

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christology, Session 5, Patristic Christology, Part 4, Monophysitism, Council of Chalcedon Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Peterson, Christology, Session 5, Patristic Christology, Part 4, Monophysitism, Council of Chalcedon, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's Christology Session 5 focuses on the historical development of understanding Christ's nature, specifically addressing the **heresy of Monophysitism** and the **Council of Chalcedon** in 451 AD. The session explains **Monophysitism's flawed concept** of Christ having only one merged divine-human nature. It then details the **Council of Chalcedon's orthodox definition**, which affirmed Christ as **fully God and fully human** in two distinct natures, united in one person, refuting previous heresies. Finally, the lecture transitions to discussing the **19th-century "Lives of Jesus" movement** and its critical, often liberal, reinterpretations of Christ's historical figure, ultimately critiqued by Albert Schweitzer for imposing modern biases.

2. 23 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Christology, Session 5 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Theology → Theology, Peterson → Christology).



Peterson_Christology_Session05.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Salvation, Session 5, Patristic Christology, Part 4, Monophysitism, Council of Chalcedon

Briefing Document: Christology - Monophysitism and the Council of Chalcedon

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 5 of his Christology lectures, focusing on the heresy of Monophysitism (Eutychianism) and the subsequent Council of Chalcedon (451 AD). The lecture also briefly touches upon criticisms of Chalcedon and provides an introduction to the "Lives of Jesus" movement of the 19th century as a precursor to modern Christology.

I. Monophysitism (Eutychianism): A Dangerous Hybrid

- **Definition:** Monophysitism, associated with Eutychius (c. 380-456 AD), taught that after the Incarnation, Christ's human nature was absorbed, merged, or changed into his divine nature, resulting in a single, new, composite nature.
- "Eutychius taught that as a result of the Incarnation, Christ's human nature was taken up, absorbed, and merged into the divine nature so that both natures were changed into one new nature, a nature that now was a kind of divine-human composite."
- **Key Idea:** The Incarnate Christ had *one* nature (*monos physis*), not two.
- **Consequences:** This view resulted in a Christ who was neither truly God nor truly man, a "hybrid."
- "So this makes him a hybrid, neither God nor man."
- **Impact on Redemption:** A Christ who is not fully God and fully man cannot effectively redeem humanity.
- "But the result of every form of Monophysitism is that Christ is neither truly God nor truly man, a view contrary to scripture and leaving us with a Christ who cannot redeem—the Council of Chalcedon 451, Christological Orthodoxy."
- **Distinction from Apollinarianism (but similar outcome):** While different in its mechanism, Monophysitism, like Apollinarianism, resulted in an overpowering divinity and a submerged humanity.
- "...the result is similar in that in this new nature, we have an overpowering divinity and a submerged humanity."

II. The Council of Chalcedon (451 AD): Defining Orthodox Christology

- **Context:** Convened in October 451 with around 520 bishops to address ongoing Christological disputes, particularly Monophysitism. Western influence was significant due to Pope Leo's Tome.
- "In October 451, 520 bishops gathered at Chalcedon to wrestle with the ongoing Christological disputes within the Church... Yes, Western influence was great due to Leo's Tome, a letter that was written prior to the Council and which would be incorporated into the Chalcedonian Creed."
- **Significance:** The Chalcedonian Definition became a crucial standard for orthodox Christology, affirming the two natures (divine and human) in one person of Christ.
- "...it became, quote, the second great high-water mark of early Christian theology. It set an imperishable standard for Orthodoxy, close quote, as it confessed the deity and humanity of Christ in the classic formulation of two natures, one person."
- **Key Affirmations of the Chalcedonian Definition (Creed):** Christ is "one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead and the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man..."
- He possesses a "rational soul and body."
- He is "consubstantial with the Father in Godhead and the same consubstantial with us in manhood."
- He is "begotten from the Father before the ages as regards his Godhead, and in the last days the same because of us and because of our salvation, begotten from the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, the God-bearer, as regards his manhood..."
- He is "made known in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation."
- "The first two withouts are against Eutychianism or Monophysitism, without confusion, without change."
- "The second two are against Nestorianism, without division, without separation."
- The "difference of the natures being by no means removed because of the union, but the property of each nature being preserved and coalescing in one *prosopon* and one *hypostasis*, one person, not parted or divided into two *prosopopersons*, but one and the same Son, only begotten, divine Word, the Lord Jesus Christ."

