



SESSION 16: CHALCEDON REVISITED, MORE SIGNIFICANT EVENTS & DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE CHURCH – CONTENT

1. In the last session we looked at some of the actions and effects of the 4th Ecumenical Council. It was attended by over 500 bishops. Significantly, canon 4 placed monks under the authority of bishops. Canon 28 was of greater significance: “We decree that the metropolitans – and only those metropolitans – of the dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thrace, as well as the bishops of the aforementioned dioceses who are in barbarian lands, be ordained by the most holy throne of the most holy church of Constantinople”. This canon endorsed a purely political rationale for the existence of primacies, saying that Rome was granted primacy because it was the imperial capitol, not because it was founded by Saint Peter. Thus, New Rome (i.e. Constantinople) is entitled the same status. Rome did not like this, and neither did Alexandria, where their archbishop was the first to be called ‘pope’. But, 454 bishops did ratify the decisions of Chalcedon, declaring that they were freely accepting Constantinople’s new authority. They closed the Council by singing, “Holy God, Holy Mighty...”, the first recorded use of that hymn.
2. Reactions were immediate. Upon his return to Jerusalem Archbishop Juvenal was prevented from assuming his throne. He escaped to Constantinople and a monophysite bishop replaced him. The Chalcedonian position was enforced by troops sent by Leo I. In Alexandria the Chalcedonian archbishop was murdered during Divine Liturgy, and replaced by monophysite Timothy. Leo I sent troops and Timothy was exiled. Many in the three patriarchates of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem felt politically exploited by the new authority of Constantinople and the existing authority of Rome. They rejected it. Meanwhile Chalcedonian versus non-Chalcedonian conflicts continued and monophysitism grew in Africa and the East.
3. In 421 a long series of wars began between the Empire and Persia. Christians had been severely persecuted in Persia since 340.
4. In 431 Pope Celestine dispatched a bishop to Scotland. The next year he was replaced by Patrick, who went to Ireland. There had been a Christian presence in Britain since before Constantine; now it began to grow, especially due to the efforts of monastics.
5. Germanic Vandals left Spain for North Africa, where they were especially brutal from 432 until 439.
6. In 451, as Atila the Hun tried to take Paris, he was defeated by Roman general Aetius. This was Rome’s last military victory. In 455 Aetius and Roman emperor Valentinian III died; Roman rule collapsed, and emperors stayed in Ravenna.
7. In 480 Saint Benedict was establishing monastic discipline in the West. Influenced by Basil the Great and John Cassian, he developed Benedict’s Rule. He said that monks must remain in their monastery unless reassigned, must perform physical labor and rotate responsibilities according to

seniority, must pray 8 times each day (i.e. the hours), must recite Psalms by heart, and cannot have private ownership. Incidentally, the hymn 'O Sacred Head Now Wounded' is attributed to Saint Benedict.

8. In 493 the Roman Empire comes to an end as general Odovakar deposes the last emperor, Romulus Augustus. Ostrogoths then take over rule under King Theodoric.
9. In 481 King Clovis of the Franks (i.e. Gaul) married Clothilda, a Roman Christian. In 493 Clovis declared himself and Christian, and the Franks were the first Germanic nation to adopt Orthodox Christianity.
10. In 498 there were two, competing popes in Rome – one supported by Arian Ostrogoths (who soon became Nicene Christians), and the other supported by Constantinople.
11. By the end of the 400's, Spain was controlled by Visigoths, Italy by Ostrogoths, Gaul by Franks, and Britain by Anglo-Saxons. But their leaders admired Roman civilization and wished to become Roman. The Byzantine emperors gave them official court titles and encouraged them. They adopted the legal system, institutions, art and language (i.e. Latin) of the Empire. As the historian John Meyendorff says, "The conquerors were culturally overpowered by the superior civilization they conquered." But a different perspective of the new Romanism was beginning in the Frankish kingdom, which would eventually challenge Byzantium with cultural and political alternatives. As in old Rome, this challenge would involve autocracy by a divine emperor.
12. There were many important and interesting developments within the Church during this century. Some of them were:
 - Monasticism started the century as undisciplined became disciplined, controlled and respected at Chalcedon.
 - Monasticism spread from East to West. Eastern leaders included St. Saba, St. Euphymius and St. Ephraim. St. Martin (Tours) and St. John Cassian were leaders in the West. Cassian spent 10 years in Egypt, became a deacon under St. John Chrysostom, emigrated to the West and founded a monastery in Marseilles, and greatly influenced St. Benedict.
 - Renunciation of the world (i.e. becoming a monk) came to be seen as voluntary martyrdom.
 - Martyrs came to be seen as patrons with whom the living could identify and relate; because the presence of these saints was associated with their remains, their relics grew in importance.
 - Christians discerned the anticipation of the second coming in some, who were seen as outstanding witnesses of the Truth. They were venerated, sometimes during their life, but especially after their death. Veneration developed at the local level, as eucharistic celebrations each year on the day of a saint's death (i.e. repose). Each church developed its own calendar of veneration, and churches not near martyrs' tombs began to seek relics to place in their altars. Transfers of relics became common, leading to the practice of parceling out relics. Pilgrimages to recover relics increased.
 - The number of bishops in rural areas began to decrease as they were replaced by priests. Ecclesiastical and organizational authority became more concentrated in major cities (e.g. the Alexandrian church's payroll included 500 hospital attendants, Constantinople assigned 950 deacons to the burial of the needy, and Rome's revenues were divided into 4 parts – for the bishop, for the clergy, for maintenance, and for the poor).
 - Hymnology flourished; the Byzantine system of 8 tones was standardized.

- Many Christians adopted the monastic practice of praying the hours – 7 offices of the day and one of the night.
- The yearly liturgical cycle, as well as the Marian cycle of feasts, was standardized.
- In the Eastern churches the Epiclesis, or invocation of the Holy Spirit to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and to descend upon the people as they took the Eucharist, was given greater prominence in the Divine Liturgy.
- The Eucharistic prayer, or Anaphora, emanating from Antioch, became a standard part of the Divine Liturgy
- The Divine Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great became routinely used, emanating from Constantinople.
- Church leaders in the East and West began emphasizing infant baptism.
- Initially, priests and bishops could be celibate or monogamous. In the East the Council of Trullo established that priests can be monogamous. In the West, popes Innocent I, Leo I, and several councils established celibate clergy, even to the level of subdeacon.