

THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

Date: October 8 - November 1, 451 – Held in Chalcedon in Asia Minor (Modern Day Turkey)

Organizer: Emperor Marcian called for this council and 500 bishops were in attendance

The Significance: At stake was the humanity of Jesus. Did Jesus share in the human nature? Was his nature really like ours? Eutyches believed his human nature amounted to nothing.

The Person charged with heresy: Eutyches, a presbyter and archimandrite at Constantinople.

The Issue: The main issue revolved around a teaching from the Bishop Eutyches, which stated Christ only had one nature, that nature being divine, not human. Interestingly, there was a second council of Ephesus 449, (though not considered an ecumenical one), which voted in favor of Eutyches' teaching. This council (Chalcedon 451) agreed to put aside the verdict reached at Ephesus two years earlier. This meeting was to settle the matter once and for all.

Another verdict reached: In the famous 28th canon passed by the council, the bishops sought to raise the See of Constantinople (New Rome) in stature, claiming that Constantinople enjoyed honor and authority similar to that of the See of (older) Rome. This canon was opposed by Pope Leo's legates and later rejected by the pope in 453.

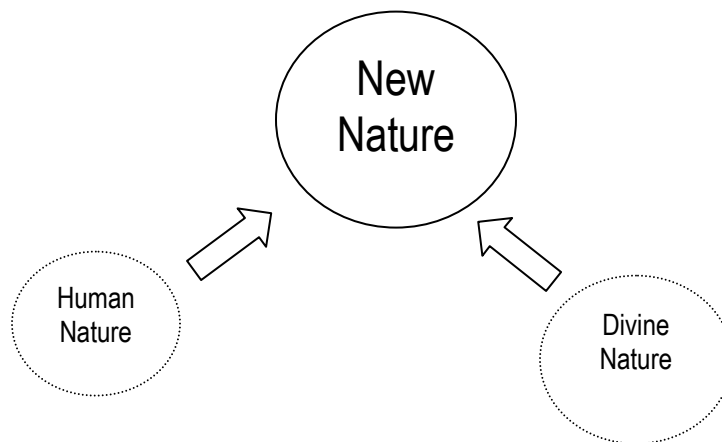
Illustrating Eutyches' Position

If one were to pour a drop of black dye into a glass of water, the result would be water that is no longer completely water, and dye that is no longer completely dye because both elements have been altered by the other. Consequently, two separate substances had merged to produce one diluted substance.

In the same way, Eutyches taught that the divine nature of Christ absorbed the human nature. In the end, two substances (human and divine) merged to create one nature—albeit a diluted form.

The Argument of Eutyches

1. The two natures of Christ were intimately united (Unlike Nestorianism)
2. The union was so intimate they became physically one
3. The human nature was completely absorbed by the Divine.
4. This resulted in a third kind of nature as Christ had one personality and one nature.



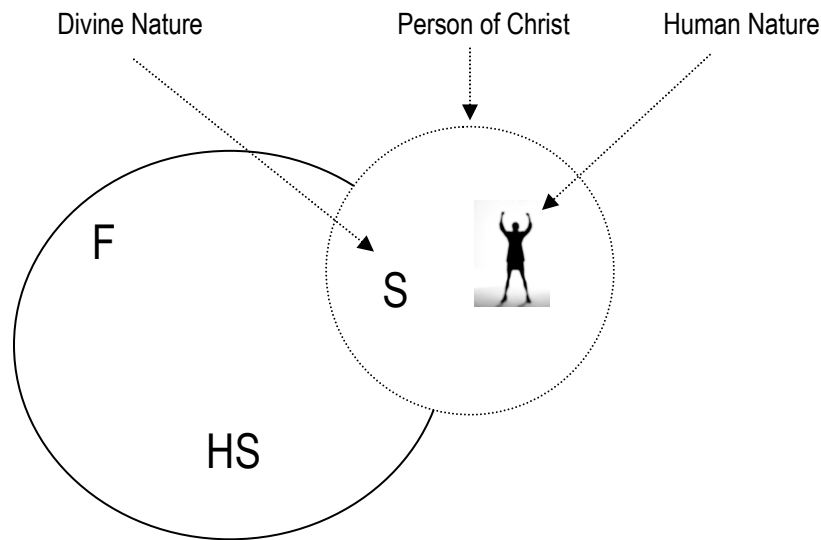
5. Biblical Support:

Philippians 2:5-7

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.

Established Orthodoxy

1. Jesus consisted of two natures, the human and divine
2. Each nature is pure and not distorted by the other
3. Jesus is fully man and fully God.
4. Biblical Support
 - a. Jesus' human nature is ascended to heaven and no longer here (John 16:28; 17:11; Acts 1:9-11, yet the Bible describes Jesus as still present: Matthew 18:20, 28:20)
 - b. Jesus was about 30 years old (Luke 3:23), yet he eternally existed (John 1:1, 8:58)
 - c. Humanly speaking Jesus was weak and tired, yet his divine nature was omnipotent (Matthew 8:26-27; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3).



The Outcome

The Bishops condemned the teachings of Eutyches. He had to give up his position as leader of a monastery in Constantinople. Eutyches was condemned as a heretic and the Nicene Creed was upheld

In addition they wrote a creed that guarded against Apollinarianism (Macedonius), Nestorianism, and Eutychianism (a.k.a. Monophysitism).

Practical Application

1. The verdict affirmed that Christ was every bit of human as you are
2. That he could relate to you because his human nature had no advantage in his temptation.

The Chalcedonian Creed

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin;

begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.