestorius and Eutyches were condemned.
 - The Monophysites accepted this and there was peace in the East, but the Western church was furious.
- The Chalcedonian Creed was ecumenical. Also, Pope Leo I's *Tome* was crucial in getting the creed accepted.
 - The Eastern Church treating the creed as optional was a slap in the face. It was also seen as apostasy.
- So Pope Felix II (483-92) excommunicated Emperor Zeno and the Patriarch of Constantinople. This split between the West and East lasted 35 years.
- The next Emperor, Anastasius (491-518), responded by moving closer to the Monophysites.
 - He condemned Leo's *Tome* and the Chalcedonian Creed. He even changed the words of a revered worship chant to the Monophysite version.
- This led to riots in Constantinople where people died. The Emperor himself was nearly killed, so he reverted the words back to the Chalcedonian version.



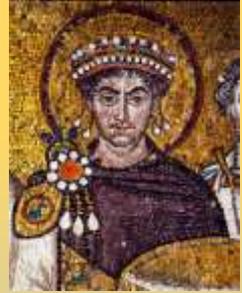
Justin and Justinian

- When the Emperor died in 518, he was replaced by Justin I (518-527). He was a Latin-speaking Western-thinking soldier from Thrace.
 - The army was loyal to him, and he had a brilliant nephew named Justinian as his advisor.
- The new emperor was committed to both the creed and cooperation with the papacy.
- The Chalcedonian Creed was again necessary in the Eastern Church.
 - This caused Monophysite Egypt and Syria to rebel again. Troops were used to bring them in line again.
- Justin was succeeded by his nephew Justinian the Great (reigned 527-565).
- He is the most celebrated of all Byzantine Emperors and one of the most influential rulers in all of history.
- He was devout to orthodoxy, and he was a brilliant leader of civil government.
 - He also was hot-tempered and jealous.
- He reigned directly over as much as he could, and was so busy with it that he was nicknamed Justin the Sleepless.



Justinian the Great

- Justinian had some outstanding achievements.
- He reconquered much of the West from its Germanic invaders, and in so doing, he reigned over half of the old Western Empire.
 - He reclaimed North Africa from the Vandals, Italy from the Ostrogoths, and southern Spain from the Visigoths. The Roman Empire, for the final time, was a political unity of East and West.
- Justinian also reformed the entire legal system that Byzantium inherited from old Rome. The most important part of this was the Justinian Code which brought the Empire's laws into a single body.
 - It removed all contradictions. It also gave a Christian foundation to all the laws. Slaves were recognized humans made in God's image and not mere property.
 - The Body of Civil Law, as it was called, was the legal system for the next 1,000 years and became increasingly important in Western Europe too. It influenced and developed canon law (Church Law) in the West.
- Another important achievement was the rebuilding of the Church of Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia).
 - It was burned down in a major riot, but what he rebuilt was actually the most splendid church building ever constructed in all of church history.
 - It looks like the ceilings defy gravity, and the building shines from the interior. Nearly 1,500 years later, it still marvels tourists today.



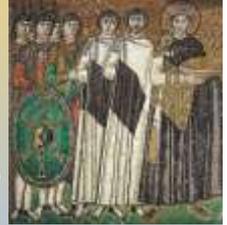
Justinian's Religious Policies

- Justinian's religious policy finished the Christianizing of the Empire.
 - He made Arianism, Manichaeism, all other heresies, and Paganism illegal.
 - He closed down the last great center of Pagan learning, the Platonist academy in Athens.
 - He passed a law requiring all non-Christians to accept baptism, with the exception of the Jews. However, he did restrict Jewish worship by forcing them to read from the LXX rather than Hebrew and all Jews were excluded from government positions.
- When it came to the Monophysites, Justinian accepted a statement that satisfied the moderate Monophysites and most Chalcedonians, but Pope Agapetus I (535-36) did not accept it.
- On a visit to Constantinople, he confronted the Emperor like an OT prophet.
 - Justinian deposed the Monophysite patriarch of Constantinople and replaced him with a Chalcedonian.
- Justinian also destroyed the Origenists and condemned their teachings that human souls are eternal, universal salvation, spiritual rather than physical resurrection, and the Origenist view of the incarnation.
- Justinian knew if he was going to have peace with the Monophysites, he had to condemn Dyophysitism.
 - He outlawed their formative writings, but the West rejected this move since some of these writers supported Chalcedon back in the days of Leo I.



