

The Council of Ephesus (431 AD):

The Council of Ephesus, convened in Asia Minor in 431 under the reign of Emperor Theodosius II, grandson of Theodosius the Great, marked a pivotal moment in the history of Christian doctrine. With 200 bishops in attendance, the council addressed the contentious Nestorian Controversy, which centered on the nature of Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

The Nestorian Controversy Explained:

Nestorius, whose teachings sparked widespread debate, posited that the Virgin Mary gave birth to a human, Jesus Christ, rather than God, the Logos ("The Word", Son of God). According to Nestorius, the Logos dwelled in Christ as in a temple, making Christ a Theophoros, or "Bearer of God," rather than God himself. This led to the assertion that Mary should be referred to as "Christotokos" (Mother of Christ) rather than "Theotokos" (Mother of God), giving rise to the term "Christological controversies" due to its focus on the nature of Christ's incarnation.

Council's Condemnation of Nestorianism:

The council vehemently rejected Nestorius' teachings, affirming that they overly emphasized Christ's human nature at the expense of His divine nature. It clarified that Jesus Christ is one person embodying both divine and human natures, not two separate entities coexisting. Consequently, the Virgin Mary was rightfully named "Theotokos," as she bore God made flesh. The council emphasized the unity of Christ's two natures, divine and human, coexisting without confusion or separation.

Affirmation of the Creed:

Furthermore, the Council of Ephesus reinforced the Creed established by the First and Second Ecumenical Councils, declaring it complete and prohibiting any modifications, whether by addition or deletion. This decree aimed to preserve the integrity of Christian doctrinal formulation, ensuring a unified understanding of Christ's nature and the role of the Virgin Mary in the incarnation.

The Council of Ephesus thus played a crucial role in defining orthodox Christology, firmly establishing the doctrine of the Theotokos and the dual nature of Christ as central tenets of Christian faith. Its decisions have had a lasting impact on the theological and devotional practices of the Christian Church, particularly in affirming the doctrine of the Incarnation and the veneration of the Virgin Mary.