

Background of the Ecumenical Councils of Rome

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Tuesday, August 4, 2026

Shortly after the death of John the apostle in 100 A.D. and his completion of the last book of the Bible, The Revelation of Jesus Christ to John, an intellectual and spiritual assault commenced. Its strategy was to destroy the Bible's authority and power, as well as the person of Jesus Christ.

This nefarious stratagem sought Christ's destruction by the re-establishment of a priestly-clerical class whose success depended on its cunning craftiness consisting of deceit (sorcery),¹ incrementalism, and corruption. Its goal was to completely render Christ's work (crucifixion, atonement, redemption), words (authority), and legacy (Christ's Holy Spirit) of no effect.

This meant erasing the Savior's payment for sin as unnecessary. Jesus' words threatened the whole religious structure because the completed scriptures were to now become the believer's authority. This prospect meant the whole concept of religion (law vs. grace) was dead. Finally, there was the proposition that as the saint's teacher, the Holy Spirit of Christ undermined the necessity for men to captivate others when it came to matters of the individual's soul, spirit, and life—one's philosophical worldview.

This conflict arose in a most sinister fashion. In one corner you had an ecclesiastical body championing itself as 'Christian' whose roots could be traced to Babylon and whose growing allegiance was clearly Roman. A fascinating point regarding this counterfeit 'Christianity' was its façade of legitimacy; however, the deeper you went the more one discovered its pseudo fidelity toward good, and its mutual devotion to the powers of darkness. Those enduring the cruel and relentless imperial persecutions of Rome, discerned the heart of this scarlet colored beast.

In the other corner, you had an endless parade of clerics and non-Christian, religious fanatics who had no devotion to the Bible or Christ. For us today it is reflected in 'Christian' denominationalism. It has gone so far as to infiltrate the two-party system within the political framework of American representative government.²

Having the appearance of 'Christian' religiosity, or as I like to call it *churchianity*, this malevolent group, ultimately groomed by the Roman religionists, would become the other element in Hegel's godless dialecticism or 'struggle,' namely a conflict that really was no conflict at all, but a type of religious Reformation.

¹ Casting down the truth and substituting that truth with a lie. It also challenged anyone questioning the sorcerer's character as 'fringe' or a conspiracy theorist.

² Not to mention the obvious Democratic Socialists of America (Commies), namely the Democratic Party, Constitutionals also recognize those masquerading as R.I.N.O.'s (Republicans in name only) as those hiding behind the Republican party label. These apparent opposites, share the same incestuous bed of un-Constitutional and unbiblical collectivist ideology.

Protestantism was perceived as outwardly acceptable. It appeared it was spiritually and ideologically in conflict with Rome. The shocking reality to those who had eyes to see and ears to hear; however, was that Rome and Protestantism produced the same rotten fruit—manipulation, bondage, the depersonalization of the individual through the collectivist mindset (the group memory complex), and ultimately spiritual death. Much like Janus, the two-faced Roman god, the real motives and objectives were hidden from the non-discriminating. Present a guise of respectability to the masses while engaging in the most heinous of all practices—the teaching of works with its bondage and darkness versus grace with its message of hope, peace, and spiritual freedom in Christ.

Such is the case of the Ecumenical Councils. These religious conclaves bolstered and legitimized Rome as the champion of Christology on the one hand but on the other eviscerated the person of Christ, substituted Roman magisterium for biblical authority, and relegated the Holy Spirit as the believer's teacher to a neutral and ineffectual position.

There was no such duality or double-mindedness on the part of the true believer in Christ. The Roman persecutions had done their best to silence the believer's voice when it came to matters of corrupt Roman politicians serving their own interests, 'science falsely so called,' Greek intellectualism, and biblical creationism versus pagan cosmology.

