

The Creeds of the Faith Part 6

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[0 : 0 0] So, welcome everyone. Let's open in prayer. Father in heaven, we gather once again this Sunday morning to learn about your saints of old who've come before us to learn from their wisdom. We pray that you give us guidance by your eternal spirit who guides into all truth. You would keep us united. You would help us to be prayerful, full of joy and life by your life-giving spirit. And we ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

We are now, I think this is class five in our creed series. It's, and the first class we did an overview of creeds. Maybe this is class six. We did an overview of creeds. Then in the first class we did pre-Nicene creeds, creeds before Nicaea. And then we talked about the Nicene creed. And then we also talked about the Apostles' creed after that, which did not come out of a council. Then we discussed Constantinople. And today we're going to talk about Ephesus and Chalcedon. And I have on the board just a little chronological chart. Nicaea is the first big empire-wide council. There were lots of councils before that, but this discussed the deity of Jesus. And remember the, the guy who's associated as the heretic against the council is Arius. Constantinople was the deity of the Holy Spirit.

And this council effectively took the Nicene creed and expanded it. And then today we'll be talking about Ephesus and in 431 AD and then Chalcedon in 451. So the period of the four great councils in church history goes from 325 with Nicaea, 381 Constantinople, 431 Ephesus, 451 Chalcedon.

So about 125 year period, these councils are happening. We have maps today because maps are awesome. And actually I charted all this out with, with Nicaea and Constantinople. And then today we're going to look at Ephesus. So you might be wondering, what did they talk about with Ephesus? Well, they talked about the Virgin Mary because if you were running around Constantinople and Ephesus in the early 400s, people were thinking about, you know, the deity of Jesus, the deity of the Holy Spirit, and there was some folks who started giving Mary this honorific, this title called Theotokos in Greek.

And that can be translated a variety of ways. The most literal way is, is the God begetter God begetter. It's also translated as, as a mother of God, which feels more theological. It feels like it accords Mary a higher honor than simply God begetter. This was controversial. This word, Theotokos, had not been used of Mary for a long time. If you do an intensive word study to try and track down when did people, when did that phrase, Theotokos, first emerge? The very first time it emerges is around 300 AD.

[3 : 3 1] There is a theologian who wrote a book. We don't have the book, but we have the title, and the title has the term Theotokos in it. We don't know if he opposed the term, if he coined the term, if he thought it was a great term. We just know that's the first time someone used it. So it's a new term. It's not something that Christians used in the first 250 or 300 years, as far as we're aware.

And it was controversial, not just because it's new, but why would someone think the term mother of God might be controversial? Like something maybe you wouldn't want to say.

Well, Mary is a human being. So Mary's a human being, and if she's the mother of God, And Jesus is a total human being. It implies that Mary existed before God, that like God has a mother. It just brings up all these, all these difficulties, potentially. However, if we look at it from the other side of things, then there were people who said, well, look, you believe Jesus is fully God, right? That's what these councils were about. He's fully God. So if Mary is his mother, then we need to call her the mother of God. And they would argue that people who didn't want to use that term were denying the deity of Jesus. So you see this, this impasse here. And I just want to throw a bit of biblical wisdom in this. Paul talks about not getting in fights over words that he wants you to get at the substance of things and talk about. But here we have what seems to be a big fight over terminology. And on the one hand, there was Nestorius. So just how Arius, the Council of Nicaea opposed Arius, the Council of Ephesus opposed Nestorius. And Protestants will often categorize Nestorius as a heretic. You might be interested to learn that Nestorius said we shouldn't use this term. It's too confusing. And I have passed out a letter of Nestorius. It's the one with the staple on it, the dogmatic letters of Nestorius and Cyril of

Alexandria. We are not going to read this whole thing. You can read it on your own time if you like. But what we are going to do is we're going to go to page 347. And I want to read an excerpt where, I think it's 347, maybe it's the next one. And no, it's 348. Top of 348. Second line of 348.

And here he's talking about the term Theotokos. And listen to what he says about it. He says, They even dare to treat of the Christ-bearing Virgin in a way as along with God. For they do not scruple to call her Theotokos. When the holy and beyond all praise fathers at Nicaea, that's the Council of Nicaea, said no more of the Holy Virgin than that our Lord Jesus Christ was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Not to mention the scriptures which everywhere, both by angels and apostles, speak of the Virgin as mother of Christ, not of God the Word. Here Nestorius is saying that, you know, scriptures don't really use this term. And when you use this term, it associates her with God, like elevates her on the status of God the Father. So God the Father is the Father of Jesus.

