

- I. **Introduction.** During the bloody times of persecution, as Catholicism attempted to exterminate the true, loyal churches, many of the false doctrines of the Catholic church of today began to take place.

- II. **The beginning of the false doctrines of the Roman Catholic church.**
 - A. **Mariology** (worship of Mary) was introduced at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.
 - B. **“Image worship”** and "saint worship" had their definite start at the (2nd) Council of Nicea in 787 A.D.
 - C. The teaching that there is **no salvation outside the Catholic church** had its beginning in or about the 8th century. *[The phrase "there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church" is often attributed to **Saint Cyprian of Carthage, a 3rd-century Christian bishop**. The phrase is *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* "outside the Church there is no salvation", which is often used to summarize the doctrine that the Church is necessary for salvation.]*
 - D. **The sale of indulgences** was another teaching that began about the 8th century.
 1. This teaching stated that all the works of Christ, most of the works of the apostles, and the good Christians that followed went into a great credit account controlled by the Catholic church.
 2. A sinner was taught that he could buy for himself some of the merit laid up in this credit account and thus escape punishment.
 - E. **The doctrine of Purgatory**, an intermediate place between heaven and hell, was introduced in the 9th century.
 - F. Each of the false doctrines of Catholicism [**many more exist**] could be cataloged but it can be summarized by saying that **not** one of them is found in the New Testament

- III. **The division of the Catholic church.**

- A. In 325 A.D. Emperor Constantine had moved the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to a city in Greece named Byzantium. He changed the name to Constantinople.
 - 1. As a result, there were two capital cities Rome and Constantinople.
 - 2. These two cities also became the heads of two factions within the Roman Catholic church.
 - 3. All the Ecumenical Councils had been held at or near Constantinople. *[The Catholic Church recognizes as ecumenical 21 councils occurring over a period of some 1900 years. The ecumenical nature of some Councils was disputed for some time but was eventually accepted.]*
- B. The Pope at Rome's insistence of being Lord over all, brought about a division. Pope Nicholas and Pope Pontius of Constantinople each excommunicated each other.
- C. This break never healed and today there still exists the Roman Catholic church and Greek Orthodox Catholic church.

IV. During these centuries that Catholicism dominated the scene, true and loyal churches continued to conduct God's work despite the persecution.

- A. Extreme efforts were put forward to destroy all copies of the Bible. Christian books and histories were burned.
- B. All leading pastors and workers were slain.
 - 1. Despite all this, the true churches lived on – the gates of hell did not prevail.
 - 2. In this age, as in every age, there were in existence the churches that are now called Baptist.
- C. Due to the domination of the Catholic church during these years, nearly all accurate histories of the period were destroyed or altered. Most secular history, therefore, in a measure, presents the “**Catholic version**” of what happened.

Discussion: What was the most dangerous teaching of the Roman Catholic church?**Brief Historical Sketches of the Ecumenical Councils**