The ultimate conflict resulted from those unable to accept God's grace through Christ juxtaposed (contrasted) to the purpose of the law. The purpose of the law was to be our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. This conflict could be traced to Eden where acknowledging the truth was the true benchmark of Christianity, not the willful choice of a creature who all their lifetime was subject to bondage.

At the close of the New Testament, God's witnesses were overwhelmingly clear and indicting:

1. BEYOND THE CORRUPTION OF MAN

The story of God's redemptive plan written in the celestial heavens

2. CONTINUITY OF GOD'S SPOKEN WORD TO MEN

The spoken word passed down from Adam to Noah to Abraham to Moses

3. THE LAW AND MAN'S SPIRIT—A GUILTY CONSCIENCE

God's commandments written down and thundered from Mount Sinai

4. THE UNIQUE DYNAMIC BETWEEN JESUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

God in flesh, the Incarnation of the Word, Jesus Christ as payment for man's sin

5. BAPTISM BY THE HOLY SPIRIT—WHEN REDEMPTION OCCURS

The giving of the Holy Spirit as the believer's redeemer and teacher

6. THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY: GOD OR MEN

The completion of the inerrant word signaled the end of man's monopoly in spiritual matters

The ecumenical councils were a religious reaction and response to the clear teaching of scripture regarding Christ, his word, and his Holy Spirit and what this meant to the converted sinner. The clear teaching of scripture, directed to the saint, disclosed freedom from the power of the law; a peace that passes all understanding; and imputed

righteousness with its sanctification, along with the individual's personal gifting and calling of God, i.e. consecration.

The councils crossed all denominational³ barriers, i.e. as spearheaded by the teachings of the Roman Church Fathers.⁴ These men saw the simplicity of the apostolic faith, with its revolutionary teaching, as a direct threat to the establishment, maintenance, and perpetuity of their religious clericalism.

With a rigid caste and hierarchy possessing a descending order of authority, top down, from priests, bishops, presbyters, elders and deacons⁵ the concept of Christ's Holy Spirit as the believer's teacher and the absence of a priestly chain of command, as well as the concept of the priesthood believer, threatened the very existence of this religious monolith.

The ecumenical councils of Rome were intended to give the world the IMPRESSION that Rome was the champion of Christianity as it fought for the doctrinal purity of scripture. Two things to remember:

- The problems that arose in the apostolic churches were not issues involving the **nature of Christ** but questions involving idolatry, what day to worship, eating unclean meats (all in Corinthian church), the gospel of works vs. the gospel of grace (Galatians), etc. As we have it with the Roman Church Fathers, denominationalism was man's attempt to take the focus off Christ and place it on the individual in the pulpit (Acts 20:30;⁶ Jezebel, a prophetess in Thyatira from Rev. 2:20). We see this with Justin Martyr, Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. From teacher to student we see this fascination

³ Denominationalism was going on in the Corinthian church (I Cor. 1:10-13). Verse 10 says divisions occur because individuals exalt themselves above Christ through teaching what is contrary to the scriptures . . . The focus is taken off Christ and put on an individual. This can occur from an individual not considering the whole counsel of God but rather focusing on one or two verses and taking those verses out of context. Whole 'Christian' denominations have been constructed in this fashion. In the end, denominationalism is personality driven (the cult of personality) instead of Christ directed.

⁴ With individuals and their stilted view of church evangelism, it is always about numbers of people or a group, not the genuine redemption of the individual. This stems from the faulty assumption that the gospel is inclusive instead of exclusive (see Matt. 13:11; Matt. 7:13, 14; Matt. 20:16; 22:14)

⁵ These offices were necessary during the apostolic church period. What held the visible church together was the Holy Spirit's influence, clerical authority as evidenced from the various church offices, and apostolic doctrine with its supernatural enforcement. After the word was completed, the visible would give way to the invisible church. By virtue of Christ's Holy Spirit as teacher and the completed and inerrant scriptures as the believer's authority, as the apostolic influence disappeared, man's dependence on others for his spiritual well-being was significantly reduced. What kept the concept of corporate worship alive was the lack of the Bible's accessibility and availability. While the invention of the printing press (1450) by Johannes Guttenberg in Europe signaled a loosening of the stranglehold on knowledge resulting from the Dark Ages, with its superstition and ignorance, this reliance on the clergy as the guardians of all things spiritual would not be destroyed until the concept of publishing houses was conceived and competition among them made access to Bibles possible.