[7 : 20] And then you have Mary, the mother of God. It feels like she's entering into the Trinity, which she should not be. We're going to find out that maybe Nestorius has gotten a little bit of a bad rap from people as of late. Because I guess if I'm honest, I kind of agree with him on this, that it's a confusing term. However, you might be wondering, why did the Council decide against Nestorius? And why they decided against him? I think we will find out in the very next sentence.

Because if we go on to, I presume, which is right after footnote seven, listen to this thing. This is a humdinger. He says, I presume that rumor has already informed your blessedness. He's talking to the Bishop of Rome here. What conflicts we have endured for these things. And you have also learned that we have not struggled in vain, but many of those who had gone astray have by the grace of the Lord repented.

Here we go. Learning from us that what is born is properly consubstantial with the parent, and that it was to the creature of the Lord's humanity joined with God, being of the Virgin by the Spirit, that what was seen among men was committed. Exactly. This is a very difficult sentence to follow and understand. And this is how Nestorius writes. He's a rambler. He's confused. If you're writing papers for class, do not write like this. This translation is a good one. I mean, it reflects his thoughts and what the sentence is really like. It's really hard to figure out what he's trying to say. What is committed? What is he talking about? And what are the reference here? I mean, it's just very hard. And his writings are frequently like this. So imagine Nestorius, who I should mention, was the Bishop of Constantinople. So he is a huge deal, huge deal. But he's coming out trying to make these arguments. And there are some other theologians, like Cyril of Alexandria, who are just running circles around the guy, because he just can't get it out. He can't express his points of view particularly well. Who, Cyril? Nestorius. Nestorius, yes. He's very confused. He rambles. It's difficult to understand what he's saying. This council also had, there was a lot of politics behind it. So anyway, he goes on to say, let's continue to read what he says. So then he says, if anyone wishes to use this word, Theotokos, with reference to the humanity which was born and joined to God the Word. So he's trying to say, if you want to use the word Theotokos simply in reference to how Mary is the mother of Jesus's humanity and that humanity was joined to deity, and you're not using it with reference to the parent, we say that this word is not appropriate for her who gave birth, since a true mother should be of the same essence as what is born of her. I think I've actually switched Nestorius's logic here. He's saying, if you want to use the word Theotokos to talk about Mary and how she's the mother of the deity, you shouldn't. But, he goes on, but the term could be accepted in consideration of this, that the word is used by the virgin only because of the inseparable temple of God the Word, which was of her, not because she is the mother of

God the Word. For none gives birth to one older than herself. I know this is very confusing, and I think I switched one or two things earlier on, but what Nestorius is saying here is, okay, fine, if you really want to use this term, you can, as long as you're very careful that what you're talking about here is how Mary was the mother of the humanity of Jesus, and the humanity of Jesus was joined with the Godhead, and so in that sense, she's mother of God, but not in the sense that she gave birth to deity, that she started deity, that she began the existence of God, which is what mothers normally do. They begin the existence of someone. So, Nestorius here actually takes, though very confused and difficult to follow, he takes kind of a moderate line. He's like, well, we got to be careful here.

So, the council goes on, they consider these things, and they decide against Nestorius, and they decide that not only should you use theotokos, but you must use theotokos, that it's not okay for some people to do it. Everyone needs to do it, and this is a pretty extreme position, because what if someone doesn't want to use it? What if to them that word communicates bad things? So, the council decides that, and Nestorius gets kicked out. This is all very complicated. We have to summarize several things here, and what ends up happening is that the Persian church, which is the church of the east, which is part of the Sasanian Persian Empire. You see on the map here, this is a massive empire with a huge number of Christians that we don't know very much about in the west, but they did leave a very vibrant legacy that still continues to this day. This church decides, actually, we don't want to use the term theotokos. We don't think it's a good one, so we're not going to use it. And that causes a massive split, where this church split off from the rest of the church and remains split to this very day.

[13 : 14] They still exist. Didn't that start in 1051? No. That was the split between the Latin church and the Greek church, the Byzantine church in Europe.

That was a European split. So, the Great Schism, when people say the Great Schism, they're talking about the European east and European west split that happened in 1050-something. But this schism could also rightly be called the Great Schism because of how massive it was. And the interesting thing is that the Church of the East is often called the Nestorian church. And the curious thing about this is that Nestorius was from Constantinople. He wasn't Persian. So, it's unclear if they should really be called the Nestorian church. Nestorianism classically believes that there were two persons in Jesus.

There was a divine Jesus and a human Jesus that combined together. That's the heresy of Nestorianism. However, Nestorius himself, it's not entirely clear if he actually believed that. With Arius, it's pretty clear this is exactly what Arius believed. But with Nestorius, it's not... He's a very confused writer. He's a very confused writer. And it's not entirely clear what is going on.

