



[Home](#)  
 [About this site](#)  
 [What is an encyclical?](#)  
 [Document Directory](#)  
 [Pope Directory](#)  
 [Church Councils](#)  
 [Pictures](#)  
 [E-mail](#)

## Second Council of Constantinople - 553 A.D.

### Contents

- [Sentence against the "Three Chapters"](#)
- [Anathemas against the "Three Chapters"](#)

### Introduction

The emperor Justinian and **Pope Vigilius** decided to summon this council after the latter withdrew his "Judgment" condemning the "Three Chapters" of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret and Ibas. This "Judgment" had been issued on 11 April 548 but the bishops of the west and especially of Africa unanimously opposed it. The council was summoned by Justinian to Constantinople, although Vigilius would have preferred to convene it in Sicily or Italy so that western bishops might be present. It assembled on 5 May 553 in the great hall attached to Hagia Sophia cathedral.

Since the Roman pontiff refused to take part in the council, because Justinian had summoned bishops in equal numbers from each of the five patriarchal sees, so that there would be many more eastern than western bishops present, Eutychius, patriarch of Constantinople, presided. The decrees of the council were signed by 160 bishops, of whom 8 were Africans.

On 14 May 553 Pope Vigilius issued his "Constitution", which was signed by 16 bishops (9 from Italy, 2 from Africa, 2 from Illyricum and 3 from Asia Minor). This rejected sixty propositions of Theodore of Mopsuestia, but spared his personal memory and refused to condemn either Theodoret or Ibas since, on the testimony of the council of Chalcedon, all suspicion of heresy against them had been removed. Nevertheless, **the council** in its 8th session on 2 June 553 again [condemned the "Three Chapters"](#), for the same reasons as Justinian had done so, **in a judgment which concludes with 14 anathemas**.

After carefully considering the matter for six months, **Vigilius**, weighing up the persecutions of Justinian against his clergy and having sent a letter to Eutychius of Constantinople, **approved the council**, thus changing his mind "after the example of Augustine". Furthermore he **anathematized Theodore and condemned his writings and those of Theodoret and Ibas**. On 23 February 554, in a second "Constitution", he tried to reconcile the recent condemnation with what had been decreed at the council of Chalcedon.

The council did not debate ecclesiastical discipline nor did it issue disciplinary canons. Our edition does not include the text of the anathemas against Origen since recent studies have shown that these anathemas cannot be attributed to this council.

For the 14 anathemas (pp. 114-122) the translation is from the Greek text, since this is the more authoritative version.

### Sentence against the "Three Chapters"

Our great God and saviour Jesus Christ, as we are told in the parable in the gospel, gives talents to each one according to his ability, and at the proper time asks for an account of what has been done by each one. If the person to whom only one talent has been given is condemned because he has not worked and increased it, but has only preserved it without diminishment, how much more serious and more frightening must be the condemnation to which the person is subjected who not only fails to look after himself but scandalizes others and is a cause of offence to them? It is clear to all believers that when a problem about the faith comes up it is not only the heretical person who is condemned but also the person who is in a position to correct the heresy of others and fails to do so. To those of us to whom the task has been given of governing the church of the Lord, there comes a fear of the condemnation which threatens those who neglect to do the Lord's work. We hurry to take care of the good seed of faith protecting it from the weeds of heresy which have been planted by the enemy. We observed that the pupils of Nestorius were trying to bring their heresy into the church of God by means of the heretical Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia and his books as also by the writings of the heretical Theodoret and the disgraceful letter which is alleged to have been sent by Ibas to Mari the Persian. Our observations prompted us to correct what was happening. We assembled in this imperial city, summoned here by the will of God and the command of the most religious emperor.

