

## **The Council of Constantinople**

### **Objectives**

To learn about the heresies of Apolinarius, Eusabius and Macedonius against the Holy Spirit and to understand how the church refuted them.

### **References**

1. “The Era of Ecumenical Councils (Asr El Magamee)” by Fr. Kyrollos El Antouny
2. Dioceses of the Southern U.S. [www.suscopts.org](http://www.suscopts.org) (servants and preservants)
3. “The Nature of Christ” by H.H. Pope Shenouda the 3<sup>rd</sup>

### **Scriptural Verses**

“And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one” (1 John 5:6-7)

### **Lesson Guidelines**

#### **1. Qualifications of the Ecumenical Council**

- Held because of a heresy
- Held by an Emperor’s invitation
- Attended by most of the bishops to represent the whole world
- Must issue a Statement of Faith
- Only three ecumenical councils fulfilled these criteria
  - The first at Nicea, 325 AD
  - The second at Constantinople, 381 AD
  - The third at Ephesus, 431 AD

#### **2. The Council of Constantinople**

##### **A. The Heresy:** (Against the Holy Spirit)

Three heretics blasphemed against the Holy Spirit

**1. Macedonius** said: “The Holy Spirit is created like angels but superior to them and is not one of the three Hypostasis”

**2. Apolinarius** said: “The Three Hypostasis of the Holy Trinity are not equal. The Holy Spirit is great, the Son is greater and the Father is the greatest.” He also blasphemed against the nature of Christ claiming that His human nature was not in need of a soul because God the Logos provided the needed life.

**3. Eusabius** claimed: The Holy Trinity is one person. He appeared in the Old Testament as the Father, was incarnate in the New Testament as the Son and descended upon the disciples as the Holy Spirit.

### **B. The Emperor:** King Theodosius Senior

Emperor Theodosius was a very faithful Christian, interested in keeping the right faith of the church. He was called the “Orthodox King.” He delivered a decree in the year 381 AD making Christianity the official religion of the Empire and ordered the destruction of pagan temples, transforming them to churches.

### **C. The Council of Bishops: (150 attendees)**

One hundred and fifty bishops assembled in the city of Constantinople to attend this council, which was chaired by His Grace the respectable **Malatius, Bishop of Antioch**. He was a respected old man who defended the faith courageously and departed in the year 381 before the completion of the sessions of this great council

**Abba Timothy**, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Pope of Alexandria attended this council with the pillars of Orthodoxy: **St. Gregory the Theologian**, a defender of the true faith and author of the Gregorian Liturgy, and **St. Gregory Bishop of Nyssa**.

This council was a purely eastern council because none of the bishops from the western churches attended, though they accepted the resolutions of the Council

### **D. Resolution of the Council**

The bishops of the council proclaimed that the Holy Spirit is the third Hypostasis of the Holy Trinity and is equal and one with the Father and the Son. They wrote the Conclusion of the Nicean Creed “Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit...we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come.” They condemned the heresies of Macedonius, Apolinarius and Eusabius and excommunicated them.

They permitted the transfer of a bishop from the See for which he was originally ordained to another See only under extenuating circumstances and by the decision of a council of bishops.

**Note:** In the year 1012, the Church of Rome claimed that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and Son and altered the Creed - “proceeds from the Father and the Son.” This contradicts Orthodox belief that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father.

### **Conclusion**

The Holy Spirit is the third Hypostasis of the Holy Trinity, who proceeds from the Father and dwells in us forever. Through the Council of Constantinople the correct belief regarding the Holy Spirit was restored and preserved for Christians throughout all ages.

### **Activities/Discussion Points**

1. Why do we oppose the Catholic Church in saying that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son? Simply because the Lord Jesus Christ said:

- a) “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” (John 14: 16 - 17)

- b) “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (John 14: 26)
- c) “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.” (John 15: 26)

2. Is the Holy Spirit the same in the Old and New Testaments?

He is the same but His role differs:

In the Old Testament He came upon the priests, kings, and prophets after they were anointed with oil. He also departed from people who were unworthy of Him as in the case of Saul.

In the New Testament the Holy Spirit dwells in us through the Sacrament of Confirmation and never departs from us because we become a temple for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit may be sad and not working in us when we live in sin but He is always there and is ignited through repentance. Therefore, the church does not repeat the baptism or confirmation of those who deny the faith but then return.

3. Remember the following commandment and recite it daily: “Do not quench the Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 5: 19)