There's another issue is what did people who followed Nestorian, Nestorius' teachings believe? What did Nestorians believe? And that's also a confused issue, which I'll explain once we get to Chalcedon.

I know we're covering a lot of material here, but we actually have a lot left to go over with Chalcedon. So, I want to pause and see if there's any questions about this. So, in other words, Arius, big bad heretic.

[15 : 12] Nestorius, maybe, maybe. But certainly his teachings are of a completely different order than Arius. We're not talking about similar levels of misguided teaching.

Misguided teaching. We're gonna get to that.

Oh, okay, no, no, no. Sorry, sorry. Yes, yes, we're gonna get to that. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. So, if God is sinless, and Jesus is sinless, that would make Mary sinless, just by common sense.

But according to the Bible, after she gave birth, she went to the temple to sacrifice whatever it was, turtle doves, which makes her sinful, not sinless, because she went to the temple to offer sacrifice.

And then Jesus always went to the temple, but he never sacrificed. He was the sacrifice. He always went to synagogue or the temple to teach. He never went to sacrifice. But Mary did. So, that Theotoko was the mother of God, because she's sinful. So, one of the interesting things, so Nestorius's letter, you know, he says in his letter that, hey, this term associates Mary with the Godhead in a way that human beings should not be associated with. And his warning has kind of turned out to be true. When you look at a Mariology in the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, where Mary has this very, very exalted role, where she's in the Roman Catholic Church said to be sinless, that she was assumed into heaven, that she's the mother of heaven, you know, that she has all these titles.

[17 : 05] Some people call her co-redeemer. It's interesting that that has borne out that kind of warning and caution against this term. On the other hand, there are Protestant traditions that use this term. Anglicans will use this term.

I can't remember if some Lutherans will use it. They might in some of their liturgy. And I do want us, like at Trent here, I think as mature Christians, we need to be careful not to have hair triggers for terminology. That people use words and they don't always mean the same things.

And we always want to be careful to know, like, what do you mean by that? What do you mean when you say Mary was the mother of God? Well, she did give birth to the God-man. So if that's what you mean, then okay. But if you mean something else, but we also want to, we want to be aware of how people interpret our terminology as well. So we want to, we want to be careful with that.

This whole terminology question is going to become another one with Chalcedon, which we're going to find out in just a moment. Any other last, last quick questions before we, before we go on? So Ephesus did not release a creed. They released certain letters. They released some statements, excommunications, things like that. They didn't actually have a creed like Nicaea and Constantinople, but they wanted Theotokos to be used. Chalcedon, 20 years later, comes around and is the last of the great councils. And this one discussed how the deity of Jesus and the humanity of Jesus could be combined together. Because if you think about it, you know, if you, I'm going to, I'm going to use two crude examples here. I have an eraser and I have a marker and they're two different things, right? Two different, you have the nature of an eraser here and the nature of a marker here. And if you want to combine these two things together, it's kind of hard to do. You could glue it, but then you just have a thing glued to an eraser. You could maybe actually secretly, this is actually a marker with an eraser on it. So you could do that, but then, I don't know, it's kind of like a hybrid. I mean, if you take a tiger and a lion and put them together, you get a liger. That's neither. It's like a hybrid. So saying that Jesus is both human and both divine, 100 percent, lacking in nothing with respect to the humanity and the divinity, feels contradictory to some people. It feels beyond mysterious. It feels contradictory. That can't happen.

And of course, the easy response to this is, well, yeah, you know, if God was an eraser, you couldn't do that. But God is on a completely different plane of existence. He's not in the material plane here. So you're not talking about two physical objects coming together like a lion and a tiger. You're talking about a being that is beyond our physical space-time continuum, and he's totally able to do this. That's what God is. That's what he does. He can do this. So it's not contradictory.

[20:10] However, this was heavily debated, highly debated. People disputed it. People started coming up with all sorts of terms. And I'm going to erase the board here, or at least part of it. Uh-oh. It's not erasing very well. The spray bottle? Okay. Behind it? Okay. Well, let me just see if I can...

So people started trying to use terminology to describe how the deity and humanity of Jesus were connected or linked or combined or whatever term you want to use. And the definition of Chalcedon got together to talk about this issue. And one thing we want to keep in mind is, uh, couldn't Astorius have submitted to this? And we're going to find out that maybe yes. And then, uh, what do we think about this definition? So let's read it. Uh, following therefore the Holy Fathers, we confess one and the same, our Lord Jesus Christ. So there's not two, there's one guy.

And we all teach harmoniously that he is the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same of a reasonable soul and body, consubstantial with the father in Godhead, and the same consubstantial with us in manhood, like us in all things, except sin.

