

Early Church Councils

	YEAR	Jerusalem Council
1	325	First Council of Nicaea
2	381	First Council of Constantinople
3	431	First Council of Ephesus
4	451	First Council of Chalcedon
5	553	Second Council of Constantinople
6	680	Third Council of Constantinople
7	787	Second Council of Nicaea

However, not all of these councils have been universally recognized as ECUMENICAL. As indicated above, the **Church of the East** accepts only the first two, and **Oriental Orthodoxy** only three. Nontrinitarians, such as **Oneness Pentecostals, Unitarians, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Quakers, Christadelphians** and **Jehovah's Witnesses**, reject the teachings of all seven

Jerusalem Council

That the gospel, “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved” was to be proclaimed to both Jew and Gentile.

- 1 325 First Council of Nicaea

Dealt with the person of Jesus Christ being equal with God the Father

- 1 Christ is of the being of the Father
- 2 To the phrase “begotten” is added “not made” to deny the Arian contention that the Logos was “made”
- 3 The Son is one substance with the Father

- 4 To the words “became flesh” was added “and was made man”
- 5 Other issues discussed: date of Easter; problems of clerical discipline, heresy, and schisms.

This doctrine will never be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone. Therefore, the church is characterized by divisions.

This is one reason Jesus Christ as head of the church, set it up by local churches, not by denominations. But even then major doctrines like the Essence of Jesus Christ divides the Church universally. Even today we have “Evangelicals” “Fundamentalist” who disagree even with in these broad designations.

2 381 **First Council of Constantinople**

Primarily decreed the deity of the Holy Spirit.

3 431 **First Council of Ephesus**

This Council was called to combat Nestorianism, which split Jesus Christ, the God-man, into two distinct persons, one human and one divine. Also, at issue was the ‘Theotokos’ – God bearing of Mary.

4 451 **First Council of Chalcedon**

Still debating the nature of Jesus Christ; when pressed few people today are capable of giving a definitive definition to the two natures in Christ. At this Council, it was confirmed (1) that Lord Christ is one. His two natures preserved in one—hypostasis. (2) two natures in one, complete deity and true humanity.”unconfusedly, unchangeable, indivisibly, and inseparably.” (3) the distinct natures are fully God and man, thus securing salvation by a saving God, and a man identified with man (representing mankind)

5 553 **Second Council of Constantinople**

WHICH WAS CALLED DUE TO THE GREAT DIVISION
IN THE CHURCH OVER THE BEING OF JESUS CHRIST

PRIMARILY “MONOPHYSITISM” FROM TWO GREEK WORDS *MONOS* – ONLY AND *FUSIS* – NATURE WHICH CONTENDS THERE IS ONLY ONE NATURE IN THE INCARNATION, NOT TWO. THIS THEY FELT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO PROTECT THE TEACHING OF THE UNITY OF CHRIST’S PERSON. TO ASCRIBE TWO NATURES TO CHRIST WAS A DENIAL THAT MAN COULD GAIN ULTIMATE ONENESS WITH GOD WHICH WAS THE GOAL OF SALVATION.

THE RESULT OF THIS EMPHASIS IS TO PLAY DOWN THE MANHOOD OF CHRIST AND RELEGATE IT TO THE REALM OF AN UNIMPORTANCE (FROM *DICTIONARY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH*, GENERAL EDITOR; J. D. DOUGLAS)

Now to the

Second Council of Constantinople in 553.

They challenged the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ making Him one nature, de-emphasizing His Humanity.

This one was so pro RCC that it –Mother of God and now “ever Virgin”

6 680 **Third Council of Constantinople**

This council came by necessity from the rise of Islam from the middle of the 7th century. But they could not come to any full agreement on the substance of Jesus Christ and it ended with yet greater division.

7 787 **Second Council of Nicaea**

This one focused on “iconoclasm” and while it said that worship of these was forbidden it did not stop the making or having of them. Again, the council ended in more division in the Church.