

## **Council of Chalcedon - 451 A.D**

### **Therefore, following the holy fathers,**

"Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith, follow, considering the outcome of their conduct." Hebrews 13:7 (NKJV)

### **we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,**

"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers." Acts 1:14 (NKJV)

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Ephesians 4:4-6 (NKJV)

### **at once complete in Godhead**

"looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ," Titus 2:13 (NKJV)

"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." John 1:18 (NKJV)

"But to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.'" Hebrews 1:8 (NKJV)

"Now when He said to them, 'I am He,' they drew back and fell to the ground." John 18:6 (NKJV)

*[note: He in the original Greek used here is the 'unspoken name of God used in the old testament]*

"I and My Father are one." John 10:30 (NKJV)

"Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" Matthew 16:16 (NKJV)

"Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'" Acts 8:37 (NKJV)

### **and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man,**

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14 (NKJV)

"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven." John 3:13 (NKJV)

### **consisting also of a reasonable soul and body;**

"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;" Colossians 2:9 (NKJV)

### **of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead,**

"who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," Hebrews 1:3 (NKJV)

### **and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin;**

"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." -Hebrews 4:15 (NKJV)

**as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages,**

“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” John 17:5 (NKJV)

**but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer;**

“Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? <sup>35</sup>And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Luke 1:34-35 (KJV)

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.” Matthew 1:18 (KJV)

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,” Galatians 4:4 (NKJV)

**one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ;**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1 (NKJV)

"Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever." Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV)

**even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us,**

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets," - Hebrews 1:1 (NKJV)

**and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.**

"Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 1:13 (NKJV)

"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:14-15 (NKJV)

NOTE- The Council of Nicaea defined the Biblical doctrine for the Trinity by focusing on the identity of Jesus, but it was not within the scope of the council to define Jesus' humanity and the relation of the two natures to each other. The Trinitarian doctrine had significant implications for Christology that was addressed at Chalcedon in 451 A.D. The council wrestled with how one person, Jesus, could have two natures. If Jesus is the same *homoousios* with the Father and is God, this must be reconciled with Jesus' clear humanity as evidenced in the Gospels. Chalcedon was directed at the Nestorian and Eutychean heresies, which concurred with the Nicene Creed but worked out Jesus' deity in false relation to His humanity. Nestorianism's error was the failure to unite the two natures in one person. Each nature represented separate persons somehow possessed by the man Jesus. The other heresy, Eutycheanism, drew the opposite conclusion. In this case, the human nature was subsumed by the divine nature making a hybrid and unique kind of nature. The solution at Chalcedon was to strike a Scriptural balance. The solution sought at Chalcedon affirmed the unity of Jesus' person and the duality of His natures, and

His identity with the divine substance. Four factors need to be balanced for an accurate understanding of Jesus: deity, humanity, the unity of one person, and the distinction of the two natures. This has been called “the Chalcedonian box” that defines the boundaries of orthodoxy and within which the answer must be found. The Chalcedonian creed falls short of plumbing the depths of the full implications of this doctrine, but it lays out the essential elements of Christology and defines the boundaries of error. Shedd underscored the importance of Chalcedon, “It substantially completes the orthodox Christology of the ancient Church.” (Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998, 38-39).

In summary; in A.D. 451, as a response to the monophysitism supported by the Robber Council of A.D. 449, the Emperor Marcian convoked the Council of Chalcedon. In dealing with this heresy the Council of Chalcedon set forth a new creed in which all the Christological heresies were addressed. It argued against the Docetist that Christ was "perfect in manness," against Paul of Samosata that the Logos was 'begotten of the Father before the ages' and had a "personal subsistence," against the Sabellians that the Son and the Father are distinct persons, against the Arians that the Lord was "perfect deity, truly God, and consubstantial with the Father," against Apollinarius "that Jesus had a rational soul that is a spirit," against Nestorius that Mary was theotokos, and Christ is one divine person "not parted or divided" and "whose natures are in union," and against the Eutychians that "in Christ were two natures without confusion and without change, the property of each nature being preserved and concurring in one person." [5]

[5] Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 608-9.