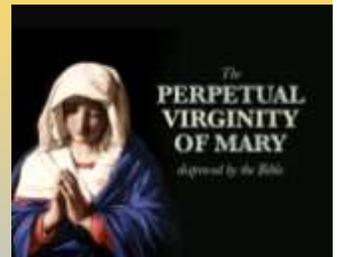
The Second Council of Constantinople

- Battles between Justinian and the next Pope were strange.
- Justinian had him kidnapped, transported to Constantinople, and bullied him into supporting his position.
 - The Western church then excommunicated that Pope. The Pope then recanted. He regained his position.
- Justinian then summoned the Second Council of Constantinople in 553. Most the attendees were Eastern.
- The Christology of the Chalcedonian Creed was strengthened by declaring the single person of the incarnate Lord was none other than the Logos or the 2nd Person of the Trinity (since the Chalcedonian Creed didn't directly say this).
- It was also declared the Cyril meant person by physis and was not a Monophysite.
- Origen and his writings were declared to be heretical at this council. He was post-humously excommunicated.
 - His troubling doctrines were the cause of this decision: pre-existence of human souls; spiritual resurrection; universal salvation (apokastasis); eternal human soul of Jesus.



The Second Council of Constantinople

- The Council also affirmed the idea that Mary was a perpetual virgin.
- They claimed that her womb was a temple only fit for God Himself, and so no other child could be conceived in her.
 - The Eastern Church interpreted Jesus's brothers as Joseph's children from a previous marriage.
 - The West argued they were Jesus's cousins.
 - Sadly, even Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin believed in Mary's perpetual virginity.
- The Second Council of Constantinople was ecumenical, and it was a total victory for Cyrillian Chalcedonianism.
- The church was committed to the Chalcedonian Creed interpreted in light Cyril's Christology.
 - The Origenists and Dyophysites positions were off the table in light of the language of this Council.



The Council Failed to Bring Unity

- The hope was for a reconciliation with the Monophysites. But this did not happen.
- First, the West did not offer full support for this council.
 - Eventually, the West did come to fully accept it though.
- Second, the Monophysites had already lost interest in union with Byzantium.
 - Nationalism led to a successful functioning of the Syriac church with its own language and traditions.
 - The same thing happened in Egypt, and it henceforth called itself the Coptic Orthodox Church. It is still the prevailing form of Christianity in Egypt.
 - Missionaries from both the Syriac and Egyptian Monophysite churches spread this form of Christianity to Ethiopia, and thus the Ethiopian Church was Monophysite.
 - The Armenian Orthodox Church was always independent of Byzantium, and they formally rejected the Chalcedonian Creed in 500. They leaned in the Monophysite direction.
- By the end of Justinian's reign in 565, nationalist church movements of Egypt, Syria, Armenia, and Ethiopia had no real connection to the Eastern and Western Churches, and they developed separately until this day.



Eastern Theology

- In terms of theology, Eastern theology developed differently than the West.
- One of the most famous expressions of it was a source that we today call *Pseudo-Dionysius*.
- It purports to be written by Paul's convert in Athens, and the church accepted this until the 15th century.
- It clearly dates to around the era of Justinian.
- It argues for a way of knowing God that was very Neo-Platonic.
- One of its lasting contributions was to insist on speaking about God in apophatic terms. This greatly influenced Western theologians of a later time.



One or Two Energeias?

