

Christological Councils and Heresies

Jesus is our Lord and God. He is both Divine and
Human.

1. The Council of Nicaea (325 AD)

It was ordered by Emperor Constantine.

It speaks about the “FULL DIVINITY OF CHRIST” – It asserted that the Son of God is as truly Divine as the Father, equal in Divinity.

versus

Arius (Arianism)- a priest of Alexandria

He taught that the LOGOS (Word) is neither truly God nor truly human but rather the first and highest creature. Arius understood Jesus as a Created being. Therefore not the same with God and not God himself.

To refute the heresy of Arius, the Council of Nicaea declares the “Full Divinity of Christ.”

“God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, one in being (Homoousios) with the Father.”

St. Athanasius says: “Only God can save us. If Jesus is not divine, he cannot save us.” Jesus, fully divine, becomes human so that we may become divinized.

Homoousios means that the Son is “Consubstantial” and “one in being” with the Father.

The Importance of Nicaea

God communicates personally in the human existence of the man Jesus. This self-communication of God in God's incarnate Son unveils the self-communication between persons that exists in the mystery of God's inner life.

2. The First Council of Constantinople(381)

It speaks about the “INTEGRAL HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST” versus

Apollinarius of Laodicea

He denied the human soul of Jesus. “We are made of a flesh and two souls: the nous and the pneuma. In the incarnation, the Logos takes the place of the nous – the rational soul – in Jesus. Jesus then has no human soul and thus not fully human.

Pope Damasus I together with the Council rejected the doctrine of Apollinarius, because it was necessary that Christ, in order to redeem human beings, should have a complete human nature. Christ's humanity is made up of body and a soul with its lower and higher faculties. A full humanity is united to the eternal Son of God.

What is the significance?

According to St. Gregory of Nazianzus:

“What is not assumed is not healed,” “If Jesus did not take on what is human, we would not be saved.”

If the Logos took only our bodies and not our souls, then our souls wouldn't have been healed. Jesus had to take in all that we are in order to turn it into all that he is.

3. The Council of Ephesus(431)

It declares the “Personal union of the Two Natures in Christ”

Versus

Nestorius – patriarch of Constantinople

He believed that Mary should not be called “Theotokos” but rather “Christotokos.”

The Heresy of Nestorius concerned about the question of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

In what sense and in what manner has the Son of God become human in Jesus?

For Nestorius, the humanity of Jesus is no doubt real, but the man Jesus is not the Word of God become man, one and the same, nor was the Word personally humanized. Rather, the Word was present in the man Jesus as in a temple, and operative in Him.

Council of Ephesus

Cyril of Alexandria affirms that the Word of God has united to Himself, the humanity of Jesus “according to the hypostasis” (*the unity of person*).

It also affirmed Mary as “Theotokos.” If Jesus, who is truly God, has truly become man through Mary, then Mary can be called the Mother of God.

The Significance

That Jesus is the personal bridge, the personal Mediator between God and Humanity. Jesus is a Divine Person. Jesus is God humanized, not man divinized.

The authentic humanization of God in Jesus Christ is at once the foundation of God's self-communication to humankind and the revelation to it the mystery of God.

4. The Council of Chalcedon(451)

It affirms the “Indivise-inconfuse”

- That Jesus is truly God, Jesus is truly human, Jesus is one person in whom both divine and human exist without division, without confusion. **VERSUS**
- **Eutyches**, who teaches Monophysitism – “the union of the divine and human natures in Christ results only in one incarnate nature.”

Eutyches, a monk of Constantinople, teaches that there is only one nature in Jesus Christ. The Divinity absorbed the humanity of Jesus. Thus, there is only one nature in Christ.

Council of Chalcedon teaches that the incarnate Word of God is only one individual but has two “things”, His Divine and Human natures. There are Human and Divine nature in one person, Jesus Christ. They both exist in Jesus Christ.

“Without division or separation” explains that the two natures are not one beside the other.

“Without confusion or change” stresses the fact that the distinction of natures endures and that the properties of each are maintained.

5. Second Council of Constantinople (553)

Heresies: Monophysitism and
Nestorianism

The council speaks about the Canon 4 which says that the human nature subsists in the “hypostasis” of the Word. The Word communicates its own personal existence to the humanity of Jesus. Jesus Christ therefore, is a composite divine-human person, as truly human as He is divine. The unity of person presides- and prevails over – the distinction of natures.

6. The Third Council of Constantinople (681)

It was convoked by Emperor Constantine IV, with the consent of Pope Agatho, this Council defined the Two Wills and Actions in Christ.

VERSUS

Monotheletism by Macarius and
Sergius

It speaks about the only “One Will” in Jesus Christ.

Solution:

According to St. Maximus, the Confessor, the Two Natural Wills, the divine and the human, work in full concordance (work in communion, unity, harmony, agreement).

If Christ has two natures, He has also two wills and modes of actions, belonging respectively to each nature, both of which are intimately united on one and the same Christ God. It was necessary that the salvation of humankind proceed also from a true human will, freely acting.