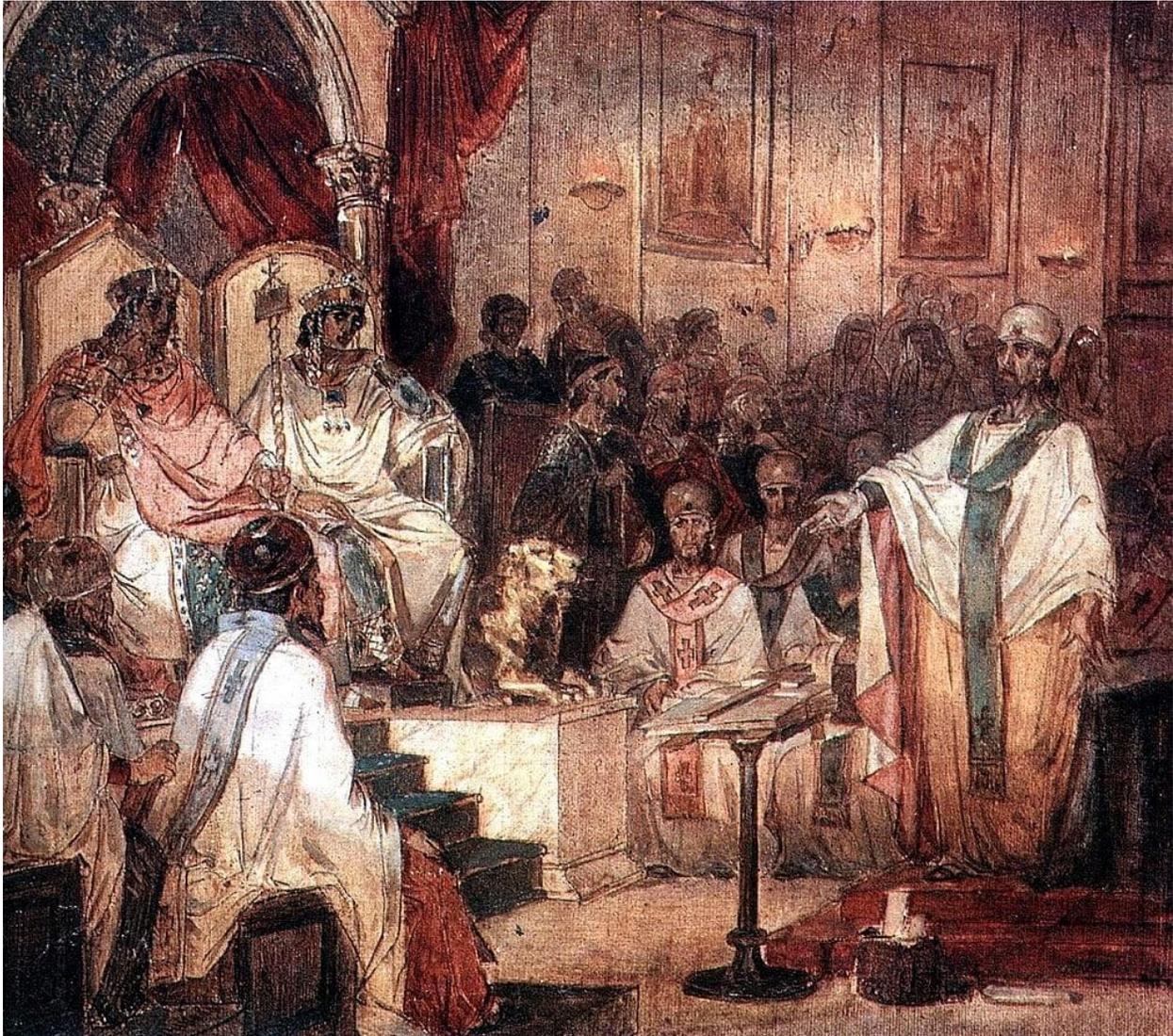


The Council of Chalcedon (451 CE)



By the year **451**, Christianity had spread widely across the Roman Empire. Churches were growing, and followers of Jesus were asking an important question:

Who exactly is Jesus?

Everyone agreed that Jesus was central to the Christian faith. But there were serious disagreements about **how Jesus could be both divine and human at the same time.**

To address this question, church leaders gathered at the **Council of Chalcedon**, near Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul). Hundreds of bishops and church leaders came together to discuss, debate, and pray about what the church should teach.

The Question They Were Trying to Answer

Early Christians believed two things about Jesus:

- Jesus was **truly human** — born, living, suffering, and dying like us.
- Jesus was also **truly divine** — revealing God's presence and power in the world.

The challenge was understanding **how both could be true at the same time.**

Some people believed Jesus was **almost entirely divine**, with his humanity being less important.

Others emphasized Jesus' **humanity so strongly** that it sounded like he might be two separate persons — one human and one divine.

The church worried that either idea missed something important about the story of Jesus.

What the Council Decided

The Council of Chalcedon offered a statement of faith that tried to hold these truths together.

They declared that:

Jesus Christ is one person who is both fully divine and fully human.

They explained that these two natures exist together:

- **without confusion**
- **without change**
- **without division**
- **without separation**

In other words:

- Jesus is **not half God and half human.**
 - Jesus is **not two separate people.**
 - Jesus is **one person in whom both divine and human life meet.**
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Why This Was Important

The church believed this mattered because of what it means for our faith.

If Jesus were **only divine**, then he would not truly share in our human experience.

If Jesus were **only human**, then he could not reveal God's life and love in a unique way.

The Council's teaching tried to say that **in Jesus, God truly entered human life.**

Jesus understands human struggle, suffering, and joy — and at the same time reveals the heart of God.

Why It Still Matters Today

Most Christian churches today — including Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox traditions — still rely on this teaching.

The statement from Chalcedon helps Christians say:

- God understands what it means to be human.
- Human life is deeply valued by God.
- In Jesus, heaven and earth meet.

For many believers, this means that **our faith is not about escaping human life, but about discovering that God is present within it.**

A Simple Way to Remember Chalcedon

The Council of Chalcedon taught that:

Jesus Christ is one person who is fully God and fully human.

Not mixed together.

Not separated apart.

But united in a mysterious and meaningful way.