- One of the big controversies stemmed from one more attempt to unite Monophysites and Chalcedonians in the 7th Century.
- It was suggested that Christ had one *energeia* (action, activity, work, or operation). For example, a human being is the specific group of human activity or operations—thinking, feeling, willing, speaking, etc.).
 - Well, if *energeia* manifests a distinct nature, and Christ has two natures, then wouldn't He have two *energeias*. Chalcedonians would answer no since they argued Christ's two natures dwelt in each other without mixing or becoming confused.
 - But since Monophysites didn't think you can separate person and nature, and yet Chalcedonians insisted that you can, the question was what do you do with *energeia*?
 - It is technically different from either person or nature, so if the two sides could agree on one *energeia*, then maybe there could be reconciliation. It was argued energy belonged to the person rather than the nature. In fact, it was argued that Jesus exercised His one perfect energy through the two natures.
- This satisfied a lot of Monophysites and there was some union in Armenia and Egypt with Chalcedonians.
 - But in Palestine, some of the Monophysites rejected this. They believed energy belongs to nature, and Christ's divine and human natures exert different works and activities. So it is wrong to use *energeia* as a concept in the way the church was trying.

One or Two Wills?

- The Emperor of Constantinople appealed to the Pope for theological support, but this backfired.
- The Pope asked why anyone was talking about energy this way in the first place?
 - The Bible doesn't use energy to talk about God or Christ's divine and human natures.
 - Instead, he suggested they should drop the talk of energy and declare that Christ had a single will rather than a single energy.
- This detonated a theological bomb that led to the next big controversy.
- The Pope thought using the word *will* to unite the Savior's divine and human natures would produce unity between the two parties. The opposite happened.
- The Emperor took the suggestion and forbid all energy talk, but insisted that Christ only had a single divine will. This position was known as monothelites (one will).

Monothelitism

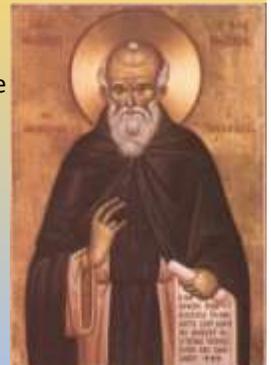
THERE ARE TWO WILLS AND TWO
CENTERS OF ACTION IN CHRIST,
BUT NOT TWO
PERSONS

Maximus the Confessor

- The orthodox Chalcedonians immediately opposed it, including the next Pope (Martin I 649-655) and Maximus the Confessor (580-662).
- Maximus articulated the correct position very carefully.
 - Christ has two wills because will is a property of nature, not person.
 - So He had a divine will that was inseparable from the Father and Holy Spirit's will. There is only one divine will.
 - But when Christ assumed full humanity, He assumed a human will distinct from the divine will, otherwise He was not fully human. Furthermore, the human will is the source of sin according to Maximus, and therefore if Christ is going to rescue our human will, He had to have a human will.
 - As Gregory of Nazianzus said, "What Christ does not assume, He does not save." If He saves our human will along with the rest of our humanity, then He had to have a human will Himself.
- Maximus was so forceful and brilliant in his arguments (his influence was on the level of men like Athanasius, the Cappadocian Fathers, and Cyril), that the Emperor found him dangerous.
- But it was the Emperor's heir and grandson, Constans (641-668) (a cruel tyrant that cared little for theology) that punished Maximus.
- Maximus and Pope Martin had convinced most people that Monothelitism was heresy.
 - Constans sent troops to Rome and captured the Pope. He also captured Maximus. He had the Pope tortured, defrocked, and then sent him in poor health to an exile where he died.

Maximus the Confessor's End

- For 74 year old Maximus, he made a more public spectacle.
- Despite the threats, Maximus proclaimed that the Emperor had no authority on theological matters.
 - He was exiled to Thrace, where he continued to speak against Monothelitism. So he was put on trial again by the Emperor.
- The rest of the Empire had given into the Emperor's position, and so how dare this lone elderly monk defy him?
- Maximus quoted Galatians 1:9 in response.
 - Soldiers then ripped out his tongue and chopped off his right hand so that he could speak and write no more.
- He was banished and died a few months later. His immovability on this issue despite such opposition earned him the title the Confessor.



The Third Council of Constantinople

- Constantine was murdered 668, and his son Constantine IV (668-685) was a much wiser ruler.
- The Empire was actually divided over this issue, and so after he fought off some Islamic invasion attempts, he then sought to restore the religious peace.
- He summoned the sixth of the Ecumenical Councils, Third Constantinople in 680. Monothelitism was condemned.
 - Maximus and Martin's biblical position won the day.
- This finally brought an end to centuries of division concerning the relationship between Christ's divine and human natures.
- All three great branches of the professing Church—Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant—agree on the Trinitarian and Christological doctrines of the first six ecumenical councils.
- The seventh ecumenical council (still to be discussed) is accepted by Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, but not by most Protestants.



