

# The Council of Chalcedon

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Historical and Theological Overview

# Agenda

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- Quick recap
- Before Chalcedon
- Chalcedon
- Chalcedonian *Aftermath*
- Different Interpretations of Chalcedon

# Quick Recap

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- The formula of reunion
- The Alexandrian interpretation
- The Antiochian interpretation
- No new definition of faith after Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed
- Ephesus is universally accepted

# Quick Recap - Cyril

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- Oneness of Christ – Hypostatic union – Natural Union
- One Incarnate Nature of God the Word
- Christ from two natures
- Christ has double consubstantiality with God and us
- Christ is the subject of all divine and human actions and words

# Quick Recap - Antioch

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- Christ is one on the level of person (sometimes hypostasis)
- Christ is two natures or in two natures
- Emphasis on the attribution of divine things to divinity and human things to humanity
- Christ has double consubstantiality with God and us

# Before Chalcedon

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- Cyril → Dioscorus – Alexandria
- Nestorius → Flavian – Constantinople
- Celestine → Leo – Rome
- Eutyches – Archimandrite in Constantinople
- Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa

# Ephesus 449

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- Eutyches is excommunicated by Flavian in Constantinople 448
- Eutyches appeals his position in Alexandria
- Eutyches presents two statements of faith – One unorthodox in Constantinople and One Orthodox in Ephesus
- Dioscorus readmits Eutyches and excommunicated Flavian thinking he rejected Eutyches' "Orthodoxy"
- The reading of the tome
- Theodoret and Ibas are excommunicated
- Dioscorus is excommunicated by Leo and Dioscorus excommunicates him back
- The Church is divided and an ecumenical council is needed

# Chalcedon 451

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- Leo sends delegates while Dioscorus attends in person
- Leo sends a letter known now as the Tome again to Chalcedon—the place of the tome is debated between Greeks and Latins to this day
- Dioscorus is condemned for canonical misconduct alone—despite the attendance of numerous bishops in 449—and exiled to Gangara
- Antiochians are divided over the decisions of the council
- Theodoret and Ibas are readmitted to communion



# Chalcedon

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- New definition of faith
- No mention of the hypostatic union, natural union, one incarnate nature of God the Word
- Debate over Christ being from two natures or in two natures and accepting the latter
- Ambiguous Tome: “The one shines with miracles while the other succumbs to injuries”

# The Aftermath

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- Chalcedonian Churches: Rome, Constantinople, Greece,  $\frac{1}{2}$  Antioch, few Alexandrians (eventually, Russia, Serbia, Romania, etc.)
- Non-Chalcedonian Churches: Alexandria,  $\frac{1}{2}$  Antioch, Ethiopia, Armenia (Eventually India, and Eritrea)
- Persisting schism to this day
- Multiple encounters hoping to resolve the schism until the schism is solidified and some of the Churches in the debate fall under the yoke of Islam

# Chalcedon – Multiple Interpretations

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- Rome: Authoritative – any compromise is compromise of papal authority
- Constantinople/Greece: Authoritative – a stage in doctrinal development – not the beginning or the end – only interpreted as per subsequent councils
- Alexandria: Not authoritative
- Antioch: Not authoritative – But administrative canons are okay and we will take them
- Armenia: Not authoritative – But we will hear your explanation of it

# The Situation Today

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- The schism continues but...
- There are agreed statements on the essence of christology even if we disagree on terms
- There are pastoral agreements in Alexandria and Antioch
- All formulas have Orthodox and unorthodox interpretations
- All formulas fall short before the mystery of Christ