Let's, uh, keep going. Begotten before ages of the father in Godhead, the same in the last days for us and for our salvation, born of Mary, the virgin theotokos in manhood, one in the same Christ, son, Lord, unique, acknowledged in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. The difference of the natures being by no means taken away because of the union, but rather the distinctive character of each nature being preserved and each combining in one person and hypostasis. We'll talk about that, not divided or separated into two persons, but one in the same son and only begotten God word, Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets of old and the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us about him and the symbol or the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

So that is one very, very long sentence, but it's a little easier to follow than the stories of sentences. And I want to kind of go through it, talking about what each of these things mean and why they're expressed.

[22 : 52] And then I am going to highlight a couple areas that are, are, are sources of, of confusion or conflict even today.

So let's begin at the top. So they say we're following the Holy father. So they believe they are expressing the faith that has been passed down to them. And what do they confess? The same, our Lord Jesus Christ, meaning we only have one Jesus.

We don't have two Jesuses, a human Jesus, a divine Jesus combining. No, no, no. One, one Lord. And this Lord, he's the definition says is the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, truly God, truly man.

That means he didn't have like 98% of humanity. He had the whole thing. We're not talking about a hybrid where you have 50% tiger, 50% lion combining together. That's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about where the deity and humanity is both perfectly expressed and they're careful.

They go on, they say truly God and truly man. They say the same of a reasonable soul. That's important because sometimes when people say, when people would say in the past that Jesus was truly human, people would interpret that as simply referring to the physical flesh.

[24 : 12] And what the definition is saying is we are more than just flesh. We have mind, soul, spirit. Jesus had all those things as well. This is what a Apollinarius got in trouble for because he thought that Jesus didn't have a human mind.

He had a divine mind. And this is saying, no, no, he is everything we have. He has with the exception of sin. He's not sinful.

It goes on to use that word consubstantial that we've seen before right here, consubstantial with the father. So that is of the same substance, of the same essence as the father with respect to the Godhead, with the deity.

But he is consubstantial with us with respect to his manhood. So he is united with God. He's the same nature as God the father with his divinity.

But with his humanity, he's the same substance as us. And then it says he was begotten before all ages of the father with respect to the Godhead.

[25 : 19] And this is very important. It means that Jesus existed before all ages as the divine word, as the supreme son of God. But he did not always exist humanly or his human nature did not always exist.

His human nature came into existence in the last days for us and for our salvation when he was born of Mary, the virgin. So that human aspect, that's the incarnation.

That's the aspect of God descending and taking on humanity. So he becomes physically human. And then he's born of Mary, the virgin.

And then they use that term, theotokos. So she is the God bearer or the mother of God. But they use this term in manhood. We'll come back to that. And then they reaffirm.

This is one and the same Christ, son, Lord. He's unique. Meaning that we're not talking about two people. They're trying to reiterate this. It's not two people.

[26 : 21] In two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation. This is another important thing. Because if you took two natures and combine them together in the physical world, there can be situations where you're mixing them up.

You're confusing them. You're getting some kind of solution out of them. You know, you put water and some other liquid together and you shake it all up and you have something else. You know, water and milk.

And they're saying, no, these natures are not compromised by this union. They are the same. And it says the difference of the natures is by no means taken away because of the union.

So he's fully God, fully man. But rather, the distinctive character of each nature is preserved, each combining in one person and hypostasis. We'll talk about that in a moment.

Not divided or separated into two persons. But one and the same son and only begotten God, word, Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets of old and the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us about him.

[27 : 25] And the symbol, the creed of the fathers, has handed down to us. So in Western tradition, this is like bar none the definitive statement about the nature of Jesus, where it's very clear there are two natures in Christ, human and divine.

It expresses what those natures are. It's not partially human. It's the whole of humanity and the whole of the divinity united together in this mysterious union. But they're not altering one another.

The distinctive properties of each are preserved. Before we talk about the ramifications of this, any just observations or questions about this definition?

We're going to find out that actually this turned out to be really controversial. Very, very controversial. And we'll see why in a moment here. I can't see why because I would sign that.

Yeah, I'd sign it too. So I can't see why either because it seems to reconcile both sides pretty well. With the possible exception of Theotokos.

[28 : 37] Yes, so there is the Theotokos part. So let's actually, let's talk about that. So this Theotokos thing. So one problem is, of course, if you're just anti-Theotokos, you're not going to like it, right?

If you're just totally anti-Theotokos, you're not going to like this. Many Protestants today are anti-Theotokos. The other problem is that it says Theotokos in manhood.

Now, for some people, that's comforting because they say, oh, see, it's qualifying Theotokos. It's saying that, yes, she's the God-bearer, but only with respect to the fact that she bore the manhood of Jesus, the humanity of Jesus, and the humanity of Jesus was united with the divinity.

