



Ecclesiastical History

Part 5

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Holy Council of Ephesus II



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Who is Eutyches?



- He is an Archimandrite of Constantinople who was known as a strong defender of the divinity of Christ and the Orthodox Theology of Saint Cyril the Great
- But in the dawn of 448 A.D. he fell into a grave heresy himself because of his blind zeal for St. Cyril's Orthodox theology.

What was the Eutychian heresy?

- He taught that Christ's humanity was absorbed entirely and thus eliminated by His divinity.
- This heresy is the belief in a divine-only nature to Christ Jesus our LORD.
- This is what Eutyches calmed: "His (i.e. Christ's) humanity was so much mingled in his divinity that it ceased to exist".
- He gave this analogy "Like a drop of vinegar that dissolves in an ocean, his humanity ceased to exist amidst the vastness of His divinity."
- This is a grave heresy as it renders Salvation ineffective because if Christ had no full and unchanged humanity then he could not possibly be the Atonement needed.
- Also, if the Divinity were to absorb the humanity by mingling with it then God would have to change which is an absolute impossibility as God is UNCHANGABLE and UNALTERABLE.

Eutyches and Flavian of Constantinople



- While Eutyches was spreading his heresy according to his power as the abbot of a monastery in Constantinople, the news of his heresy reached the ears of his patriarch, Flavian of Constantinople.
- He called a provincial council in the fall of 448 A.D. to investigate Eutyches' claims, found him guilty of heresy, divested of all ecclesiastical rank and excommunicated him.
- Up until now this is acceptable however, Flavian concludes the council with a decree that triggers a chain of events that led to the first split of the church.
- Flavian concludes thus **“In two natures AFTER the union”**
This is absolute heresy as two natures after the unity would imply separation and lack of unity.

Leo I, Bishop of Rome



- To set this even more a blaze, Eutyches does not give up but sends to all senior bishops and to the emperor a letter of appeal with respect to his excommunication by Flavian.
- Among those that he appeals to is our Pope Dioscorus I and Leo, the bishop of Rome.
- Leo had been attempting to gain the favour, sway, and power over Pope Dioscorus ever since Pope Dioscorus' ascension to the Holy Apostolic Throne in 444 A.D. (when St. Cyril departed to the LORD).
- Leo sent a “congratulatory” letter to Pope Dioscorus dated the 21st of June 445 A.D.
- But this letter was full of deceit to the extent that Pope Dioscorus decide to ignore it in its entirety.
- When Eutyches sent to Leo his appeal, Leo was glad because he saw it as an opportunity to gain some respect among the leading theologians of his time and so he decided to write on Eutyches behalf to the emperor.
- However, his good favour toward Eutyches would soon change to bitter hatred.

Eutyches and Ephesus II

- In the early spring of 449 AD. the Emperor Theodosius II had received a letter from Pope Dioscorus asking for an Ecumenical Council to discuss the matter.
- The emperor agreed and assigned the presidency of the council to Pope Dioscorus.
- The council began with reading of the Acts of the Ecumenical Councils and of their Canons.
- Then, Eutyches presented a written plea to the council that was in everyway orthodox (however, that was not at all what he stated verbally in Constantinople), so the Bishops unanimously agreed that he is not guilty of heresy and must regain his position as Archimandrite.
- Accordingly, Pope Dioscorus absolved him and reinstated him in his position as Archimandrite.

Flavian and Ephesus II

- However, the status of Flavian was not at all positive, he was found guilty of heresy, excommunicated and de-vested of all ecclesiastical power.
- The council ended with the re-affirmation of the Ephesus dogma of “One Nature of God the Incarnate Word, without confusion, change, mixing or alteration”.
- The Chalcedonians claim that at the conclusion of the council the imperial supporters of Eutyches mortally wounded Flavian.
- Seeing that Flavian died, Pope Dioscorius ordained his Alexandrian secretary in Constantinople as Patriarch of Constantinople instead of Flavian.
- This was taken by Leo and the Nestorians as Alexandrian Pharaonic Imperialism.

Leo's heresy and Excommunication

- In any case, Leo of Rome embraced Flavian and his heresy in defiance of an Ecumenical Council.
- So when the news of Leo's situation reached the ear of Pope Dioscorus he gathered an Alexandrian Council which found Leo guilty of heresy and accordingly Pope Dioscorus EXCOMMUNICATED Leo.
- This excommunication shows the great power of our Coptic Popes.
- Leo along with his Nestorian allies knew very well that they were in deep water and that they must find a way to avenge themselves from Pope Dioscorus.
- So they requested from the Emperor Theodosius II the gathering of another Ecumenical Council in order to clarify the matter.
- The emperor, however, knew very well that the faith was in mint condition and that they were driven by revenge against Pope Dioscorus so he denied their request to hold another council.

Calling the Ecumenical Council

- The Emperor Theodosius II himself begged the bishops of every country to come to a **second** time to Ephesus.
- The choice of Ephesus was favourable to the bishops just like Nicea was favourable once before.