The most religious Vigilius happened to be present in this imperial city and took part in all the criticisms against the three chapters. He had frequently condemned them by word of mouth and in his writings. Later he gave a written agreement to take part in our council and to study with us the three

chapters so that we could all issue an appropriate definition of the true faith. The most pious emperor, prompted by what was acceptable to us, encouraged a meeting between Vigilius and ourselves because it is proper that the priesthood should impose a common conclusion to matters of common concern. Consequently we asked his reverence to carry out his written undertakings. It did not seem right that the scandal over these three chapters should continue and that the church of God should be further disturbed. In order to persuade him, we reminded him of the great example left us by the apostles and of the traditions of the fathers. Even though the grace of the holy Spirit was abundant in each of the apostles, so that none of them required the advice of another in order to do his work, nevertheless they were loathe to come to a decision on the issue of the circumcision of gentiles until they had met together to test their various opinions against the witness of the holy scriptures.

In this way they unanimously reached the conclusion which they wrote to the gentiles: It has seemed good to the holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity.

The holy fathers, who have gathered at intervals in the four holy councils, have followed the examples of antiquity. They dealt with heresies and current problems by debate in common, since it was established as certain that when the disputed question is set out by each side in communal discussions, the light of truth drives out the shadows of lying.

The truth cannot be made clear in any other way when there are debates about questions of faith, since everyone requires the assistance of his neighbour. As Solomon says in his proverbs: A brother who helps a brother shall be exalted like a strong city; he shall be as strong as a well-established kingdom. Again in Ecclesiastes he says: Two are better than one, for they have a good reward for their toil. And the Lord himself says: Amen I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Vigilius was frequently invited by us all, and most distinguished judges were sent to him by the most pious emperor. Eventually he promised to give judgment personally on the three chapters. When we heard this promise, we remembered the warning of the Apostle that each of us shall give an account of himself to God. We were afraid of the condemnation which threatens those who scandalize one of the least important, and of the much more serious one which threatens those who scandalize so very christian an emperor, the people and all the churches. We also remembered what was said by God to Paul: Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not be silent; for I am with you, and nobody shall be able to harm you. When we met together, therefore, we first of all briefly made a confession of the faith which our lord Jesus Christ true God, handed down to his holy apostles and by means of them to the holy churches, the same faith which those who afterwards were holy fathers and doctors handed down to the people entrusted to them. We confessed that we believe, protect and preach to the holy churches that confession of faith which was set out at greater length by the 318 holy fathers who met in council at Nicaea and handed down the holy doctrine or creed. The 150 who met in council at Constantinople also set out the same faith and made a confession of it and explained it. The 200 holy fathers who met in the first council of Ephesus agreed to the same faith. We follow also the definitions of the 630 who met in council at Chalcedon, regarding the same faith which they both followed and preached. We confessed that we held to be condemned and anathematized all those who had been previously condemned and anathematized by the catholic church and by the aforesaid four councils. When we had made this confession in this way, we made a start on the examination of the three chapters. First, we considered Theodore of Mopsuestia. When all the blasphemies in his works were exposed, we were astonished at God's patience, that the tongue and mind which had formed such blasphemies were not straightaway burned up by divine fire. We would not even have allowed the official reader of these blasphemies to continue, such was our fear of the anger of God at even a rehearsal of them (since each blasphemy was worse than the one before in the extent of its heresy and shook to their foundation the minds of their listeners), if it had not been the case that those who revelled in these blasphemies seemed to us to require the humiliation which their exposure would bring upon them. All of us, angered by the blasphemies against God, burst into attacks and anathemas against Theodore, during and after the reading, as if he had been living and present there. We said: Lord, be favourable to us; not even the demons themselves have dared to speak such things against you.

O his intolerable tongue! O the wickedness of the man! O the proud hand he raised against his creator! This disgraceful man, who had made a promise to understand the scriptures, did not remember the words of the prophet Hosea: Woe to them, for they have strayed from me! They have become notorious because of their impiety towards me. They spoke evil things about me, and after they had considered them, they spoke even worse things against me. They will fall into a trap because of the depravity of their tongues. Their contempt will be turned inwards on themselves, because they have broken my covenant and acted impiously against my law. The impious Theodore deserves to come under these curses. He dismissed the prophecies about Christ and he vilified, as far as he could, the great mystery of the arrangements that have been made for our salvation. In many ways he tried to demonstrate that the divine word was nothing but fables composed for the amusement of the gentiles. He ridiculed the other condemnations of the impious made by the prophets, especially the one in which holy Habakkuk says of those who teach false doctrines: Woe to him who makes his neighbours drink of the cup of his wrath, and makes them drunk, to gaze on their caverns. This refers to their teachings which are full of darkness and quite separate from the light.