That's the only reason why we're using that. But some people look at this and they say, I understand what you're saying, but that's not what it says. It doesn't, it says, it says something that actually doesn't make sense.

It says she's God-bearer in manhood, but God-bearer means she bore God, not manhood. She'd be the anthropos-Tokos or something. So they just find that to be a confusing phrase.

[29 : 43] The way that it's explained that it's Theotokos only with respect to she begot the humanity of Jesus, which was united in the God, that makes sense. It just seems poorly expressed here.

Like Theotokos in manhood, what exactly is that getting at? This is supposed to be a definition. It's supposed to be clear. And some people find it to be unclear. She gave birth to a baby boy, it's a man, but that man turned out to be the second person of the Trinity.

Agreed. Agreed. Well, let's go to another one. Lewis. Was Theotokos the thing that they were worried about when they were doing it? It was definitely one of them.

I'm not sure. The bigger issue was the two persons. The two persons issue of two persons in Christ was the issue, that Christ is not two persons. Another issue was that the mixing of the natures, that we don't have, we have two natures that are not mixed or changed or hybrid or deficient or somehow.

They're both there. But Theotokos is an issue, but it's not one of the primary. Yeah. I thought that was part of the story of Theotokos. It was essentially us in the future sort of reading stuff into the past that was not a primary concern.

[31 : 06] Yes. That these people try to explain. Yeah, I think you're right. It's not really important for being like, okay, you know, it should always be clear. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's not what you're worried about. Agreed. Agreed. That's a great point.

Let's go on to another aspect that was more controversial. So this one, acknowledged in two natures. All right. Now we look at that and we're like, well, yeah. But imagine someone saying, what do you mean acknowledged in two natures?

He is in two natures. Do you mean we only think of him as in two natures, but he's not actually in two natures? We just acknowledge it? It just felt weak to some people?

Because remember, this is a definition. So it's supposed to be clear. But the bigger issue was that this is where we get, there's a church theological tradition called Maya phisytism, which are people who believe Jesus only had one nature.

Now, before you think that's heretical, let me explain their point of view, because it does sound very heretical to me. But what they would say, this is what Cyril of Alexandria would express, is he would say, look, there's only one nature, the divine nature.

[32 : 22] And when you say, well, then you're denying the humanity of Jesus. He says, I am not. Because to him, human nature and divine nature are two different levels of existence.

And the human nature is subsumed in the divine nature. And before you think, okay, but doesn't that violate? No, no, no. He'll say, think about it this way. And I'm just, I'm not saying I agree with this.

I'm just expressing what Cyril would say. He would say, you're human, right? We're all human here. Good. You're 100% human, right? Okay, great. But don't you also have the nature of like bone and blood and hair?

Don't you have that nature also? Yeah. Well, aren't you four natures then? No. Well, what are you then? And what Cyril would say is, you are human in respect to your nature.

That nature is made up of these sub-natures like bone and blood and hair and stuff. And those are sub-natures. They are lesser on the order of being than human.

[33 : 23] And so we can freely say we are one nature, even though we know we have all these other sub-natures. So when Cyril or people like him say Jesus is one nature, that's what they mean.

They mean that there's this nature of the deity that then has this sub-nature of humanity that is taken up in it. And it's fully human.

Whatever you want to say, it's fully there. And they were really, they felt very, very strongly about this. They felt like you are exalting the nature of humanity to be on par with the nature of the deity when you talk about Jesus in two natures.

You need to exalt the deity first and then explain this other sub-nature of humanity. I feel like they're getting bent out of shape out of semantics there, but that was important to them.

Then there was this issue, hypostasis here. So it says here that these two natures are combining in one person and hypostasis.

[34 : 33] And the Greek term for that is prosopon, so one prosopon and one hypostasis. In Greek, this is translated as one person, and hypostasis is basically synonymous with person or maybe an instance of a nature.

So these are effectively synonymous terms. But this, and we call this today the hypostatic union, the union of the two natures of Jesus in one person, we call it the hypostatic union.

Right? Boom. Done. The problem with this is if we go back to the Council of Nicaea on your other handout. We go back to the Council of Nicaea, which this statement affirms, the symbol of the fathers of others.

We go there, and remember how the Council of Nicaea ends? It just says, oh, and we believe in the Holy Spirit. That's why they had Constantinople afterwards, right, to add on, to talk about the Holy Spirit. Well, if we keep reading, it says, but as for those who say there was a time when he was not, and before being born he was not, and that he came into existence out of nothing, or who assert that the Son of God is of a different hypostasis or substance or subject to alteration or change, these the Catholic or universal and apostolic church anathematizes.

