

WORKSHEET (78) – FOURTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL (CHALCEDON 451)

From the Greek Archdiocese of North America's web site....

<http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith8067>

Held in Chalcedon, near Constantinople, 451. Under Emperor Marcian. 630 Bishops were present.

MONOPHYSITE CONTROVERSIES

The Council was concerned, once again, with the nature of Jesus Christ. The teaching arose that Christ's human nature (less perfect) dissolved itself in His divine nature (more perfect): like a cube of sugar in a pot of water. Thus, in reality, Christ had only one nature, the Divine. Hence, the term: Monophysites ("mono", one and "physis", "nature".) Monophysitism overemphasized the divine nature of Christ, at the expense of the human.

PROCLAMATION

The Council condemned Monophysitism and proclaimed that Christ has two complete natures: the divine and the human, as defined by previous Councils. These two natures function without confusion, are not divided nor separate (against Nestorius), and at no time did they undergo any change (against Eutyches: Monophysites).

DEFINITION FROM THE 4TH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL IN CHALCEDON

"We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach people 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, unconfusedly, 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 (*prosopon*) and one Subsistence (*hypostasis*), not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten God (μονογενῆ Θεόν), 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."

* Nicene Creed

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare this with the Nicene Creed. What clarifications does it add?
2. What Nicene teaching is simply repeated?
3. "to be acknowledged in two natures, unconfusedly, 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" – what does this mean in real terms (use examples from the life, death and resurrection of Christ)?
4. "concurring in one Person (*prosopon*) and one Subsistence (*hypostasis*), not parted or divided into two persons" – this restates the Orthodox refutation of Nestorianism (3rd Council). What is the difference between these words: - PERSON, INDIVIDUAL, NATURE?