- **Purpose:** To summarize and address all previous Christological errors, curb speculation, and clarify theological language.
- "For this reason, it sought to summarize and address every problem that had plagued the church in regard to Christ's identity. It sought to curb speculation, to clarify the use of language between the East and West, and as such, it acts as a defensive definitive statement, pardon me, and roadmap for all later Christological reflection."

III. Significance and Key Points of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy:

- **Truly God and Truly Man:** Both deity and humanity are equally preserved and emphasized.
- "First, Christ was truly and perfectly God and man. Both the deity of Christ and his humanity are equally preserved and emphasized in order for him to serve as our great high priest and mediator and to win salvation for us."
- **Person (Hypostasis/Prosopon):** Person and hypostasis are the same, distinct from nature. The person of the Incarnation is the eternal Son.
- "Second, person and hypostasis are viewed as the same thing... Chalcedon affirms that the person of the incarnation is the eternal son, the second person of the Godhead."
- **Impersonal Human Nature (in a specific sense):** Christ's human nature did not have a separate hypostasis or person of its own. The person acting is always the divine Son.
- "Third, Christ's human nature did not have a hypostasis slash person of its own. It was impersonal in the sense that there was not a man that God came and indwelt... The person who did these things was the same God the son."
- **Integrity of Both Natures:** The union does not obscure the distinct attributes of each nature, though there is a "transfer of attributes" (attributes of both coexist in one person).
- "Fourth, there is no union of the natures that obscures the integrity of either nature... Yet, this does not entail that the two natures are merely juxtaposed, lying side by side without contact or interaction. Instead, there is a transfer of attributes in that the attributes of both natures coexist in one person."

- **Complete Human Nature:** Christ took on a full human nature, including a rational soul and body, affirming a "word-man Christology."
- "Fifth, the son took to himself a complete human nature, which was comprised of a rational soul and body... It rejects the idea that the son replaces the human soul... it implicitly asserts that Christ had a human will and mind..."
- **Standard for Orthodoxy:** Chalcedon serves as the benchmark for evaluating Christological views. Rejecting either Christ's deity or humanity signifies abandoning historic orthodoxy.
- "...the Chalcedonian definition quote, became our standard for measuring orthodoxy, where either its affirmation of Christ's deity or of his humanity is rejected. It means that historic orthodoxy has been abandoned."

IV. Criticisms of Chalcedon:

- **Dependence on Greek Philosophy:** Critics argue that the use of terms like *ousia* and *hypostasis* distorts biblical teaching. Peterson counters that all theologizing uses extra-biblical language, and Chalcedon uses these terms in uniquely un-Greek ways to reflect scriptural demands.
- "...even though fifth-century words were employed, Chalcedon uses them in very un-Greek ways. For example, as presented, nowhere in Greek thought is the nature-person distinction made. But the church distinguished between *ousia*, nature, and *apostasis*, person because scripture demanded it."
- **Dualism:** Some claim Chalcedon places the two natures side-by-side without sufficient explanation of their interaction. Peterson argues that Chalcedon's purpose was to avoid unbiblical attempts to resolve this mystery and emphasizes the unity of the person.
- "In fact, Chalcedon serves as a warning and guard against the attempt to overcome dualism. Chalcedon, along with Scripture, holds in tension the unity of the one divine person, the Son, who, as a result of the Incarnation, now subsists. He lives, he exists in two natures."
- **Docetism (Implicit):** Critics contend that denying a human person (hypostasis) in Christ leads to a diminished view of his humanity. Peterson clarifies that this denial aimed to prevent Nestorianism (two persons) and that the one acting subject is the divine Son, whose personality encompasses the human nature from its conception.

- "To affirm the existence of a human person alongside the person of the Son would mean that Jesus was not, in fact, the Incarnate Son but simply a man who was especially friendly with the Son."
- **Chalcedon as "Not the Whole Truth":** While essential, Chalcedon sets parameters but doesn't exhaust all Christological understanding. Further reflection on Scripture in light of Chalcedon is necessary.
- "E.L. Maskell states it well, "Chalcedon is the truth and nothing but the truth but it's not the whole truth.""