They kick out. So, okay, it says, you know, if anyone denies that Jesus was eternal, we kick them out. But it says if anyone says he is of a different hypostasis than God, they're out.

[36 : 05] But then Chalcedon says he has his own hypostasis. Does that make sense?

Now, what's going on here is that this was written in 451. Come on, what's going on here? This was written in 451.

This was written in 325. There's 125 years. Over 125 years, what people meant by hypostasis changed. It originally meant nature or substance.

It became... Why is my thing acting up on me here? It became person later on. So, in other words, there doesn't seem to be a contradiction here when you properly understand these terms in their proper historical context.

But you can understand how confusing this would be to people who are trying to read these things. And this caused disputes. So, where did it cause disputes?

[37 : 15] Well, remember, the Church of the East has already split from the greater church after Ephesus in 431.

Curiously, as John pointed out, Nestorius is said to have agreed with the definition of Chalcedon. And the Church of the East, later on, signs on to the definition of Chalcedon.

So, what's interesting is that today, people still say the Church of the East is historian, but they have expressly, for 1,500 years now, signed off on this statement that says there is no two persons in Jesus.

That there's two natures and one person, which is the exact opposite of Nestorianism. But they're often called Nestorian because of this association with Nestorius, because they didn't want to use the term Theotokos, which, by the way, they just kind of signed off on.

Using it in a very particular way, they signed off on it. Despite this, they're still separated from the greater church. So, they kind of signed off on it, but there was a lot of churches that didn't.

[38 : 25] The Assyriac Church said, no. The Coptic Church said, we don't like this. The Nubian Church said, I'm going home. The Ethiopian Church said, sayonara.

The Armenian Church says, this game isn't fun anymore. And the Georgian Church said, I'm taking my ball and I'm going home. And all these churches left. These are not minor churches.

They're actually pretty big and important. And if we take the example of Armenia, which Armenia is a very tiny country today. But back in the day, you know, the Armenian Empire was pretty big.

There was Armenian people all over this area. And, you know, this is like an area larger than Germany or about the size of Germany where Armenians were. And they left.

And that's not to speak of Ethiopia and Nubia and Egypt. I mean, these are really, really, really big churches. And they decided to leave. They all, except the Georgian Church, which later on in its history reunited.

[39 : 28] But these churches are today classed as the Oriental Orthodox churches. So there's the Eastern Orthodox churches, which come out of the Greek Byzantine area.

But then there is the Oriental Orthodox, which are the Ethiopians, the Copts, the Syriac Church, the Armenian Church. There's the Indian Orthodox. They are part of a different church with tens of millions of people.

They still exist today. The Nubian Church historically has pretty much gone extinct, although there's many newer believers. But all the other churches are still around. So they left.

And they've been gone ever since. Lewis, did you have a question? Yeah. If you're really going to show how the East was worth, didn't the Church of the East get pulled away to China?

Yes. Yes. So the Church of the East went all the way to China and southern India and Sri Lanka and off the coast of Somalia, southern Arabia.

[40 : 29] That's the Church of the East. So the fact that all these churches, so we could continue this map over like this. It's a pretty big split.

It's actually way bigger than the Great Schism of 1051. And the other issue with this is if we look at the definition.

Let me go back to it. If we look at the definition, remember that these churches, this is written in Greek. And these churches are reading this in Greek. And even Greek folks are struggling with this word hypostasis.

We actually have letters from someone like Jerome. Jerome is this illustrious translator of Greek texts into Latin. He's writing around like 420, you know, 30 years before this or 40 years before this.

And he's talking about how he went to, I think it was Constantinople. And people were using these theological terms like this. And he was telling them, that's not what that word means.

[41 : 32] And they were like, no, that's what the word means. And he's like, that's not what it means to me. And so just imagine being in this debate where people are using these highly technical terms in different ways, going back and forth with each other.

It was a difficult time. So let's bring this forward to the present. Any questions, though, before I keep going?

Could we close the door over there? Is that okay if we close that door? Could we close the door? Is that all right? Yeah. Any questions?

Yes. I have a more theological question. How did the church understand the addition or the preparation of the humanity into the Godhead?

That's a great question. Did the Godhead change in time? How did they understand that? That's a great question. That's beyond my pay grade.

[42 : 30] I haven't studied that question. So how did the church understand? So when the divinity, when the humanity of Jesus was in some sense incorporated into the Godhead, did that change the Godhead?

Like what's going on there? How did the church explain? So now you have humanity, a human nature sitting on the right hand of the Father in heaven for the rest of eternity. So that's a big change.

