

Early Church Councils And Creeds

Council	Issue	Bad Guy	Good Guy	Outcome
Nicea 325 AD	Eternal Deity of Christ	Arius Christ is a Created Being	Athanasius Christ is God	Eternal Deity of Christ Affirmed Nicene Creed
Constantinople 381 AD	Person of Christ	Apollinarius Christ is Divine Logos but not human spirit	Gregory of Nestansius	Complete Humanity of Christ Affirmed Nicene Creed Affirmed
Ephesus 431 AD	Person of Christ	Nestorius Against the Deity of Christ	Cyril of Alexandria	Complete Deity of Christ Affirmed Nicene Creed Affirmed
Chalcedon 451 AD	Person of Christ	Eutyches Christ is a "tertium quid" A third unique nature	Flavian of Constantinople and Leo of Rome	Two Natures of Christ Affirmed (Human Nature and Divine Nature)

Council of Nicea 325 AD

- The First Ecumenical council of Nicaea was called by emperor Constantine. The council met to deal with the schism created by Arianism. The Arians wished to avoid the heresy of Sabellius who believed in a divine monad which, by expansion, projected itself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit--a form of Modalism. The Arians separated the Son from God entirely so that they believed he was a creature having a beginning. "There was when he was not." The Son was but God's first creation, yet out of nothing and hence has preeminence over the rest of creation.
- The symbol answers the question, "Who is Jesus Christ."
Its answer: God

Council of Constantinople 381 AD

- The Nicene Creed -- Constantinopolitan Creed -- Creed of 150 Fathers
 - Usually associated with the Council of Constantinople this symbol is an expansion and revision of the earlier Creed of Nicaea with which it is often confused. This is the creed recited in churches. The council met to refute Apollinarianism. Apollinarius taught that Jesus was a combination of the divine Logos spirit, a sensitive human soul and a human body. He taught that Jesus did not have a human spirit. His views were based on the platonic tripartite view of human nature.

- The council condemned this view in order to show that Christ, as truly human, could redeem the whole person.
- The symbol emphasizes the Trinitarian faith.

Council of Ephesus 431 AD

The **Council of Ephesus** was held in the Church of Mary in Ephesus, Asia Minor in 431 under Emperor Theodosius II, grandson of Theodosius the Great; Ephesus was the city of Artemis (see Acts 19:28). Approximately 200 bishops were present. The proceedings were conducted in a heated atmosphere of confrontation and recriminations. It is counted as the **Third Ecumenical Council**, and was chiefly concerned with Nestorianism.

Nestorianism emphasized the dual natures of Christ. Patriarch Nestorius tried to answer a question considered unsolved: "How can Jesus Christ, being part man, not be partially a sinner as well, since man is by definition a sinner since the Fall". To solve that he taught that Mary, the mother of Jesus gave birth to the incarnate Christ, not the divine Logos who existed before Mary and indeed before time itself. The Logos occupied the part of the human soul (the part of man that was stained by the Fall). But wouldn't the absence of a human soul make Jesus less human? No, Nestorius answered because the human soul was based on the archetype of the Logos only to become polluted by the Fall, therefore Jesus was "more" human for having the Logos and not "less". Consequently, Mary should be called *Christotokos*, Greek for the "Christ-Bearer" and not Theotokos, Greek for the "God-Bearer." This was essentially a Christological controversy.

At the urging of its president, Cyril of Alexandria, the Council denounced Nestorius' teaching as erroneous and decreed that Jesus was one person, not two separate people: complete God and complete man, with a rational soul and body. The Virgin Mary was to be called Theotokos because she bore and gave birth to God as a man. This did not resolve the debate over the union of the two natures of Christ, and related issues were debated at the Council of Chalcedon.

The Council of Ephesus also declared the text of the Nicene Creed of 381 to be complete and forbade any additional change (addition or deletion) to it. In addition, it condemned Pelagianism.

Council of Chalcedon 451 AD

- The council of Chalcedon met to resolve the Monophysite controversy in which Eutyches had refused to confess the existence of two natures in Christ both after the union as well as before. The definition summarizes the Church's teaching on the natures of Christ largely in negative terms.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, 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; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Definition of the

Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D)

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

<http://christology101.wordpress.com>

highpurpose@hotmail.com