V. Introduction to Modern Christology and the "Lives of Jesus" Movement:

- **Shift in Biblical Interpretation:** The 19th century, influenced by the Enlightenment and new historical methodologies, saw a rise in critical approaches to the Bible.
- **"Lives of Jesus" Movement:** This movement sought to reconstruct the historical Jesus using "scientific" historical methods, often separating him from traditional theological interpretations.
- "The most tangible result of a new attitude toward the Bible, namely a critical one, in the 19th century... was the rash of lives of Jesus that were produced."
- **Key Figures and Ideas: Adolph Harnack:** Believed Christianity was an idea realized in Jesus but not defined or limited by him, appealing to "cultured despisers."
- "What Harnack tried to do, therefore, was to capture the meaning of Christianity as an idea. An idea which had been realized in and through Jesus but was not itself defined by or limited to Jesus."
- **Albert Schweitzer:** Critiqued the movement, arguing that authors projected their own liberal ideals onto Jesus and that the historical discoveries were minimal. He famously stated that the Jesus they constructed was "a figure designed by rationalism endowed with life by liberalism and clothed by modern theology in a historical garb."
- "Indeed, the Jesus who emerged from most of these studies was so like the liberal authors who wrote them that Schweitzer observed they must have been looking down the long well of human history and seen their own faces reflected at the bottom."

- **Failure of the Movement:** Schweitzer declared the "abysmal failure" of this movement, which attempted to break from traditional doctrine based on Enlightenment premises and a naive view of history. This failure left a lasting wound in the theological community.
- "The abysmal failure of the movement, however, wounded the theological community. It is a wound that, to this day, has refused to heal."

Conclusion: Dr. Peterson concludes this session by emphasizing the crucial role of the Council of Chalcedon in establishing the foundational boundaries for orthodox Christology. He then introduces the "Lives of Jesus" movement as a significant development that challenged traditional understandings and paved the way for modern Christological debates, setting the stage for future discussions on liberal Protestantism.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Salvation, Session 5, Patristic Christology, Part 4, Monophysitism, Council of Chalcedon

Study Guide: Monophysitism and the Council of Chalcedon

Key Concepts and Themes:

- **Monophysitism (Eutychianism):** Understand the core tenets of this heresy, particularly the idea of Christ having only one nature (a fusion of divine and human). Recognize the key figure of Eutychius and the implications of this view for Christ's identity and redemptive work.
- **Council of Chalcedon (451 AD):** Know the historical context of the council, including the reasons for its convocation (ongoing Christological disputes, specifically Monophysitism and Nestorianism). Understand the significance of the number and origin of the bishops present, and the influence of Pope Leo's Tome.
- **Chalcedonian Definition:** This is the central output of the council. Memorize and understand the key phrases and their significance. Pay close attention to the "four withouts" (without confusion, without change, without division, without separation) and what each negates. Understand the affirmation of "two natures, one person (hypostasis/prosopon)."
- **Distinction between Nature and Person:** Grasp the crucial distinction made by the Chalcedonian Definition between *physis* (nature, essence) and *hypostasis/prosopon* (person, individual subsistence). Understand how this distinction refutes previous heresies.
- **Significance of Chalcedon:** Understand why the Council of Chalcedon is considered a pivotal moment in the development of Christian doctrine. Recognize its role in summarizing past debates, clarifying language, and setting a standard for orthodoxy.
- **Chalcedon's Arguments Against Heresies:** Be able to identify how the Chalcedonian Definition directly refuted various earlier Christological errors, including Docetism, Adoptionism, Modalism, Arianism, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, and Monophysitism. Understand the specific clauses within the Definition that address each heresy.
- **Five Key Points of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy:** Understand the five core affirmations that Peterson identifies as capturing the heart of the Chalcedonian

Definition: Christ as truly God and man, the identity of person and hypostasis as the eternal Son, the impersonal nature of Christ's humanity (and Peterson's nuanced understanding of this), the preservation of the integrity of both natures without mixture, and Christ taking a complete human nature (body and soul).