<https://graduate.christendom.edu/councils/> - a Catholic Institution

1. **First Council of Nicaea – 325 A.D.**
2. Called by the Roman Emperor Constantine and approved by Pope Sylvester I, this first gathering of the bishops of the Church met in the imperial city to discuss the teaching of the Egyptian priest, Arius. In essence, Arius taught that Jesus was a creature of God and therefore He was not God Himself. Unfortunately, Arius' teachings gained acceptance and spread threatening the unity of the Church and the Empire. Desiring an end to the debate, Constantine invited the world's bishops to Nicaea to discuss the matter. Three hundred and eighteen bishops responded to his call. Most came from the East although several were from the West including the papal legate, Bishop Hosius of Cordoba. The Council condemned Arius' heresy, proclaiming the apostolic faith that Jesus is "true God and true man, *consubstantial(homoousios)* with the Father." A Creed was developed to express this apostolic faith. It forms the majority of the Creed that is still recited at Mass today. The council fathers also passed several discipline canons and established the universal method for dating Easter as the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox – this dating method is still used by the Church today.
3. **First Council of Constantinople – 381**
4. Near the end of the fourth century, a devout Catholic emperor from Spain ruled Rome. Theodosius I the Great was concerned with the heresy of Macedonianism, which denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit – as Arius had done previously. Theodosius called the bishops of the East to meet in the imperial capital to condemn this heresy. The 148 bishops reaffirmed the teachings of the Council of Nicaea and added the following words concerning the Holy Spirit to the Nicene Creed: "*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Life-giver, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and Son is worshipped and glorified.*"
5. **Council of Ephesus – 431**
6. In the early fifth century the Patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius, entered into heresy when he denied that Mary was the Mother of God (*Theotokos*) and instead preached that she was the Mother of Christ (*Christotokos*). Nestorius attacked not only Mary but also her Son Jesus. Shocked by this attack on Jesus and His Mother, St. Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria wrote letters to Nestorius, the Emperor, and Pope Celestine I. The pope condemned Nestorius' teachings and eventually with papal approval the Emperor convoked a council to meet in Ephesus. The council fathers proclaimed the apostolic faith that Mary is the Mother of God. Nestorius was deposed from his seat, excommunicated, and exiled for his heresy.
7. **Council of Chalcedon – 451**
8. The Christological controversies continued twenty years after the Council of Ephesus with the arrival of Eutyches, an abbot of a monastery in Constantinople, who taught Jesus had only a divine nature. Eutyches denied the human nature of Christ calling into question whether Jesus was truly human. This rejection of the apostolic faith as reaffirmed by the previous three ecumenical councils inspired one of the great popes in Church history to write a book reiterating Church teaching. Pope St. Leo the Great wrote his famous *Tome* (formulating the doctrine of the hypostatic union) to St. Flavian the Patriarch of

Constantinople, who in turn excommunicated Eutyches. Eventually, a council was called at Chalcedon where the assembled bishops embraced Leo's *Tome* and declared that Jesus is one Divine Person with two natures – human and divine.

9. Second Council of Constantinople – 553

10. The emperor Justinian the Great desired unity and peace in the empire. Although the previous four ecumenical councils addressed the question of Jesus' identity and relationship with the Father and Holy Spirit, proponents of Monophysitism remained. Violence erupted in the east between the Monophysites and the Orthodox but the emperor believed a compromise could be reached. The Monophysites criticized the writings of three long-dead theologians (known as the "Three Chapters" – they are Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa), who they argued were friends of Nestorius. Justinian thought an imperial edict condemning these theologians would pacify the Monophysites but Western bishops viewed his decree as an attack on the Council of Chalcedon (because two of the three theologians had been reinstated at the council after repudiating Nestorius). Pope Vigilius refused to accept the emperor's edict and was eventually arrested and sent to Constantinople, where he remained in captivity for a decade. Ultimately, a council met in 553 that condemned the writings of the three theologians and reiterated the teachings of Ephesus and Chalcedon.

11. Third Council of Constantinople – 680

12. This council was called to address another Christological heresy that originated when the Patriarch of Constantinople (Sergius) taught that Jesus had only one will – a divine will (the heresy is known as Monothelitism). Like the false teaching of Eutyches, this heresy called into question the humanity of Jesus. Emperor Constantine IV called a council, which was approved by Pope St. Agatho. The assembled bishops condemned Sergius' heresy.

13. Second Council of Nicaea – 787

14. In the eighth century, a heresy erupted in the East that threatened to destroy all forms of sacred art. Known as iconoclasm, this heresy taught that any representation in art of sacred persons was idolatry. Those who held to this belief destroyed religious paintings, sculptures, icons, and other works of art. This council met in the same city as the first ecumenical gathering to declare that Catholics do not worship artistic images but rather sacred art assists the faithful in giving reverence to God (and venerated to the saints) who are represented.

15. Fourth Council of Constantinople – 869

16. In the mid-ninth century, Emperor Michael III deposed Ignatius, the legitimate bishop of Constantinople, and replaced him with the layman Photius. News of this illegal action eventually reached Rome, where Pope Nicholas I the Great refused to recognize Photius' claim to the episcopacy. Subsequently, Photius excommunicated Pope Nicholas (although he had no authority to do so) and a schism erupted. Eventually, in 869, the new emperor, Basil the Macedonian, called a council to end the schism. Photius was deposed and banished, and unity was restored. This was the last council to meet for the next 124 years.

To date, thirteen More councils have subsequently occurred.