

THE FIRST SEVEN ECUMENICAL CHURCH COUNCILS

NAME OF COUNCIL	DATE	ISSUES / RESULTS
First Council of Nicaea	325	Affirmed that Jesus is truly God and equal to the Father (Christ is fully divine); repudiated Arianism, adopted the Nicene Creed; defined the very foundations of orthodoxy; defined a formal church structure above the local level
First Council of Constantinople	381	Affirmed the full Deity of the Holy Spirit; affirmed that Jesus was perfectly man (Christ is fully human) against the Apollinarians; revised the Nicene Creed into its present form which is used in the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches; prohibited any further alteration of the Creed without the assent of an Ecumenical Council; stated that Constantinople should have "primacy of honor" after the bishop of Rome, on the ground that Constantinople was "the new Rome."
Council of Ephesus	431	Affirmed the sole authority of the creed of Nicaea; affirmed that Jesus is one person (Christ is a unified person) against Nestorianism; proclaimed the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God (a term which at the time emphasized Jesus' humanity and Mary's unique circumstance only and not the later belief of her perpetual virginity, sinlessness, and cooperative work in human redemption); condemned Pelagianism; decision to condemn Nestorianism caused a split in the Eastern Church which continues today.
Council of Chalcedon	451	Affirmed that in Jesus there are two distinct natures in one person that are hypostatically united "without confusion, change, division or separation"; repudiated the Eutychianism and Monophysitism (Christ is human and divine in one person); adopted the Chalcedonian Creed; Council is not accepted by the Oriental Orthodox branch of the church which has been accused of being monophysite. Note: The Armenian Apostolic church (which missed the Council due to conflict and martyrdom at the hand of the Persians) claims their teaching is misunderstood as monophysitism and so they refuse to accept the decrees of the Council with regard to monophysitism.
Second Council of Constantinople	553	Reaffirmed decisions and doctrines explicated by previous Councils, condemned new Arian, Nestorian, and Monophysite writings; condemned Origenism; further divided church between West and East.
Third Council of Constantinople	680-681	Asserted that Jesus had both a divine and human will; repudiated Monothelitism; reaffirmed equal privilege of Constantinople with Rome while affirming church practices contrasting with those of Rome; further divided church between West and East.
Second Council of Nicaea	787	Restoration of the veneration of icons and end of the first iconoclasm. It is rejected by some Protestant denominations, who instead prefer the Council of Hieria (754), which had also described itself as the Seventh Ecumenical Council and had condemned the veneration of icons; too measures against monasticism which resulted in monastic refugees emigrating from imperially controlled territories in the East.