- **Criticisms of Chalcedon:** Be familiar with the main criticisms leveled against the Chalcedonian Definition, including the charge of reliance on Greek philosophy, dualism, and implicit Docetism due to the concept of an impersonal human nature. Understand the counter-arguments presented against these criticisms.
- **Chalcedon's Legacy and Limitations:** Understand that while Chalcedon is a foundational statement, it is not exhaustive and has continued to be interpreted and debated throughout church history. Recognize its role as setting boundaries for orthodox Christology.
- **The Lives of Jesus Movement:** Understand the historical context of this 19th-century (and extending into the 18th and early 20th centuries) movement, driven by new historical methodologies and a critical approach to Scripture. Know the key figures and the general aim of these "lives of Jesus."
- **Critique of the Lives of Jesus Movement:** Understand Albert Schweitzer's critique of this movement, particularly his argument that these authors projected their own liberal biases onto their reconstructions of Jesus, resulting in a historically inaccurate and ultimately inadequate figure. Understand the lasting impact of this critique.

Short-Answer Quiz:

1. Explain the core teaching of Monophysitism (Eutychianism). What did Eutychius believe happened to Christ's human nature during the Incarnation, and what was the consequence of this view?
2. What was the primary purpose of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD? Briefly describe the composition of the council in terms of geographic representation.
3. Identify and briefly explain the significance of the "four withouts" included in the Chalcedonian Definition regarding the two natures of Christ. What two heresies did the first two "withouts" specifically address?
4. According to the Chalcedonian Definition, who is the active subject of the Incarnation? How does this affirmation distinguish the orthodox view from Adoptionism?

5. What does it mean to say that Christ's human nature was "impersonal" according to the language of Chalcedon? Explain Peterson's preferred way of understanding this concept.
6. Describe one of the criticisms raised against the Council of Chalcedon. Briefly summarize the counter-argument presented in the source material against this criticism.
7. Explain why the affirmation of Mary as "Theotokos" (God-bearer) was important for the Council of Chalcedon in refuting Nestorianism. What aspect of Christ's identity did this title emphasize?
8. According to Peterson, what is the relationship between the Chalcedonian Definition and Scripture? What role does the Definition play in subsequent theological reflection?
9. What were some of the key factors that contributed to the rise of the "Lives of Jesus" movement in the 18th and 19th centuries? What was the general aim of scholars involved in this movement?
10. Briefly summarize Albert Schweitzer's main criticism of the "Lives of Jesus" movement. What did he conclude about the Jesus portrayed in many of these works?

Answer Key:

1. Monophysitism, associated with Eutychius, taught that Christ had only one nature after the Incarnation. This view held that Christ's human nature was absorbed and merged into his divine nature, resulting in a single, new composite nature that was neither fully divine nor fully human. This meant the Incarnate Christ was a hybrid unable to truly redeem humanity.
2. The primary purpose of the Council of Chalcedon was to address and resolve the ongoing Christological disputes within the Church, particularly concerning the relationship between Christ's divine and human natures (especially Monophysitism and Nestorianism). The council was largely composed of bishops from the East, with limited representation from the West (notably including legates of the Pope).
3. The "four withouts" are: without confusion, without change (against Monophysitism/Eutychianism), without division, without separation (against Nestorianism). They affirm that while Christ has two natures united in one

person, these natures are distinct and retain their properties without being mixed or separated.

4. According to Chalcedon, the active subject of the Incarnation is the eternal Son, the second person of the Trinity. This refutes Adoptionism, which taught that Jesus was initially a human being whom God later adopted or indwelt with divine power. Chalcedon affirms the pre-existence and eternal divinity of the Son.
5. The term "impersonal" in relation to Christ's human nature in Chalcedonian language meant that it did not have a separate *hypostasis* or person of its own, distinct from the divine Son. Peterson clarifies this by saying that Christ's humanity was never impersonal in the sense of lacking human attributes, but rather its personality was always that of the divine Son from the moment of conception ("in-personal").
6. One criticism is that Chalcedon relies too heavily on Greek philosophical terminology, potentially distorting biblical teaching and reducing Christology to metaphysical speculation. The counter-argument is that while it uses fifth-century language, Chalcedon employs these terms in ways that are distinct from Greek philosophy, particularly in establishing the nature-person distinction, which Scripture demanded.
7. The affirmation of Mary as Theotokos was crucial for Chalcedon to affirm the true deity of Jesus and the reality of the Incarnation. By calling Mary "God-bearer," the council emphasized that the very being she carried in her womb was God, thus directly countering Nestorius's separation of the divine and human in Christ into two distinct persons.
8. Peterson states that while Scripture is the final authority, the Chalcedonian Definition is a significant confessional statement that accurately sets forth the basic points of Christ's identity as revealed in Scripture and the patristic tradition. It establishes the theological boundaries within which the church must theologize.
9. The rise of the "Lives of Jesus" movement was fueled by a new critical attitude toward the Bible and the application of emerging historical methodologies. The aim was to reconstruct a historically accurate portrait of the human Jesus, often based on a perceived need to make Jesus more relevant to modern thought and to break free from traditional doctrines.

