

Action of the Council

Pelagius and his chief disciple, Coelestus, had a strong following in North Africa. It was through this means that the teaching came before Augustine. His reaction was swift and a condemnation of the teacher, his teaching, and followers was achieved in Carthage in 418. The discussion continued and the Pelagian controversy eventually came to Ephesus. The decision of the council found the teaching heretical and banned fellowship and hearing to all those who followed the chief teachers. The fact is that teachings such as those of Pelagius often gain an academic following but generally not much of an accomplished following. The reason is that the ideas so beautiful in theory are practically impossible and too high-minded for most...so they don't work! Some give lip service to them but the ideas are diametrically opposed to the Gospel and the ability of such schemes to really improve the lives of men becomes a mockery.

You will discover that there are not many true Pelagians but semi-pelagians and semi-Augustinians are very common. A representative opinion of this sort is offered by John Cassianus when he says..."Man fell in Adam and cannot make himself whole, but can make himself receptive to the Divine Grace. The will to believe and obey is primary. The lost could have been saved if they had made themselves available to grace and the saved could have been lost if they had not." The whole subject is still a tempestuous issue and we are much closer to Augustine...the "we" meaning the writer and other wise persons.

A very nice summary of these things in concise form is Chart # 17 in Walton's CHRONOLOGICAL AND BACKGROUND CHARTS OF CHURCH HISTORY.

IV.2.a. Church  
Struggles: The  
Great Councils

The Council of Chalcedon 451

## Chalcedon

The Chalcedonian council continued the church's occupation with the Christology problems. It is the fourth great council and is accepted by all Christian churches except the small band called the Oriental Orthodox churches. The nature of the council is sufficiently complex that we may divide our material more conventionally.