Why ought we to add anything more? Anyone who wishes can consult the volumes of the heretical Theodore or the heretical chapters from his heretical books which have been included in our acts. Anyone can see his unbelievable folly and the disgraceful utterances made by him. We fear to continue and to rehearse again those shameful things. The writings of the holy fathers against him were also read out to us. We heard what had been written against his folly which was more than all the other heretics, and the historical records and imperial laws which set out his heresy from its beginning. Despite all this, those who defended his heresy, delighting in the insults offered by him to his creator, declared that it was improper to anathematize him after his death. Although we were aware of the ecclesiastical tradition concerning heretics, that they are anathematized even after death, we deemed it necessary to go into this matter as well and it can be found in the acts how several heretics were anathematized after they were dead. In many ways it has become clear to us that those who put forward this argument have no concern for God's judgments, nor for the pronouncements of the apostles, nor for the traditions of the fathers. We would willingly question them concerning what they would say about the Lord, who said of himself: He who believes in him is not condemned, he who does not believe in him is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And about that claim of the Apostle: Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what you have received, let him be accursed. As we said earlier, I repeat once more: If anyone preaches to you a gospel contrary to what you have received, let him be accursed.

Since the Lord declares that the person is judged already, and the Apostle curses even the angels if they instruct in anything different from what we have preached, how is it possible even for the most presumptuous to assert that these condemnations apply only to those who are still alive? Are they unaware, or rather pretending to be unaware, that to be judged anathematized is just the same as to be separated from God? The heretic, even though he has not been condemned formally by any individual, in reality brings anathema on himself, having cut himself off from the way of truth by his heresy. What reply can such people make to the Apostle when he writes: As for someone who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned.