10. Schweitzer criticized the "Lives of Jesus" movement for projecting the liberal theologians' own ideals and assumptions onto their historical reconstructions of Jesus. He argued that the Jesus who emerged from these studies was an idealized figure who bore a striking resemblance to his modern interpreters and ultimately failed to meet the theological expectations ascribed to him, deeming the movement a historical and theological failure.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the theological significance of the Chalcedonian Definition's affirmation of "two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, in one person." How did this formulation address the Christological controversies of its time, specifically Monophysitism and Nestorianism?
2. Evaluate the criticisms leveled against the Council of Chalcedon, particularly the charges of reliance on Greek philosophy and implicit Docetism. To what extent are these criticisms valid, and how does the source material defend the orthodoxy of Chalcedon?
3. Discuss the five key points of Chalcedonian orthodoxy as presented by Peterson. How do these points collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of Christ's identity, and why are they considered essential for orthodox Christology?
4. Explain the historical context and theological motivations behind the "Lives of Jesus" movement. What were the key assumptions and methodologies employed by scholars in this movement, and why did it ultimately face significant criticism, as articulated by Albert Schweitzer?
5. Compare and contrast the Christological understanding presented by Monophysitism with the orthodox understanding articulated by the Council of Chalcedon. What were the key points of disagreement, and what were the implications of each view for the person and work of Jesus Christ?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Apollinarianism:** A 4th-century heresy that taught Christ had a human body but not a human rational soul; the divine Logos took the place of the human mind.
- **Adoptionism:** The belief that Jesus was born as a mere human being and was subsequently "adopted" by God at some point in his life (e.g., at his baptism).
- **Arianism:** A 4th-century heresy that denied the full divinity of the Son of God, teaching that he was a created being subordinate to the Father.
- **Christology:** The branch of Christian theology concerned with the person, nature, and work of Jesus Christ.
- **Communicatio Idiomatum:** A theological concept referring to the mutual exchange or communication of the properties of Christ's divine and human natures within the one person.
- **Consubstantial (Homoousios):** Of the same substance or essence. This term was central to the Nicene Creed in affirming the Son's divinity as being the same as the Father's.
- **Docetism:** An early heresy that taught Christ only appeared to be human and did not truly suffer or die.
- **Dualism (in Christology):** A criticism leveled against Chalcedon, suggesting it presents Christ's two natures as merely juxtaposed without a genuine interpenetration or unified experience.
- **Eutychianism:** Another name for Monophysitism, after Eutychius, its prominent proponent.
- **Hypostasis:** (Greek) Can refer to individual substance, reality, or person. In Trinitarian and Christological theology, it refers to the distinct persons within the Trinity and the single person of Christ.
- **Incarnation:** The Christian doctrine that God the Son became human in the person of Jesus Christ.
- **Modalism:** An early heresy that taught the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not distinct persons but different modes or manifestations of the one God.
- **Monophysitism:** The belief that Christ had only one nature, typically understood as a fusion or absorption of the human nature by the divine.

- **Nestorianism:** A 5th-century heresy that emphasized the distinctness of Christ's divine and human natures to such an extent that he seemed to be two separate persons loosely joined. It opposed the title "Theotokos" for Mary.
- **Ousia:** (Greek) Essence, substance, or being. In theological contexts, it refers to the fundamental nature shared by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (one ousia) and the two ousias (divine and human) in Christ.
- **Patristic:** Relating to the early Christian theologians and their writings, generally from the 1st to the 8th centuries AD.
- **Person (Prosopon/Hypostasis):** In Christology, refers to the single, individual subject who is both fully God and fully human. Chalcedon affirmed one person (the Son) existing in two natures.
- **Physis:** (Greek) Nature or essence. In Christology, refers to Christ's divine nature and his human nature.
- **Tertium Quid:** (Latin) A "third something"; in Christological debates, refers to the heretical idea that the union of Christ's divine and human natures resulted in a third, new kind of being that was neither fully God nor fully human.
- **Theotokos:** (Greek) "God-bearer" or "Mother of God." A title for Mary affirmed by the Council of Ephesus (431 AD) and crucial for Chalcedon in asserting the deity of Christ from the moment of conception.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Salvation, Salvation, Session 5, Patristic Christology, Part 4, Monophysitism, Council of Chalcedon, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Chalcedonian Christology

