



**SAINT CLEMENT, THE ARCHBISHOP OF OHRID** was a disciple of Saints Methodius and Cyril. After the death of Saint Methodius, Clement, under pressure by the Germans traveled from Moravia to the south. With Gorazd, Nahum, Sava, and Angelarius - together, they were called "The Numbers Five" - crossed the Danube River where they were guests of Emperor Boris Michael and following that came to the region of Ohrid. They first founded a monastery in Belica [Velitsa] where Clement's first episcopal see was located. Afterward, he settled in Ohrid and from there he developed his great arch-pastoral and illuminating work for the nearby and distant regions. In Ohrid, Saint Clement erected a church to Saint Pantaleon. He had many disciples who copied books in the Slavonic script for the Slavic peoples. Saint Naum especially assisted him in this work. He worked miracles during his life and his relics manifest a healing power until today. Following great labors and faithful service to God, he reposed peacefully in Ohrid in the year 916 A.D. His wonder-working relics repose in the former church dedicated to the Holy Birth-giver of God (The Theotokos) and later was renamed Saint Clement.

**BLESSED NICHOLAS, FOOL FOR CHRIST** was from Novogrod and the son of wealthy parents. He left his wealth and as a "fool for Christ" ran throughout the streets and through his foolishness for Christ he instructed men. His companion, of the same mortification, was Blessed Theodore. Running one time in the presence of the people they both ran across the river on the surface of the water. Nicholas reposed in the Lord in the year 1392 A.D.

#### **REFLECTION** by Saint Nikolai of Zhicha

If you give alms to the poor, know that as much as you do good works for your fellow man so much you do for yourself and even more for yourself. Saint Anthony says: "Both life and death comes to us from our fellow man." Saint Peter Damaskin writes: "As the poor should give thanks to God and love the rich who do them good, so even more should the rich should give thanks to God and to love the poor because they are saved by the Providence of God both now and in the future ages [life to come] because of their alms [Charity]. For without the poor, they not only cannot gain salvation of their souls but they cannot avoid the temptations of wealth." Alms which are given out of vanity or with disdain do not benefit anything. In earlier times, the wealthy ones brought gold to the hermits and begged them to accept it. It is a rare occurrence that the hermits gladly accepted alms and, when they did accept it, they accepted it out of compassion toward the wealthy ones giving it. The most destitute of men received alms out of compassion!

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From a Sermon

In the news these days is the announcement that a group of scholars is putting together a new version of Holy Scripture containing only the words of the "real Jesus." This reminds us of the scholars about 20 years ago whose 'research' was being taught in seminaries, research revealing the 'real Jesus', based on their interpretation of the scriptures as they researched them, according to literary 'sciences'. These researches were accomplished by comparing the language of the New Testament times with the language of the Gospels or Epistles, counting the words, considering suspicious words used only once or twice, rejecting words or phrases the 'scholars' thought it unlikely for Jesus to have uttered, and so on. But this is not new - Leo Tolstoy, a great Russian novelist, was excommunicated by the Russian Orthodox Church for producing a new version of the Gospels, containing only the words of Christ, and there was a version of scripture which did the same thing in the earliest times, which was also condemned by the Church.

This reminds us of the phrase 'Traduire, c'est trahir' - to translate is to betray. Think of how the Hebrews in Israel must have felt when they learned that the Greek King of Egypt had ordered the Old Testament, written in Hebrew, to be translated into Greek so that those Jews living in Egypt could read the scriptures in a language they could understand. The Jews in Israel felt that this would be a betrayal of God's Word. If God had 'spoken' the word in Hebrew, how could it be read in any other language?! To them, it must have bordered on blasphemy. But in those times the scriptures were translated by seventy men in seventy separate homes, and they miraculously came up with one translation. And these men were not scholars, not word counters, not linguistic analysts, not linguistic historians or lawyers, but they were seventy pious men, who read scripture daily, who were in touch with God's word as their daily companion. When King James decided to have Holy Scripture translated into English in the 1000s, he also selected seventy men to make the translation. And Saint Nikolai of Japan followed the same principal when he selected seven men to translate scripture into Japanese.

Scholars who approach Holy Scripture from what they think of as a scientific approach are attempting to make Jesus over into their own idea of who and what God should be. They approach the scriptures thinking to turn Jesus into a warm and cuddly God who bends to their ideas.

Look at the Beatitudes as contained in Saint Luke's Gospel. We are familiar with the other form of the Beatitudes, the blessings we sing as our third antiphon at most liturgies. But Saint Luke's version of the Beatitudes is a little shorter, and fills in the blanks for us, answering some unasked 'tough questions'. Blessed are the poor, blessed are the hungry and the rest - we're familiar with that. But in Saint Luke's record of Jesus' words, He continues: But woe to you who laugh now, woe to you rich, woe to ... The scholars would be likely to attempt to edit this out of Scripture. Those who have an agenda, those who want to prove something in Scripture, those who want to manipulate the words of Jesus so that some the sting of His words is taken out, those are the people who are betraying the word of God.

It is true that there are some passages in Holy Scripture which are difficult to understand. But if we listen to these false scholars, we're asking for more confusion.

To think that some scholar who uses 'scientific method' of questionable worth could dictate to us the meaning or importance of Holy Scripture is like asking the shoemaker to fix the broken plumbing.

It is essential for Christians to read scripture daily, to have the Word of God as a constant companion, to guide and teach us the Spirit and the lessons we need to know in order to survive. This daily study is the closest we can come to Adam and Eve who walked and talked daily with the Lord in the Paradise of Delight.

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