It was in the spirit of this text that Cyril of holy memory, in the books which he wrote against Theodore, declared as follows: "Whether or not they are alive, we ought to keep clear of those who are in the grip of such dreadful errors. It is necessary always to avoid what is harmful, and not to be worried about public opinion but rather to consider what is pleasing to God". The same Cyril of holy memory, writing to bishop John of Antioch and to the synod which met there about Theodore who was condemned with Nestorius, says, "It was necessary that a brilliant festival should be kept since all those who had expressed opinions in accordance with Nestorius had been rejected, whoever they were. Action was taken against all those who believed, or had at any time believed, in these mistaken views. This is exactly what we and your holiness pronounced: 'We anathematize those who assert that there exist two sons and two Christs. He who is preached by you and us is, as was said, the single Christ, both Son and Lord, the only-begotten as man, as learned Paul says'". Moreover in his letter to the priests and fathers of monks, Alexander, Martinian, John, Paregorious and Maximus, and to those who were living as solitaries along with them, he says: "The holy synod of Ephesus, meeting in accordance with the will of God, has pronounced sentence against the heresy of Nestorius and has condemned according to justice and with accuracy both Nestorius himself and all those who might later, in inane fashion, adopt the same opinions as he held, and those who had previously adhered to the same opinions and who were bold enough to put them in writing, placing upon them all an equal condemnation. It was quite logical that when a condemnation was issued against one person for such stupidity in what he said, then that condemnation should apply not only to that person alone but also, so to speak, against all those who spread the heresies and untruths. They express these falsehoods against the true dogmas of the church, offering worship to two sons, trying to divide what cannot be divided, and introducing to both heaven and earth the offence of the worship of man. But the sacred band of heavenly spirits worship along with us only one lord Jesus Christ". Moreover, several letters of Augustine of sacred memory, who was particularly outstanding among the African bishops, were read in which he indicates that it is correct to condemn heretics even after their death. Other most reverend bishops of Africa have also observed this church custom; moreover the holy church of Rome has issued anathemas against certain bishops even after they were dead, although they had not been accused on matters of faith while they were alive; the acts of our deliberations bear witness to both these cases. Since the followers of Theodore and his heresy, who are plainly opposed to the truth, have tried to adduce some sections of the writings of Cyril and Proclus of holy memory, as though these were in favour of Theodore, it is appropriate to apply to these attempts the observation of the prophet when he writes: The ways of the Lord are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them. These followers have willfully misunderstood what the holy fathers wrote, even though it was true and appropriate; they have quoted these writings, dissembling excuses for their own iniquities. It seems that the fathers did not lift the anathema against Theodore but rather used the language of concession in order to lead away from their mistake those who offered some defence of Nestorius and his heresy; their aim was to lead them to perfection and to instruct them that not only was Nestorius, the disciple of heresy, condemned but also his teacher Theodore. The fathers indicate their intention in this matter despite the conciliatory forms used: Theodore was to be anathematized. This has been very clearly shown to be the case by us in our acts from the works of Cyril and Proclus of blessed memory in respect of the condemnation of Theodore and his heresy. This conciliatory attitude is also to be found in the holy scriptures. The apostle Paul employed this tactic at the start of his ministry when he was dealing with those who had been Jews; he circumcised Timothy so that by this conciliation and concession he might lead them to perfection. Afterwards, however, he ruled against circumcision, writing on the subject to the Galatians: Now I Paul say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. We found that the defenders of Theodore have done exactly what the heretics were accustomed to do. They have tried to lift the anathema on the said heretical Theodore by omitting some of the things which the holy fathers had written, by including certain confusing falsehoods of their own, and by quoting a letter of Cyril of blessed memory, as if all this were the evidence of the fathers. The passages which they quoted made the truth absolutely clear once the omitted sections were put back in their proper place. The falsehoods were quite apparent when the true writings were collated. In this matter those who issued these empty statements are those who, in the words of scripture, rely on lies, they make empty pleas; they conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity, they weave the spider's web.

After we had investigated in this way Theodore and his heresy, we took the trouble to quote and include in our acts a few of Theodoret's heretical writings against true faith, against the twelve chapters of holy Cyril and against the first synod of Ephesus. We also included some of Theodoret's writings on the side of the heretical Theodore and Nestorius so that it would be made clear, to the satisfaction of anyone reading our acts, that these opinions had been properly rejected and anathematized.

