

431 AD – COUNCIL OF EPHESUS: WHO SAYS THE HOLY VIRGIN IS NOT MOTHER OF GOD?

“Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre?

The crowning city

whose merchants are princes

whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?” (Isaiah 18:7)

NOTES

The spiritual number **431** means ‘Evil Man Gloats’.

HISTORY

In **431** AD the **Council of Ephesus** was convened in the **Church of Mary** in the **City of Ephesus**. The president of the assembly was Cyril of Alexandria. The council was called by Emperor Theodosius II of Byzantium. This convention condemned the teachings of Nestorius that Mary may be called ‘Birth-Giver of Christ’ but not ‘Birth-Giver of God’.

Ephesus was famous in the ancient world for the cult worship of the image of the **Virgin Goddess Artemis** – whom the Romans called **Diana**. The **Temple of the Lady of Ephesus** was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Plato refers to Artemis as the ‘stainless maiden’.

During the days of the Apostles there was a riot in Ephesus because Paul taught that **“man-made gods are no gods at all”** (Acts 19 v 26) which the merchants of Ephesus who sold icons of the Lady of Ephesus said would have the result **“that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited”** (Acts 19 v 27).

It was in this Ephesus – famous for pagan worship of the Virgin Goddess – even in the **Church of Mary** - that the council debated what should be the title of Mary the mother of Jesus.

Nestorius was a spokesman faithful of the teachings of the Church of Antioch, Syria. This Antioch is the same place which the Acts of the Apostles tells us the first Gentiles outside the Holy Land, specifically Greeks who lived there (Acts 11:20), believed in Christ (Acts 11:21). The same place where Barnabus ministered (Acts 11:22-29), where Paul ministered (Acts 11:30), and where numerous teachers and prophets ministered (Acts 13:1). In the early days of the

church Antioch was the center of Christendom, and it was from Antioch that Paul and Barnabus were sent on missionary journeys (Acts 13: 2-3).

Nestorius had an ongoing issue with Cyril of Alexandria over what title to give Mary. Cyril of Alexandria was ex-communicating Christians if they did not confess that Mary was the 'Birth-Giver of God'. Nestorius said she should be called 'Birth-Giver of Christ'.

Nestorius appealed to the Emperor of Byzantium to call a Council to debate the matter. The Emperor appointed Cyril of Alexandria to be president of the Council. The Council convened before the delegation from Antioch arrived. The Council reached its conclusion that the title of Mary was 'Birth-Giver of God'. Furthermore, Nestorius was branded a heretic. Nestorius would not recognize findings of the Council due to the partiality of the Emperor appointing Cyril as president and the Council meeting without the Syrian delegation.

The Syrian delegation arrived late, met on its own and condemned Cyril for various heresies. It was in vain. The ecumenical power was in the Emperor and translated via the Patriarch of Constantinople. The votes and tallies of the Antioch Church counted for naught.

The recommendations of the Council of Ephesus were approved by the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope of Rome. However, the Church of Assyria did not accept them. This led to a split between the Church of the East and the West: the Nestorian Schism.

THE CULT OF MARY

Although seemingly a picayune issue of words – the Council of Ephesus opened wide the door for the pagan veneration of Mary in the halls of Christendom. To this day images of Mary – with her head portrayed large and surrounded by a golden holy halo carrying the smaller figure of the infant Jesus on her lap – decorate churches in both Orthodox and Catholic streams. Such images imply a direct and not so discrete desecration of the lordship of Christ.

Millions of people pray to Mary, say a repetitious prayer to Mary, worship Mary, and believe Mary can intercede on behalf of them because she has special access in Heaven.

Catholic doctrine teaches: {in as many words they are saying Mary is a goddess not a woman}

- (1) Mary was born in the usual way – but was without sin 'Immaculate Conception';
- (2) Mary was 'full of grace' – meaning she was sanctified of sin her whole life;

- (3) Mary was saved but in a different manner – like an ‘unstained’ infant in the womb;
- (4) Mary did not die – she ascended into Heaven directly ‘Assumption of Mary’;
- (5) Mary deserves veneration – higher than all other saints;
- (6) Mary ‘entered into union with Christ’ and is therefore party to the plan of salvation;
- (7) The promotion of the Virgin Mary is the constant work of the Church;

Mariology began in Egypt. Very early Origen referred to Mary as ‘Birth-giver of God’.¹ Popes have supported Marian devotional days and feasts and welcomed Marian apparitions. Pope Pius X encouraged the church to honor the Virgin Mary. Pope Pius XII declared Mary to be the ‘Mother of the Church’.

All of this is just a cover story to permit an entire pagan movement worshipping the Virgin Goddess to take up residence within the Institutional Church – both in Catholic and Orthodox camps. Interestingly, Mary is esteemed very highly in the Qu’ran: even set above all other women (K 3:42). A chapter of the Qu’ran is named after Mary (K19) and her name appears throughout the Suras. Moslems call Mary ‘The Virgin’, ‘The Purified’, ‘Mother of Isa’, ‘She Who Confirms the Truth’, ‘She Who Was Chosen’.

PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

The words of Isaiah 23 v 2:

‘Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre?’