Famous Attendees of the Council

- **Pope St. Dioscorus I of Alexandria (Egyptian)**
- **Bishop Saint Macarius of Edfo (Egyptian).**
- **Bishop John of Antioch**
- **Bishop of Ephesus**
- **Bishop Leo of Rome did not attend but sent representatives**



Pope St. Dioscorus I of Alexandria

- **Saint Dioscorus I** known as “**the Great**” is **25th Pope of Alexandria**.
- This saint is a confessor because he was persecuted for the Orthodox faith.
- He holds the title “**Champion of the Faith**” and he was the **archdeacon of his predecessor Saint Cyril I, 24th Pope of Alexandria**.
- **He presided over this council and was guided by the Holy Spirit.**



Bishop Saint Macarius of Edfo

- Saint Macarius, Bishop of Edfo is one of the three saint Macarii in the Commemoration of the Saints.
- He attended this council along side Pope Saint Dioscorus I as a member of the Coptic delegation to the council representing the Coptic Holy Synod along with **10 metropolitans and 10 bishops.**



The Significance of the Crisis

- Confirmed the full divinity and full humanity in Christ is essential for our Salvation as only God Incarnate (i.e. in the flesh) could perform such an Atonement.



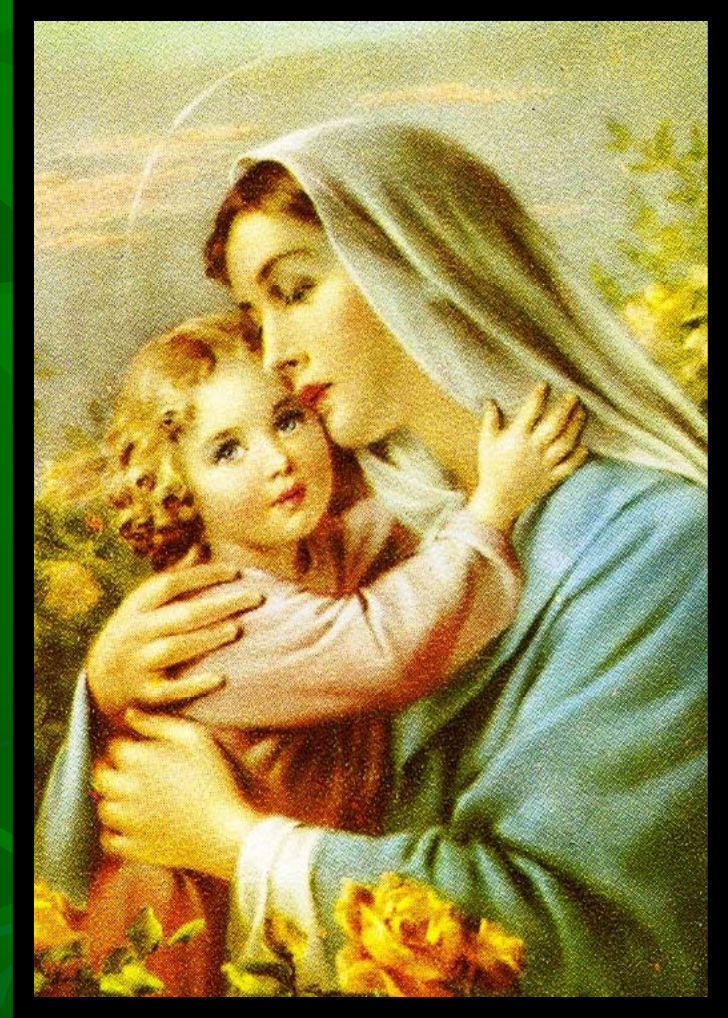
The Purpose of the Second Ephesian Council

- Confirming the faith of the Holy Ecumenical Council of Ephesus I.
- To settle the disputes of Eutyches and Flavian.
- As well as undermining the influences of the Nestorian heresy.



The Events of the Second Ephesian Council

- At this stage, in **449 A.D.**, was held the second great council that dealt with Nestorianism which is **the Holy Council of Ephesus II**.
- The governing president of this council was **Pope St. Dioscorus I of Alexandria**, the *Champion of the Faith*.





Emperor Theodosius II and the Second Council of Ephesus

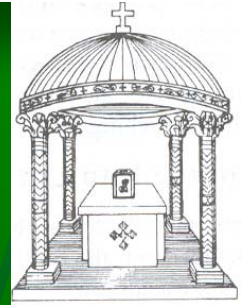


- The Council was opened by the righteous Emperor Theodosius II known as “the Orthodox King” as well as by the name “Theodosius the Younger”.
- His brother is Saint Karas the Anchorite the son of Emperor Arcadius and Empress Eudoxia of Constantinople.
- He was Orthodox and a strong defender of the faith against Nestorianism and all other heresies.
- He dies after this council ends and with him dies the unity of the Church for the next 16 centuries.





The Canons of Second Ephesus



- **Canon 1:** is an important dogmatic condemnation of all shades of Nestorianism.



The Opposition



- The representatives of Leo, Bishop of Rome who ran out of the council.
- Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople who was excommunicated.
- Nestorius and his writings were also branded with anathema.

The Conclusion



- Peace and unity in the Church would seem to be established for a time until 1 year later (450 A.D.) the Emperor Theodosius II dies and with him dies the unity of the Church.



Thanks for Listening