Thirdly, the letter which is alleged to have been written by Ibas to Mari the Persian was brought under scrutiny and we discovered that it too ought to be officially read out. When the letter was read out, its heretical character was immediately apparent to everyone. Until this time there had been some dispute as to whether the aforesaid three chapters ought to be condemned and anathematized. Since the supporters of the heretics Theodore and Nestorius were conspiring to strengthen in another way the case of these men and their heresy, and were alleging that this heretical letter, which approves and defends Theodore and Nestorius, had been accepted by the holy council of Chalcedon, it was therefore necessary for us to demonstrate that that holy synod was unaffected by the heresy which is present in that letter, and that clearly those who make such allegations are doing so not with the assistance of the holy council but so as to give some support to their own heresy by associating it with the name of Chalcedon. It was demonstrated in our acts that Ibas was previously accused of the same heresy which is contained in this letter. This accusation was levelled first by Proclus of holy memory, bishop of Constantinople, and afterwards by Theodosius of blessed memory and Flavian, the bishop there after Proclus, both of whom gave the task of examining the whole matter to Photius, bishop of Tyre, and to Eustathius, bishop of the city of Beirut. When Ibas was later found to be blameworthy, he was deposed from the episcopate. This being the state of affairs, how could anyone be so bold as to allege that that heretical letter was accepted by the holy council of Chalcedon or that the holy council of Chalcedon agreed with it in its entirety? So as to prevent those who misrepresent the holy council of Chalcedon in this way from having any further opportunity to do so we instructed that there should be a formal reading of the official pronouncements of the holy synods, namely the first of Ephesus and that of Chalcedon, on the subject of the letters of Cyril of holy memory and of Leo of blessed memory, formerly pope of older Rome. We gathered from these authorities that nothing which has been written by anyone ought to be accepted unless it has been shown conclusively that it is in accord with the true faith of the holy fathers. Therefore we broke off from our deliberations so as to reiterate in a formal declaration the definition of faith which was promulgated by the holy council of Chalcedon. We compared what was written in the letter with this official statement. When this comparison was made, it was quite apparent that the contents of the letter were quite contradictory to those of the definition of faith. The definition was in accord with the unique, permanent faith set out by the 318 holy fathers, and by the 150, and by those who gathered for the first council at Ephesus. The heretical letter, on the other hand, included the blasphemies of the heretical Theodore and Nestorius and even gave support to them and describes them as doctors, while it condemns the holy fathers as heretics. We make it quite clear to everyone that we do not intend to omit what the fathers had to say in the first and second investigations, which are adduced by the supporters of Theodore and Nestorius in support of their case. Rather these statements and all the others were formally read out and what they contained was submitted to official scrutiny, and we found that they had not allowed the said Ibas to be accepted until they had obliged him to anathematize Nestorius and his heretical doctrines which were affirmed in that letter. This was the view not only of the two bishops whose interventions some have tried to misapply but also of the other religious bishops of that holy council. They also acted thus in the case of Theodoret and insisted that he anathematize those opinions about which he was accused. If they would permit the acceptance of Ibas only if he condemned the heresy which was to be found in his letter, and on condition that he subscribed to a definition of faith set out by the council, how can an attempt be made to allege that this heretical letter was accepted by the same holy council? We are rightly told: What partnership has righteousness with iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an

unbeliever? What participation has the temple of God with idols?

Now that we have given the details of what our council has achieved, we repeat our formal confession that we accept the four holy synods, that is, of Nicaea, of Constantinople, the first of Ephesus, and of Chalcedon. Our teaching is and has been all that they have defined concerning the one faith. We consider those who do not respect these things as foreign to the catholic church. Furthermore, we condemn and anathematize, along with all other heretics who have been condemned and anathematized by the same four holy councils and by the holy, catholic and apostolic church, Theodore, formerly bishop of Mopsuestia, and his heretical writings, and also what Theodoret heretically wrote against the true faith, against the twelve chapters of holy Cyril and against the first synod of Ephesus, and we condemn also what he wrote defending Theodore and Nestorius. Additionally, we anathematize the heretical letter which Ibas is alleged to have written to Mari the Persian. This letter denies that God the Word was made incarnate of the ever virgin Mary, the holy mother of God, and that he was made man. It also condemns as a heretic Cyril of holy memory, who taught the truth, and suggests that he held the same opinions as Apollinarius. The letter condemns the first synod of Ephesus for deposing Nestorius without proper process and investigation. It calls the twelve chapters of holy Cyril heretical and contrary to the orthodox faith, while it supports Theodore and Nestorius and their heretical teachings and writings. Consequently we anathematize the aforesaid three chapters, that is, the heretical Theodore of Mopsuestia along with his detestable writings, and the heretical writings of Theodoret, and the heretical letter which Ibas is alleged to have written. We anathematize the supporters of these works and those who write or have written in defence of them, or who are bold enough to claim that they are orthodox, or who have defended or tried to defend their heresy in the names of holy fathers or of the holy council of Chalcedon.