⁶ Acts 20:30—Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

with Greek philosophy (Stoicism)⁷ to Gnosticism⁸—a move to divide Jesus' humanity from his divinity

- A Catholic monk, Jerome compiled a corrupt Latin version of the Bible (Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate, 405 A.D.) that was Rome's answer to the true Vulgate embraced by the believers in Christ. The Morning Star of the Reformation, John Wycliffe (1320-1384), translated the Old Latin Bible into English. Jerome, a frequent visitor of Alexandria, Egypt, produced a 'bible' fraught with error which reflected his own preference for Greek philosophy, Gnostic paganism and Eastern mysticism.

1. **Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.)**—Convened to renounce Arianism

Its founder Arius, an unbelieving Alexandrian, Egyptian presbyter advocated a nuance of Gnosticism. Gnosticism denounced Jesus' humanity but assented to his divinity. Either way, by doing so Gnostics neutralized any argument the Jesus Christ could be the Son of God. Arianism substantively renounced Jesus Christ as the Son of God, saying we was a creation and therefore not God. Sounds a little like the Mormon's view of Christ with their unbiblical assertion that Lucifer and Jesus are brothers

2. **Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.)**—Called to settle Apollinarianism

Apollinaris the Younger, bishop of Laodicea believed Jesus' soul was divine while his body was simply human. Another take on Gnosticism, this heresy is typical and should be no surprise coming from a man whose church was soundly rebuked by Christ for being lukewarm. As a fence sitter, middle-of-the-road, bipartisan and reaching across the aisle, Appolinaris just could not embrace the clear teaching of the Bible when it came to the nature and substance of Jesus Christ—the God man

3. **Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.)**—Dealt with the heresy of Nestorianism

This heresy said that Jesus' two natures could not co-exist within one person. A complete denial of scripture's clear teaching, this was simply another way men rejected their need for a Savior and sin-bearer

4. **Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.)**—Convened to settle a dispute regarding the Eutychian doctrine

Same problem, different angle. The tenet of Eutychian attacked the rational component of Christ's mind and said Christ's two natures, divine and human, were so scrambled Jesus was unable to relate to us, and because of this personal

⁷ Stoicism's basic tenet said that dormant within the individual lay man's capacity to harness the body, tongue, reason, and social interaction by willful determinism. This stands in stark contrast to the Bible's teaching that although man has been given a spirit by his Creator (conscience of right and wrong), this awareness is not enough to secure redemption of man's radically corrupt nature—man's nature is incorrigible (beyond man's capacity to regenerate or make new).

⁸ If Gnosticism could separate Jesus from his divine nature, Jesus would be reduced to simply a man therefore, incapable of atoning for man's sin. Jesus' virgin birth consists of two profound truths: his conception was divine; and Jesus' ontogeny, or development, within Mary's womb was supernatural (no umbilical cord or blood nourishment from the mother necessary). Jesus was made of a woman, meaning he was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4). Jesus' chromosomal makeup consisted of 23 chromosomes, not the complimentary 46, as Jesus had a Father but no mother, in the traditional sense.

conflict within Christ, his capacity to atone for man's sin was ineffectual. Its implication is obvious—Jesus was not God

5. **Council of Constantinople (453 A.D.)—Monophysitism**

Refusing to embrace the two natures of Christ, Monophysitism declared that the two distinct natures of Christ created a new being. This new creature was neither Christ nor did this creature possess the moral substance and reflect the character of God. What blasphemy!