Iconoclastic Controversy

- In the 8th and 9th centuries, the fierce iconoclastic controversy (726-843) raged in the Eastern Church.
- The controversy centered around icons (2D images of Christ, Mary, Saints, and angels).
- In the Eastern church, veneration of icons became a common practice to such a point that some would accuse them of worshiping images.
- Eastern Christians looked at icons as a physical symbol of a higher spiritual reality.
 - They thought of them as windows into heaven that allowed the believers on earth to have communion with Christ in heaven, and the church in heaven.
- Those who opposed icons were called iconoclasts (icon smashers). Those who supported icons were called iconodules (icon venerators) or iconophiles (icon lovers).
 - Pejoratively, the groups were called smashers and kissers. Iconodules bowed, kissed, and lit lamps to their icons.
 - Iconoclasts considered this idolatry. Iconodules considered them outward acts that express love for the very Christ portrayed by the icons.



Iconoclastic Controversy

- The controversy erupted when the Eastern Emperor Leo the Isaurian (717-741) declared war on icons.
 - He believed it was sin. He also likely believed that the emergence and threat of Islam was God's judgment. Islam rejected icons, and so it is possible he thought God was rewarding them with victory for being more faithful than true believers.
- Leo, like most Eastern emperors, believed that the emperor was the head of the church and state. He had the army's support, and he believed God sent him on a mission to purge icon veneration from his kingdom.
 - His goal was to destroy the icons and those that venerated them. The majority of the people opposed Leo.
 - Icon veneration was popular among the laity long before it was adored by the clergy. By this point, even most clergy were iconophiles. Monks, priests, and bishops, along with the majority of the population, supported the use of icons.
- In 726, Leo began his war against icons.
 - There was a giant golden icon of Christ on Constantinople's palace gate. His soldiers tore it down, and a mob of women captured the officer in charge and beat him to death with mops and kitchen items.
 - Leo ordered their execution, which then led to popular protests against him.



Iconoclastic Controversy

- The Western church saw this as an opportunity to oppose Leo.
 - Venice denounced Constantinople and henceforth was in opposition.
 - Pope Gregory II (715-731), and his successors, backed the iconophiles for a couple reasons: 1) he thought their position was correct; 2) he opposed the eastern emperors operating as if the state has authority over doctrinal matters.
- None of this dissuaded Leo. In 730, he deposed the iconodule patriarch of Constantinople and replaced him with an iconoclast. He then issued an edict calling for the destruction of all icons and punishment on those who harbored them.
 - Since monasteries housed so many icons, they were the victims heaviest hit. Many Byzantine monks fled to the West, hiding in their robes the most important icons.
- Leo's son and successor, Constantine V (741-775), increased the intensity of the war on icons.
 - He was obsessed with persecuting the monks that disagreed. Many were expelled from their monasteries. He converted the monasteries into barracks for his soldiers. Monks would be either banished or executed. One abbot of a monastery died as his head was split open by a blow from a club.
 - Constantine V called a council he claimed was ecumenical, and it outlawed icons. Since the other patriarchates had no representatives, the rest of the church did not consider this council to have any authority.



Iconoclastic Controversy

- After Constantine V died, his son Leo IV (775-780) reigned for a few years.
 - When he died, his wife Irene ruled on behalf of their child. She reversed the iconoclasm of the previous emperors, and called an ecumenical council at Nicaea in 787.
- This council did have representation from both eastern and western patriarchates. So the Council of Nicaea II is one of the Seven Ecumenical Councils. It authorized icon veneration.
- Despite the authority of such a council, the army did not support Irene and overthrew her in 802.
 - Afterward, there were six successive iconoclast emperors. Many of them were less motivated by theology, but instead wanted to exert state authority over the church.
 - Despite the decades of brutal persecution, the monks remained iconophiles and the majority of the population sided with them.
- Eventually, another empress ruled on behalf of a young son. Theodora came to power in 842 and summoned a council in 843 that reaffirmed Nicaea II.
 - Henceforth, icons were an important part of the Eastern church's worship.