These matters having been treated with thorough-going exactness, we bear in mind what was promised about the holy church and him who said that the gates of hell will not prevail against it (by these we understand the death-dealing tongues of heretics); we also bear in mind what was prophesied about the church by Hosea when he said, I shall betroth you to me in faithfulness and you shall know the Lord; and we count along with the devil, the father of lies, the uncontrolled tongues of heretics and their heretical writings, together with the heretics themselves who have persisted in their heresy even to death. So we declare to them: Behold all you who kindle a fire, who set brands alight! Walk by the light of your fire, and by the brands which you have kindled! Since we are under command to encourage the people with orthodox teaching and to speak to the heart of Jerusalem, that is the church of God, we very properly hurry to sow in righteousness and to reap the fruit of life. In doing this we are lighting for ourselves the lamp of knowledge from the scriptures and the teachings of the fathers. It has therefore seemed necessary to us to sum up in certain statements both our declarations of the truth and our condemnations of heretics and their heretical teachings.

### Anathemas against the "Three Chapters"

1. If anyone will not confess that the Father, Son and holy Spirit have one nature or substance, that they have one power and authority, that there is a consubstantial Trinity, one Deity to be adored in three subsistences or persons: let him be **anathema**. There is only one God and Father, from whom all things come, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and one holy Spirit, in whom all things are.
2. If anyone will not confess that the Word of God has two nativities, that which is before all ages from the Father, outside time and without a body, and secondly that nativity of these latter days when the Word of God came down from the heavens and was made flesh of holy and glorious Mary, mother of God and ever-virgin, and was born from her: let him be **anathema**.
3. If anyone declares that the [Word] of God who works miracles is not identical with the Christ who suffered, or alleges that God the Word was with the Christ who was born of woman, or was in him in the way that one might be in another, but that our lord Jesus Christ was not one and the same, the Word of God incarnate and made man, and that the miracles and the sufferings which he voluntarily underwent in the flesh were not of the same person: let him be **anathema**.
4. If anyone declares that it was only in respect of grace, or of principle of action, or of dignity or in respect of equality of honour, or in respect of authority, or of some relation, or of some affection or power that there was a unity made between the Word of God and the man, or if anyone alleges that it is in respect of good will, as if God the Word was pleased with the man, because he was well and properly disposed to God, as **Theodore** claims in his madness; or if anyone says that this union is only a sort of synonymy, as the **Nestorians** allege, who call the Word of God Jesus and Christ, and even designate the human separately by the names "Christ" and "Son", discussing quite obviously two different persons, and only pretending to speak of one person and one Christ when the reference is to his title, honour, dignity or adoration; finally if anyone does not accept the teaching of the holy fathers that the union occurred of the Word of God with human flesh which is possessed by a rational and intellectual soul, and that this union is by synthesis or by person, and that therefore there is only one person, namely the lord Jesus Christ, one member of the holy Trinity: let him be **anathema**. The notion of "union" can be understood in many different ways. The supporters of the wickedness of **Apollinarius** and **Eutyches** have asserted that the union is produced by a confusing of the uniting elements, as they advocate the disappearance of the elements that unite. Those who follow **Theodore** and **Nestorius**, rejoicing in the division, have brought in a union which is only by affection. The holy church of God, rejecting the wickedness of both sorts of heresy, states her belief in a union between the Word of God and human flesh which is by synthesis, that is by a union of subsistence. In the mystery of Christ the union of synthesis not only conserves without confusing the elements that come together but also allows no division.
5. If anyone understands by the single subsistence of our lord Jesus Christ that it covers the meaning of many subsistences, and by this argument tries to introduce into the mystery of Christ two subsistences or two persons, and having brought in two persons then talks of one person only in respect of dignity, honour or adoration, as both **Theodore** and **Nestorius** have written in their madness; if anyone falsely represents the holy synod of Chalcedon, making out that it accepted this heretical view by its terminology of "one subsistence", and if he does not acknowledge that the Word of God is united with human flesh by subsistence, and that on account of this there is only one subsistence or one person, and that the holy synod of Chalcedon thus made a formal statement of belief in the single subsistence of our lord Jesus Christ: let him be **anathema**. There has been no addition of person or subsistence to the holy Trinity even after one of its members, God the Word, becoming human flesh.
6. If anyone declares that it can be only inexactly and not truly said that the holy and glorious ever-virgin Mary is the mother of God, or says that she is so only in some relative way, considering that she bore a mere man and that God the Word was not made into human flesh in her, holding rather that the nativity of a man from her was referred, as they say, to God the Word as he was with the man who came into being; if anyone misrepresents the holy synod of Chalcedon, alleging that it claimed that the virgin was the mother of God only according to that heretical understanding which the blasphemous **Theodore** put forward; or if anyone says that she is the mother of a man or the Christ-bearer, that is the mother of Christ, suggesting that Christ is not God; and does not formally confess that she is properly and truly the mother of God,

