

# “Jerusalem Meets Rome and Finds Babylon: A Study in Church Purity”

Fall 2022-Spring 2023

April 5, 2023

## The Council of Constantinople 381 AD

### II. The First Council of Constantinople

#### A. Who Called for the Council and who Attended.

1. Emperor Theodosius I
2. About 150 eastern bishops summoned, no western bishops participated.
3. In both the East and the West, the council came to be regarded as ecumenical.

#### B. What issues were they to address?

##### 1. The Trinity

- a. The unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three persons in one Godhead
- b. A central affirmation about God rooted in God’s revelation of Himself.
  - i. As Creator – Lord of the History of salvation, Father, and Judge.
  - ii. As Lord – through the incarnation of Jesus Christ and His resurrection
  - iii. As the Holy Spirit – through His role a helper and intercessor in the power of the new life.
- c. The word “trinity” nor the explicit doctrine appears in the NT.
  - i. Jesus nor His followers did not intend to contradict the “Shema” of the Hebrew Scriptures – De 6:4
  - ii. They still had to deal with the implications of
    - Christ’s coming, (incarnation)
    - the power of the Holy Spirit upon Him,
    - The scriptures that equated the three – Mt 28:19-10; 2 Co 13:14
  - d. The doctrine had fallen out of favor since the Council of Nicaea
  - e. This council reaffirmed the trinity to put an end to the division in the church doctrinally that existed since “Constantine the Great.”
  - f. it did not in fact create theological unity; and soon new issues surfaced, particularly over the question of Christology.

##### 2. Development of the Doctrine

- a. The requirements of Monotheism as taught in the Hebrew scriptures.
- b. The implications of the need to recognize that the divine in Christ as the word, or Logos was subordinate to the Supreme Being – Phil 2:5-8; Heb 1:3
  - i. 1<sup>st</sup> tendency – recognize the distinctiveness among the three at the cost of equality and unity.
  - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> tendency – come to terms w/ Their unity at the cost of Their distinctiveness
    - Modalism.

#### C. Determinations - Seven canons, four of these doctrinal and three disciplinary.

##### 1. Canon 1 - Doctrinally adopted the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (the Nicene Creed)

- a. Affectively affirmed and developed the earlier creed from the Council of Nicaea

- i. Probably not intentionally enlargement,
- ii. an independent document based on a baptismal creed already in existence.
- b. Also declared the Trinitarian doctrine of the equality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son

2. Canon 2 – Dealing with Bishops

- a. they are not to be going beyond their allotted area.
- b. they are not to cause confusion by leaving their area and teaching something different than what their bishop is teaching.
- c. new churches are to be governed according to the custom which has prevailed from the times of the Fathers.

3. Canon 3 – Gave the bishop of Constantinople precedence over all other bishops except of Rome, b/c “Constantinople is the New Rome.”

4. Canon 4 - Dealing with a cynic.

- a. Maximus the Cynic
  - i. caused problems in Constantinople.
  - ii. he is not a bishop.
- b. His followers
  - i. Those ordained by him are not clergy.
  - ii. Everything he has done is invalid.

5. Canon 5 – acceptance of those of the west that agree with this council concerning the trinity.

6. Canon 6 – Accusations against Bishops

- a. Limits are given in bringing an accusation against bishops.
- b. those who bring such charges must be prepared to have their own characters and orthodox examined.

7. Canon 7 – Acceptance of those turning from heresy to orthodoxy.

- a. Some after a written renunciation of their error and anathema of said heresy.
  - i. They are to be sealed or anointed with the holy oil upon the forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, and ears.
  - ii. saying “The Seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
- b. Others we receive as heathens.
  - i. 1<sup>st</sup> day – make them Christian.
  - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> day - catechumens
  - iii. 3<sup>rd</sup> day – exorcise them by breathing 3 times in their face.
  - iv. After - spend time in the church
  - v. Then baptize them.

D. Reactions to Determinations

- 1. are attributed to the Council and accepted by both the [Eastern Orthodox Church](#) and the [Oriental Orthodox Churches](#).
- 2. The [Roman Catholic Church](#), however, accepts only the doctrinal statements:

#### E. Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (the Nicene Creed)

We [believe](#) in one [God](#), the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one [Lord Jesus Christ](#), the only begotten [Son of God](#), begotten of his Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very [God](#), begotten not made, being of one substance with the [Father](#), by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our [salvation](#) came down from heaven and was incarnate by the [Holy Ghost](#) and the [Virgin Mary](#), and was made man, and was crucified also for us under [Pontius Pilate](#). He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the [Scriptures](#), and ascended into heaven, and sits at the Right Hand of the Father. And he shall come again with [glory](#) to judge both the quick and the dead. Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And [we [believe](#)] in the [Holy Ghost](#), the Lord and Giver-of-Life, who proceeds from the [Father](#), who with the Father and the [Son](#) together is worshipped and [glorified](#), who spoke by the [prophets](#). And [we [believe](#)] in one, [holy](#), [Catholic](#) and Apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of [sins](#), [and] we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. [Amen](#).

#### F. The Nicæan Creed

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, **begotten** from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made human.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life.

He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.

He spoke through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come. Amen.