And what exactly is going on there? I mean, that's a great question. I guess I have to say I don't know. There was a deacon in our last church, and he said it perfectly. I never thought about it this way.

He said, there is a man in heaven. Yeah. There's a God like this in heaven. Yes. Now, I will say, remember that right in the opening chapters of Genesis, we are made in God's image.

So the image of God has always been in heaven because we're made in his image. And then this was prophesied in the scriptures. Daniel says, I saw one like a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven, whose all people shall serve and whose kingdom shall have no end.

[43 : 38] When you think about that, what he's saying, that term son of man in Aramaic was just a term for humanity. I saw someone who looked human coming on the clouds of heaven, who's going to rule all people forever.

His kingdom will never end. That feels like a divine quality. Riding on the clouds of heaven is a divine quality descending from heaven down. He's not reigning on earth and undergoes apotheosis where he's divinized.

No, he's coming down. So Daniel has prophesied this. So it's not this all of a sudden sudden rupture in Jewish theology or Old Testament theology. But at the same time, it's a change in a sense.

I mean, but he was always there. I mean, the son, as who is our image, was always there. But there is this physical aspect now.

Lewis? So I thought the one thing I heard, I don't know, I don't know, one of the things I heard is that the hypersetic human is like marriage. You get married.

[44 : 43] Yeah. And if you get married, does that change? Yeah. You know, you enter into a new relationship that doesn't, like, don't cease being human by being married.

Yeah, yeah, that's good. You don't become like, boom. Yes. Yes. Yeah. And Paul says that's a great mystery. He says the unity in marriage is a great mystery. But, yeah, that's a good analogy.

Well, let me, yes, Richard. So, it seems to me the definition of Chalcedon really just adopts the Apollinarian position with some adjustment in terminology.

Oh, can you explain a little more what you mean? So, if you ask Apollinarians, is Jesus Christ one person or two persons?

Well, he would say one person. And if you ask him, is that one person divine or human? Well, he would say, well, divine.

[45 : 53] The divine logos. So, this definition says that Jesus Christ is one person.

So, if you ask the Chalcedonian, is that person divine or human, what would they say? Wouldn't they say both, though? Both?

Both human and divine? Yeah. I mean, isn't that? Because it says that he is acknowledged in two natures. But we're not talking about the natures yet.

Well, isn't that what human and divine is? Human nature, divine nature. Yes, but I've been talking all this time about the person of Christ. But isn't that the... Okay, so, it depends.

Are you talking about pre-incarnation or post-incarnation? Because pre-incarnation, there is no humanity. He's just divine. But then with the incarnation, divinity, the nature of divinity is welcomed into the person and hypostasis of Christ.

[46 : 58] He now has two natures instead of just one. Yes, but who has those two natures? It's the divine person, right? So, that line of argument, yes, that line of argument often, not always, but often comes from the Oriental Orthodox, who are the Maya physites, where they would say...

So, I'd say Apollinarius anticipated them, didn't he? Yeah, I think in some ways you could say that, yeah. But I think Chalcedon is against Apollinarius. Although, keeping in mind, when I say...

Although, I don't think Apollinarius was right when he was talking about the mind of Jesus. But the whole one nature versus two nature thing... Like, the Maya physites, the way they express it when they say, well, Jesus has one nature, but that nature is divine and it has this subnature.

I don't think that's, like, hugely problematic in and of itself. I think it's confusing when you're walking around telling people he's one nature, because it seems to suggest he's not human.

But when they go and explain it, okay, that's fine if you want to say it that way. But I don't think it's the clearest way to explain the natures of Jesus.

[48 : 09] I think this is clearer. But... So, it depends on... Yeah, I mean, the divine son has a human nature. This is very big.

You should read Cyril of Alexandria. He talks exactly... The arguments that you're articulating is similar to what he articulates, where he's saying, no, it's the divine son.

We're not going to reposition the divine son for all eternity. We're going to say he's always the divine son. He's remained the divine son.

We're going to refer him first and foremost as divine son. And then humanity is part of this, but it's a sub-conversation rather than... But let me... I want to read, actually, something that gets at this.

But, yes, did you want to say something? One of the things that can be helpful is think, okay, is there something... You know, all this care about... Oh, can't say this when you say that.

[49 : 05] You need to preserve it. Is there something behind this that influences this? And one of the things for Cyril of Alexandria was, look, for salvation, it is absolutely critical that he is God.

Whereas, so, you know, it's happening. That's what's the decisive thing. Whereas, arguably, it seems in some of their writings, for some of the historians...

And maybe more, Deodora, a little earlier, there's a strain where, oh, the critical thing in salvation is acting in the integrity of a human person in this sort of achievement.