because he who before all ages was born of the Father, God the Word, has been made into human flesh in these latter days and has been born to her, and it was in this religious understanding that the holy synod of Chalcedon formally stated its belief that she was the mother of God: let him be **anathema**.

7. If anyone, when speaking about the two natures, does not confess a belief in our one lord Jesus Christ, understood in both his divinity and his humanity, so as by this to signify a difference of natures of which an ineffable union has been made without confusion, in which neither the nature of the Word was changed into the nature of human flesh, nor was the nature of human flesh changed into that of the Word (each remained what it was by nature, even after the union, as this had been made in respect of subsistence); and if anyone understands the two natures in the mystery of Christ in the sense of a division into parts, or if he expresses his belief in the plural natures in the same lord Jesus Christ, God the Word made flesh, but does not consider the difference of those natures, of which he is composed, to be only in the onlooker's mind, a difference which is not compromised by the union (for he is one from both and the two exist through the one) but uses the plurality to suggest that each nature is possessed separately and has a subsistence of its own: let him be **anathema**.
8. If anyone confesses a belief that a union has been made out of the two natures divinity and humanity, or speaks about the one nature of God the Word made flesh, but does not understand these things according to what the fathers have taught, namely that from the divine and human natures a union was made according to subsistence, and that one Christ was formed, and from these expressions tries to introduce one nature or substance made of the deity and human flesh of Christ: let him be **anathema**. In saying that it was in respect of subsistence that the only-begotten God the Word was united, we are not alleging that there was a confusion made of each of the natures into one another, but rather that each of the two remained what it was, and in this way we understand that the Word was united to human flesh. So there is only one Christ, God and man, the same being consubstantial with the Father in respect of his divinity, and also consubstantial with us in respect of our humanity. Both those who divide or split up the mystery of the divine dispensation of Christ and those who introduce into that mystery some confusion are equally rejected and anathematized by the church of God.
9. If anyone says that Christ is to be worshipped in his two natures, and by that wishes to introduce two adorations, a separate one for God the Word and another for the man; or if anyone, so as to remove the human flesh or to mix up the divinity and the humanity, monstrously invents one nature or substance brought together from the two, and so worships Christ, but not by a single adoration God the Word in human flesh along with his human flesh, as has been the tradition of the church from the beginning: let him be **anathema**.
10. If anyone does not confess his belief that our lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified in his human flesh, is truly God and the Lord of glory and one of the members of the holy Trinity: let him be **anathema**.
11. If anyone does not anathematize **Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, Apollinarius Nestorius, Eutyches and Origen**, as well as their heretical books, and also all other heretics who have already been condemned and anathematized by the holy, catholic and apostolic church and by the four holy synods which have already been mentioned, and also all those who have thought or now think in the same way as the aforesaid heretics and who persist in their error even to death: let him be **anathema**.
12. If anyone defends the heretical **Theodore of Mopsuestia**, who said that God the Word is one, while quite another is Christ, who was troubled by the passions of the soul and the desires of human flesh, was gradually separated from that which is inferior, and became better by his progress in good works, and could not be faulted in his way of life, and as a mere man was baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the holy Spirit, and through this baptism received the grace of the holy Spirit and came to deserve sonship and to be adored, in the way that one adores a statue of the emperor, as if he were God the Word, and that he became after his resurrection immutable in his thoughts and entirely without sin. Furthermore this heretical Theodore claimed that the union of God the Word to Christ is rather like that which, according to the teaching of the Apostle, is between