



SESSION 15: THE CHURCH IN THE 5TH CENTURY – READINGS

During the 5th century there were two great heresies which are summarized here:

1. **Nestorianism**. Advanced by Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, in 428. It says: 1) the difference between the Divine and human natures of Jesus is distinct, 2) the Logos entered the person of Jesus, making Christ a God-bearing man rather than a God-man, 3) rejected the term 'Theotokos', meaning God-bearer, 4) Christ is not identical to the Son, but personally united to the Son. Nestorianism was condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431 and at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Many Nestorians then relocated to Persia.
2. The heresy of **Monophysitism** is also called **Eutychianism**, because Eutychius, an Archimandrite in Constantinople, started it after Nestorianism was rejected. He said that Christ has **one** nature – divine and not human, and that His humanity was absorbed by His deity. It became particularly prevalent in Syria, Egypt, North Africa, Ethiopia and Armenia, and gave rise to the Coptic Church. In these countries Monophysitism is present today. Eutyches was excommunicated in 449, reinstated at the Robber Council, and again rejected at Chalcedon in 451. Later, **Monothelism** would become an attempt to resolve Monophysitism with Chalcedonian dogma. Along with Arianism, Monophysitism was the greatest threat to the early Church.

“We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary [Theotokos], according to the manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, in two natures, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably, the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one person and one substance, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the creed of the Holy Fathers has handed down to us.”

- text of the dogma of the Council of Chalcedon (4th Ecumenical Council), 451