[God sees Byzantium as a pagan city of sea-faring merchants – Biblical Tyre]

[Jezebel gave orders to her husband the King and Jezebel worshipped the gods of Tyre]

The letter of Nestorius reaches the ears of the Emperor of Byzantium; As such this matter was settled in his court and the theological Council the Emperor called was merely a pretense to give the decision an ecclesiastical stamp of approval by the divines of the faith. We know the

¹ Origen was condemned by the Institutional Church. The great part of his voluminous research was destroyed so it is hard to confirm all his teachings. What remains for evidence is mostly the writings of those who disagreed with his interpretation of Scripture.

preference of the Emperor was to elevate Mary in the Church – because he appointed Cyril to preside over the Council. He made the defendant in the law suit the justice of the case.

Why would Emperor Theodosius II choose to elevate Mary in the Church?

Theodosius II was born in 401 as the only son of Emperor Arcadius. In 408 his father died and he became Emperor – the youngest ever to attain that rank. In 414 Theodosius' older sister Pulcheria was proclaimed Augusta and assumed the regency. By 416 Theodosius was declared Augustus and Pulcheria's reign was officially over – but she remained a strong influence on him. It was therefore natural for Theodosius to imagine that in Heaven a situation could exist where Mary was in a position to have great honor and influence alongside the Lord Jesus.

'The crowning city'

Why would Theodosius seek to impose his views on the church?

The Byzantine Church was closely tied to the government ever since Constantine called the Council of Nicaea in 325. Thus Byzantine Emperors treated religion as a department of the state. The Emperor appointed the Patriarch of Constantinople and deposed him if it was deemed expedient. Bishops were instructed to deliver sermons that supported the Emperor.

whose merchants are princes

Here the LORD is implying that positions of authority could be bought for a price. With an eye to the ecclesiastical wing of government of Byzantium – Patriarchs and Bishops were positions of authority – not ordained by God – but hand-picked by men in temporal power – to serve the interests of the Emperor – and his retinue of cronies.

whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?"

When the Church becomes an institution with layers of authority – where positions of authority are obtained for money or for favors - the sheep of God's pasture become the playthings of the rich and powerful – to trade, to traffic, to manipulate.

The case of the Council of Ephesus is the perfect example of a true prince of the Church – Nestorius - who stood on solid doctrinal ground regarding the person of Mary – and lost his position in the Church, and worse, was branded heretic – never to preach again in the realm of the Emperor. All because of the whim of a secular Emperor ruling a corrupt system.

SPIRITUAL NUMBER ANALYSIS

For a mind that has wisdom please read on and learn truth on another level.

PART ONE

Isaiah **23 v 8** is the **18,086th** verse in Scripture.

The number **18,086 = 2 x 9043 (1124th prime)**

The spiritual meaning of **2** is 'Division'

The spiritual meaning of **1124** means 'The Place of Women is in the Home'.

The exaltation of Mary raises her above her level of merit – she is the figure of the dutiful mother – offering herself as a vessel to produce children - to raise them - and to love them.

PART TWO

Isaiah **23 v 8** is the **431st** verse of Isaiah.

The **431st** verse of Scripture is **Ester 5**:

Now it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.

And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

We see a woman arrayed in royal robes and a king willing to give her half his kingdom. The woman is a Jewess by birth but has adopted Persian dress and mascara (Ester 2:3) to please

the eyes of the King. The King is a Persian who worships foreign gods and loves wine and feasting. Right from the start we see a most unusual cultural and religious mixture.

The King is overly infatuated with a woman who has won his favor in a beauty contest to replace the honorable wife who would not undress before the King's grandees (Ester 1:11-12). This King will not attend to the needs of his people – if he can he will steal up to half the wealth belonging to them to spoil the woman of his lust.

Ester requests a 'banquet' in which her sworn enemy Haman and her sworn protector the King dine together. If we ascribe the goddess Mary to the Ester figure in the story, then her protector is the Emperor or the Pope or the Patriarch and her enemy is the pure believer in the court - the one who is loyal to the interest of the people in the Kingdom. At first it seems the two can co-exist - celebrate a banquet together. But this is only a ruse – to trick the pure believer into a false confidence the King will protect him.

The pure believers despise the kindred of Mary – which would figuratively be those whose loyalty is to Mary – or Mary worshippers – because they are the party which will cause the division of the Kingdom according to the lust of the King for Mary.

The division of the Kingdom in this case is the Nestorian Schism.

So while from the Jewish perspective of interpretation Ester is a shining heroine of the Jews, looking at the same passage from a Christian perspective Ester is a type of Mary Goddess who captures the love of the Lord of the Realm – the Pope or the Patriarch of the Institutional Church – at the loss of the guardians of the faith – Nestorius and believers of sound doctrine, the Church of Antioch.

The Book of Ester records that the Queen is victorious and Nestorius and all his immediate family are killed – removed from play. This prophecy was fulfilled at the Council of Ephesus.

Where did Nestorus go? He went to the land of the King of Persia! And was welcomed into the Church of the East.

Footnote: Nestorian missionaries spread throughout Asia. Nestorian priests served in the court of Ghengis Khan. Ghengis Khan crushed all the states in alliance with Byzantium including Kiev Rus, Bulgaria, and Thrace. God is with his people – but sinners pay the price!