a man and his wife: The two shall become one. Among innumerable other blasphemies he dared to allege that, when after his resurrection the Lord breathed on his disciples and said, Receive the holy Spirit, he was not truly giving them the holy Spirit, but he breathed on them only as a sign. Similarly he claimed that Thomas's profession of faith made when, after his resurrection, he touched the hands and side of the Lord, namely My Lord and my God, was not said about Christ, but that Thomas was in this way extolling God for raising up Christ and expressing his astonishment at the miracle of the resurrection. This **Theodore** makes a comparison which is even worse than this when, writing about the acts of the Apostles, he says that Christ was like Plato, Manichaeus, Epicurus and Marcion, alleging that just as each of these men arrived at his own teaching and then had his disciples called after him Platonists, Manichaeans, Epicureans and Marcionites, so Christ found his teaching and then had disciples who were called Christians. If anyone offers a defence for this more heretical Theodore, and his heretical books in which he throws up the aforesaid blasphemies and many other additional blasphemies against our great God and saviour Jesus Christ, and if anyone fails to anathematize him and his heretical books as well as all those who offer acceptance or defence to him, or who allege that his interpretation is correct, or who write on his behalf or on that of his heretical teachings, or who are or have been of the same way of thinking and persist until death in this error: let him be **anathema**.
13. If anyone defends the heretical writings of **Theodoret** which were composed against the true faith, against the first holy synod of Ephesus and against holy Cyril and his Twelve Chapters, and also defends what Theodoret wrote to support the heretical **Theodore** and **Nestorius** and others who think in the same way as the aforesaid Theodore and Nestorius and accept them or their heresy and if anyone, because of them, shall accuse of being heretical the doctors of the church who have stated their belief in the union according to subsistence of God the Word; and if anyone does not anathematize these heretical books and those who have thought or now think in this way, and all those who have written against the true faith or against holy Cyril and his twelve chapters, and who persist in such heresy until they die: let him be **anathema**.
14. If anyone defends the letter which **Ibas** is said to have written to Mari the Persian, which denies that God the Word, who became incarnate of Mary the holy mother of God and ever virgin, became man, but alleges that he was only a man born to her, whom it describes as a temple, as if God the Word was one and the man someone quite different; which condemns holy Cyril as if he were a heretic, when he gives the true teaching of Christians, and accuses holy Cyril of writing opinions like those of the heretical **Apollinarius** ;which rebukes the first holy synod of Ephesus, alleging that it condemned **Nestorius** without going into the matter by a formal examination; which claims that the twelve chapters of holy Cyril are heretical and opposed to the true faith; and which defends **Theodore** and **Nestorius** and their heretical teachings and books. If anyone defends the said letter and does not anathematize it and all those who offer a defence for it and allege that it or a part of it is correct, or if anyone defends those who have written or shall write in support of it or the heresies contained in it, or supports those who are bold enough to defend it or its heresies in the name of the holy fathers of the holy synod of Chalcedon, and persists in these errors until his death: let him be **anathema**.

Such then are the assertions we confess. *We have received them from*

1. holy **Scripture**, from
2. the teaching of the holy **fathers**, and from
3. the definitions about the one and the same faith made by the aforesaid four holy **synods**.

Moreover, condemnation has been passed by us against the heretics and their impiety, and also against those who have justified or shall justify the so-called "Three Chapters", and against those who have persisted or will persist in their own error. If anyone should attempt to hand on, or to teach by word or writing, anything contrary to what we have regulated, then if he is a bishop or somebody appointed to the clergy, in so far as he is acting contrary to what befits priests and the ecclesiastical status, let him be stripped of the rank of priest or cleric, and if he is a monk or lay person, let him be **anathema**.

---

Introduction and translation taken from *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner

END OF TEXT