Hmm. So there's this subtle... You know, why are these things important? It's because how they can prove salvation. And I think one of the critical things that Cyril would say is, look, if he is not God who is working on salvation, there is no salvation.

And really wanting to verse out that. So that's what gives a lot of energy to these distinctions. Just a little bit of a thought, but I'll be able to... Well, let's, for the sake of time, let's go on to look at how these disputes have played out.

[50 : 19] And I talked about how churches separated, et cetera, et cetera. So in the 1970s, so there's all these churches here. You've got Church of the East, all these churches.

Then you have the Greek and Latin Church, which at this point are united, but they eventually split in the Great Schism. And the Greeks and the Russians come off and become the Eastern Orthodox. But these guys all still exist with the exception of those folks, arguably.

These guys still exist. Well, in the 1970s, we've been talking about terminology, right? So in the 1970s, there was this movement for the Roman Catholics and some of these folks to have theological dialogues.

And they issued a statement, and this was issued. It was called the Declaration of Faith in June 1984. So it started in the 70s, went on.

And this was between Pope Shenouda, Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Egyptian one, Pope Paul VI, the Roman Catholic Pope, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius Jacob III, and same guy, Pope Paul VI, and Patriarch Ignatius Zaka I and Pope John Paul II, because it's going on for so many years.

[51 : 26] People are dying and being replaced. And they say this. We confess the faith of the two churches formulated by the Nicene Council of 325.

The confusions and schisms that occurred between their churches in the later centuries they realize today in no way affect or touch the substance of their faith. Since these arose only because of differences in terminology and culture and in the various formula adopted by different theological schools to express the same matter, accordingly, we find today no real basis for the sad divisions and schisms that subsequently arose between us concerning the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Then, later in that same year, this is a different thing, but this is 1994, two significant events took place. The more dramatic and important of the two is the Common Declaration of Faith, issued November 11th, by Patriarch Mark Dinka IV and Pope John Paul II.

The key passage read like this. So we're skipping down. And it says that the humanity to which the Blessed Virgin Mary gave birth always was that of the Son of God himself.

This is the reason why the Assyrian Church of the East, the Persian Church, is praying the Virgin Mary as the Mother of Christ, our God and Savior. So the Persian Church prefers to use the term Mother of Christ, not Mother of God.

[52 : 49] So they say the Mother of Christ. In light of this same faith, the Catholic tradition addresses the Virgin Mary as Mother of God and also as the Mother of Christ. We both recognize the legitimacy and brightness of these expressions of the same faith, and we both respect the preference of each church in her liturgical life and piety.

Then, Bar Hebraeus. So Bar Hebraeus is, let me tell you about him before I put his quote on. Bar Hebraeus is like the loom, the shining light of the Syriac Orthodox Church.

He's one of the great polymaths. He was, you know, a mathematician, a theologian. He was a very, very powerful bishop, influential bishop.

He was part of the Syriac Church, but he lived in Persia. So he was kind of Persian, but not part of the Persian Church. He was part of the Syriac Orthodox Church. And he says this.

So he's writing in like 1280. When I had given much thought and pondered on the matter, I became convinced that these quarrels among the different Christian churches are not a matter of factual substance, but of words and terminology.

[53 : 58] For they all confess Christ our Lord to be perfect God and perfect human without any commingling, mixing, or confusion of the natures. Thus I saw all the Christian communities with their different Christological positions as possessing a single common ground that is without any difference between them.

I like how he puts that. Because when you say, well, do you all believe Jesus is perfectly God and perfectly human? Yes! Do you all believe that these natures are not, you know, mixed or changed or confused?

Yes! Well then, okay. Isn't that enough? What's the problem? Yeah, well, what's the problem then? So in some ways, Chalcedon caused enormous schism in the church.

But in another sense, it rightly expressed our faith, that there's two natures in one person in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. All right. We've got just a couple minutes left. So time for one quick question. Anybody before we close in prayer? Maybe I can talk afterwards. Peter.

[55 : 00] Yes. That's the translators doing that.

It's a title. But it's probably appropriate because they mean it with capitalization. They want it to be this formal title rather than... When we would say Mother of Christ, we probably...

I don't know if we would capitalize it or not. I don't know if it depends on the context. It's a title. Yeah. I guess you would, yeah. Well, let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you for this. We pray for unity amongst our brethren, that we would be united with our fellow gospel preaching churches, and that we would also teach your truth, Lord.

We pray you to bless us as we worship you downstairs in just a moment. We ask this in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Amen. Amen. Amen. Oh, yes.

Yeah. One more. One more next week. well i so and and kind of the sad thing is they're still not united they have that shared declaration of faith but they're still just not you know yeah so those can be strong they can and it was politics