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**Saint Mark's Church
Sunday School**

Summary of the Ecumenical Councils

	Nicea 325 A.D	Constantinople 381 A.D	Ephesus 431 A.D
Number of Fathers	318	150	200
Emperor ordered the council assembly	Constantine the great	Theodosius the great	Theodosius the junior
The main heresy	The divinity of Christ “The Son is not equal to The Father . Jesus is created and became the mediator between God (the Father) and the creation”. He denies also the Divinity of the Holy Spirit.	The divinity of the Holy Spirit “The Spirit is not equal to The Father or The Son. He is created like the angels”	The nature of Christ “St. Mary born the human Jesus , then the Holy Spirit came upon him . So St. Mary is the mother of Jesus and not the mother of God the Theotokos”
The heretics	Arius Libyan ,ordained deacon then priest in Alexandria where he spread his heresy since the time of Pope Peter the seal of martyrs.	Mackdonios He was Arians, ordained a bishop to Constantinople , then removed for political reasons .	Nestorius He was a zealous monk in a monastery near Antioch. He was chosen as a Bishop to Constantinople
The defenders of faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ St. Alexander the bishop of Alexandria (19) St . Athanasius, Coptic deacon attended the council with his Pope St. Alexander . Then was ordained as the Pope (20) of the see of St. Mark. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ St. Timothy the Pope of Alexandria.(22) ■ St. Cyril of Jerusalem ■ St. Gregory the Theologian ■ St. Gregory the bishop of Nisus. ■ etc..... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ St Cyril the Pope of Alexandria (24) ■ St. Shenouda the archimandrite ■

	Nicea 325 A.D	Constantinople 381 A.D	Ephesus 431 A.D
The chairman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ St. Osius the bishop of Kortoba as he was the eldest among the bishops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ St. Milatius the bishop of Antioch, and followed by St. Makarius as he passed away before the end of the council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pope Cyril the bishop of Alexandria.
Decisions concerning faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Creed “Truly we belief.....Truly we belief in the Holy Spirit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The completion of the creed “ the life giving Lord.....and the life of the world to come. Amen.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The introduction to the creed “ We honor you, Mother of the true light and glorify you,.....Lord have mercy , Lord bless us .Amen”.
Other heresies or problems in front of the councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Melatius (bishop of assuit) schism ■ The day of the Easter feast. ■ The re-baptism of the heretics ■ The marriage of Priests and Bishops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Osabius heresy (The Holy Trinity is one Hypostasis appeared as the Father or The Son or The Holy Spirit) ■ Apollinarius heresy (the Divinity of Christ replaces His spirit and mind) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Belagius heresy (Adam’s sin does not extend to his descendants. Human being can be saved without the Grace of the Lord)
Essential terms used in the councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Homo-Ousious (from the same substance of the Father) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Holy Spirit is the “Life Giving Lord”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ St. Mary is the “Theotokos” mother of God.

**Councils are not recognized by the Orient
Orthodox Churches**

	Ephesus the 2nd 449 A.D	Chalcedon 451 A.D
Number of Fathers	?	? (330)
Emperor ordered the council assembly	Theodosius the junior	Markian (and his wife Polekaria)
The main heresy	The Nature of Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No heresy. ■ Leo the bishop of Rome tried to defend his friend Flabius who was excommunicated by the 2nd concil of Ephesus , and to revenge from Pope Dioscorus.
The heretics	Eutaches Archimandrite of a monastery at Constantinople , opposed the Nestorianism but fall in the heresy of “denying the manhood of Christ”. In the council , he put his faith in an acceptable form.	
The defenders of faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria (25). 	Pope Dioscorus the hero of the Orthodox faith.

The chairman
Decisions concerning faith
Other heresies or problems in front of the councils
Essential terms used in the councils

Ephesus the 2nd 449 A.D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pope Dioscorus.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One Nature of the incarnated God. ■ The council accepted the form of faith of Eutyches , but anathemize Flabius the bishop of Constantinople who believed in two natures of our Lord “ one Human and one Divine.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One Nature of the incarnated God , without mixture, nor mingling, nor confusion nor alteration.

Chalcedon 451 A.D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Christ has two natures , one human and the other is divine. ■ St. Dioscorus was tortured , excommunicated and exiled to an isolated island.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mono- physis (exclusion of all natures in one) ■ Mia- physis (one unite nature). ■ Dyo-physis (two natures)

Ecumenical Councils

1. Are the councils essential for the unity of the body of Christ ?

No.

The unity of the Church is attained where the Church assemble with Christ in the Eucharist . The ecumenical councils are to protect the one faith and the one thought that the Church practice.

2. Are the Church councils infallible ?

No.

Infallibility is belonging to God only , but not to any part of creation that had freedom.

3. How we consider the first three ecumenical councils ?

These three councils “ Nicea -325 , Constantinople - 381 , Ephesus - 431 ” have a unique nature which not to be altered or duplicated. They define the faith and Dogma “ The Divinity of Christ , Divinity of the Holy Spirit , and the Nature of Christ ” .

4. Do all the canons of these three councils have the same power ?

No.

We distinguish between canons related to the Faith or Dogma , and discipline canons which are temporal and may be not fitting now-a - days.

5. How many councils are accepted by the different Churches ?

- The Orient Orthodox accept the first three councils.
- The other Orthodox Churches accept seven councils.
- The Catholic Church has 21 councils.

References:

1. The Church councils	Late Bishop Yoanis	Arabic
2. The Nature of Christ	H.H. Pope Shenouda	Arabic
3. Christology	Fr. Tadros Malaty	Arabic/ English
4. Councils and Conciliarity	Fr. Tadros Malaty	Arabic / English