1. What was the heresy of Monophysitism (or Eutychianism) and why did the Council of Chalcedon address it?

Monophysitism, associated with Eutyches, taught that after the Incarnation, Christ's human nature was absorbed or merged into his divine nature, resulting in a single, new composite nature that was neither fully divine nor fully human. The Council of Chalcedon addressed this heresy because it contradicted Scripture's witness to Christ as both truly God and truly man, and because a Christ who is not fully human could not truly redeem humanity.

2. What was the Council of Chalcedon, and what was its primary goal regarding Christology?

The Council of Chalcedon was an ecumenical council held in 451 AD, attended by a large number of bishops primarily from the East, with some representation from the West. Its primary goal was to resolve the ongoing Christological disputes within the Church and to establish a clear, orthodox understanding of Jesus Christ's identity against various heresies.

3. What is the Chalcedonian Definition (or Creed), and what are its key affirmations about the nature of Christ?

The Chalcedonian Definition is the statement of faith produced by the Council of Chalcedon. It affirms that Jesus Christ is "one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead and the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same of a rational soul and body, consubstantial with the Father in Godhead and the same consubstantial with us in manhood." It further clarifies that these two natures exist in Christ "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation," and coalesce in "one person (prosopon) and one hypostasis."

4. How did the Chalcedonian Definition address specific Christological heresies like Nestorianism and Monophysitism?

The Chalcedonian Definition directly countered Nestorianism by affirming Mary as Theotokos (God-bearer), emphasizing the unity of Christ's person from conception, and stating that the two natures exist "without division, without separation." It opposed Monophysitism by asserting that Christ is made known "in two natures" that exist "without confusion, without change," maintaining the distinct properties of both his divine and human natures within one person.

5. What is the significance of the distinction between "nature" (ousia/physis) and "person" (hypostasis/prosopon) in the Chalcedonian Definition?

The distinction between nature and person is crucial to the Chalcedonian Definition. "Nature" refers to the fundamental essence or attributes of something (in Christ's case, both divine and human). "Person" (hypostasis/prosopon) refers to the individual, conscious subject who possesses these natures. Chalcedon affirmed that in Christ, there is one divine person, the eternal Son, who possesses both a complete divine nature (consubstantial with the Father) and a complete human nature (consubstantial with humanity), yet remains a single, unified acting subject.

6. According to the Chalcedonian Definition, did Jesus have a human person (hypostasis) alongside his divine person? Why or why not?

No, according to the Chalcedonian Definition, Jesus Christ did not have a separate human person (hypostasis) alongside his divine person. Instead, it affirmed that the one person, the eternal Son of God, assumed a human nature. This was to avoid the heresy of Nestorianism, which could imply two separate "Christs." Chalcedon taught that Christ's human nature was "impersonal" in the sense that it did not have its own independent subsistence but subsisted within the person of the Son.

7. What are some of the criticisms leveled against the Chalcedonian Definition, and how does the text address them?

Some criticisms include the charge that Chalcedon relies too heavily on Greek philosophical terminology, potentially distorting biblical teaching, and that it presents a dualistic view of Christ's two natures existing side-by-side without sufficient explanation of their unity. The text argues against the first criticism by stating that all theologizing uses extra-biblical language and that Chalcedon used these terms in ways distinct from Greek philosophy, driven by scriptural necessity. Regarding dualism, the text emphasizes that Chalcedon's purpose was to guard against unbiblical attempts to resolve the mystery of the two natures in one person, stressing the unity of the person of Christ as the acting subject while acknowledging the mystery involved.

8. How does the text evaluate the ongoing relevance and authority of the Chalcedonian Definition for Christian theology?

The text asserts that while Scripture is the ultimate authority, the Chalcedonian Definition remains a crucial standard for measuring orthodox Christology. It summarizes and addresses the major Christological problems of its time, setting forth basic points that must be confessed and defended. Rejecting Chalcedon's affirmations regarding Christ's deity or humanity is seen as abandoning historic orthodoxy. While not a complete theological program, it provides essential limits and guardrails for subsequent Christological reflection and continues to guide theological discussion.