Arguments of the Iconoclastic Controversy

- The iconoclasts claimed icons violate the 2nd commandment to make no images.
 - The only valid images of Christ are the bread and wine of the Eucharist, the sign of the cross (but no crucifix), and the Chi-Rho sign.
- The iconodules (greatest theologians were John of Damascus and Theodore of Studium) countered this claim.
 - They said the 2nd commandment forbids making pagan images. Christ is truth, and therefore He can be represented in image.
 - By Christ taking on flesh, He now made it possible to make images of God, who was previously invisible. He is now made visible in Christ since you can see the Father by seeing Him.
 - The iconodules also pointed out that the Old Testament authorized all kinds of images (cherubim in the Temple and the Ark of the Covenant; pomegranates; bronze oxen carrying the bronze sea; palm trees; the bronze serpent). The Ark of the Covenant itself was an image representative of Christ, and the Israelites rightly bowed before it in Joshua 7:6).
 - They also said they did not worship the icons since that would be idolatry. Instead they worshiped what the icon represented. Nicaea II made the distinction between worship (*latreia*) and veneration (*proskunesis*). A good example is the difference between the love a man has for his wife and secondary affection he would have for a picture of her.



Arguments of the Iconoclastic Controversy

- Iconoclasts claimed the fact that Christ became a man does not mean we can make images of Him.
 - Christ Himself is the image, so we should not make other images. Additionally, the image at best can only show His humanity, which leaves out His divinity.
- Iconodules countered that Christ became a real man, and if you cannot depict it then you are denying His real humanity.
 - Just because you cannot depict His divinity in art doesn't mean the real humanity cannot be depicted.
 - Furthermore, the very claim that the icon is of the God-Man affirms His divinity, even if you cannot artistically display it.
- Iconoclasts appealed to the fact that the Church Fathers developed no theology of icons, and the earliest treatments of the idea condemned it.
- The iconodules claimed it was an unwritten tradition that icon veneration was permissible.
 - After all, you find icons as soon as Christians started meeting in buildings.



Arguments of the Iconoclastic Controversy

- Iconoclasts said icons would tempt the illiterate to worship objects like pagans.
- Iconodules countered that the pictures are a great way to help the illiterate see Bible stories.
 - Words and pictures are both symbols of greater realities. So why is it okay to describe Christ with words but not also pictures? Icons are just a different way of communicating the same truths.
- Most of the debate centered around icons of Christ, but Mary and the saints naturally were debated as well.
- The iconoclasts thought it was wrong to venerate pictures of them.
 - Yet, both sides agreed that you can invoke them to pray to God on your behalf.
- The iconodules argued that since they all agree on invocation, then icons should be allowed since they help you think about the dead saint you are asking to pray for you.



Iconoclastic Controversy Concluded

- This controversy was mainly an Eastern church problem.
- The Western church agreed that icons could be made (and against the East they will also authorize statues), but at this time they did not venerate icons or statues.
 - They instead were obsessed with relics.
- Sometime later, the West did start to venerate images with the same zeal as the East, but again, they would do so for statues.
- The East will actually accuse them of idolatry for this.
 - They reasoned a flat picture does not depict something material, whereas a three dimensional statue is entire this worldly. It becomes a material object rather than an immaterial window.
- How should Protestants see this?
 - Different traditions have different positions on images and statues. Across the board, however, Protestants reject veneration of images or that they are windows into heavenly reality.



Conclusion

- The Eastern Church and Eastern Empire traveled a very different path than that of the West.
- Constant theological controversy and frequent wars (with Persians and Muslims) define this period.
- The high point of Eastern hegemony and religious influence was Justinian the Great.
- Afterwards, the Eastern and Western religious and political realities become exceedingly different. It is only a matter of time until an official religious split.
- Over the centuries that follow this lesson, the Eastern Empire will erode as Islamic invaders claim increasing amounts of territory.