

Comparative Theology (Part I)

The First Schism and Non-Chalcedonian Orthodox

1- Objectives

- ❖ The council of Chalcedon marked the beginning of the separation of the great church of God into two main divisions
- ❖ To know about the churches who share with us our Orthodox faith

2- References

- ❖ The Era of Ecumenical Councils (Asr El Magamee), Fr. Kyrillos El Antouny
- ❖ The Nature of Christ (H.H. Pope Shenouda the 3rd)
- ❖ The Coptic Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Movement (Maged Attia)

3- Scriptural Verse

- ❖ “The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also“ (2 Timothy 2:2)

4- Lesson Guidelines

The First Schism (Split)

- ❖ In the Second Council of Ephesus, Pope Dioscorus accepted Eutychus back and Pope Leo of Rome accused him of being “Eutychian” and made a resolution to excommunicate Pope Dioscorus from any church orders because:
 - 1- He accepted Eutyches (Eutyches confessed the right faith in front of the council written and orally although he said it just to get absolution).
 - 2- He took the lead of the council (The Emperor appointed him leader) and did not allow the letter of Leo to be read (He asked for it twice but the Emperor had more letter to be read first then they forgot Leo’s letter).
 - 3- He has been invited three times to attend the council and refused. (He was locked in a place and he insisted about the presence of the judges)
- ❖ Emperor Theodosius died; Pope Dioscorus lost a great Emperor defender of the right faith. Emperor Theodosius had no child. His sister Policharia, who was a nun, broke her vow and married Markian who was a Nestorian officer in her brother’s army. They became the Emperor and the Queen and this was in favor of Pope Leo.
- ❖ The emperor ordered to make a council in Chalcedon. They all attended the sad council, which was the cause of schism of the one holy church of God.

Council of Chalcedon in 451

- ❖ Apparently was held to condemn **Eutyches** but was an attempt to make Rome as supreme see and to avoid the authority of Pope **Dioscorus**
- ❖ They issued Tome Leo: Presented as declaration of true faith “there are two Natures of Christ”.

- ❖ Pope Dioscorus refused it and said: “One Nature out of Two”. Deceit and politics played a big role; Pope Dioscorus was ill-treated and was physically attacked. He issued an anathema and was exiled to Gangra, where he reposed.

First Schism separated the church into two parts:

- ❖ Chalcedonian (Rome and Constantinople).
- ❖ Non-Chalcedonian (Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem).
- ❖ The Non-Chalcedonian (Orthodox = straight) cleaves strongly to the Apostolic faith, presented by the Lord Jesus Christ to His Apostles and was kept in the church through tradition, canons of the apostles, the fathers, etc

Non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches

- ❖ Coptic Orthodox (See of Alexandria)
- ❖ Syrian Orthodox (Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East); See of Antioch (location - Damascus); First church to be established after Jerusalem by St. Paul and St. Barnabas; St. Peter also visited it, and is considered its first bishop. This church suffered with the Coptic Church at the hands of the Chalcedonians and they have strong ties together. They use Syriac language and pray the Liturgy of St. James.
- ❖ Armenian Orthodox: Established through the preaching of St. Thaddaeus and St. Bartholomew: It became a Christian country in 301 AD through the preaching of St. Gregory the Armenian; 1st state in the world to adopt Christianity as official religion; they declared their Orthodox faith, and refused the council of Chalcedon in the council of Devin (506 AD. They kept their Armenian Language in Prayers. They have One Faith with the Coptic Church, but adopted the “new (Roman Gregorian) Calendar”; Celebrate Nativity and Epiphany on Jan. 6 and use unleavened bread for Qorban.
- ❖ Ethiopian Orthodox (they worshiped God after their queen visited King Solomon): Christianity entered through the Baptism of the eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). Pope Athanasius ordained their first Bishop, Frumentius (Abba Salama). Pope Kyrillos VI ordained the first Patriarch for Ethiopia. They use 14 liturgies which they claim they received from the Coptic Church.
- ❖ Indian Orthodox (Malankara Syrian Orthodox Diocese of Malabar) [two groups]: Preached by St. Thomas the Apostle and had missionary visits by Syrians, Nestorians and Jesuits. In 1653, they chose the Orthodox Faith. Their First Patriarch, Mar Thoma I, ordained by the Patriarch of Antioch. Conflicts between the Syrian and Indian Churches caused an administrative split, but the two groups coexist calmly. They still keep the rituals they received from the Syrian Church.
- ❖ Eritrean Church: Was part of the Ethiopian Church, until 1994 Holy Synod of the Coptic Church accepted their request to be independent. H.H. Pope Shenouda III ordained 5 Bishops, one of whom was ordained a Patriarch, Abouna Phillopos.

Recent Dialogues

- ❖ All agree upon the same faith.
- ❖ Both sides (as well as the Catholic Church) signed protocols defining their understanding of the Nature of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ❖ They are based on the teachings of St. Athanasius and St. Cyril “We all believe that Christ is fully Divine and fully Human. His Divinity and His Humanity united and never separated for a single moment, nor a twinkling of an eye, yet without mingling, without confusion, and without alteration”.
- ❖ Even though the main issue of the schism is resolved, fifteen centuries of separation has caused many other problems that must be resolved before complete unity.

5- Conclusion

- ❖ We, Coptic Church, do not accept the resolutions of the Council of Chalcedon. Pope Dioscorus, preserved our faith from corruption by abiding in the teaching of Pope Cyril the pillar of faith. He suffered a lot to keep the faith unblemished and was exiled in the island of Gangra till his departure into the heaven.
- ❖ The churches that adopted the original Orthodox faith are: the Coptic; the Syrian (Antioch); the Armenian; the Ethiopian; the Indian and the Eritrean Churches.
- ❖ All these churches are one family; they are one in faith and in the communion of the mysteries.

6- Activities / Discussion Points

- ❖ Form groups to discuss the main points that led to the schism then discuss together how important was it to stand firmly and to oppose it.
(The belief in the One Nature of the Incarnate Logos is essential, necessary and fundamental for redemption. Redemption requires unlimited propitiation sufficient for the forgiveness of the unlimited sins of all the people through all ages. There was no way other than the incarnation of God the Logos to offer this through His divine power).