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SYNOPSIS OF: THE REAL STORY BEHIND THE TRANSLATION OF 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

COMMENT: This is a condensed version of the 80-page article with the same title, which is also available for downloading from my website www.franknelte.net. The full article contains the documentary proof that supports all of the main points presented here. In this condensed version the focus is on presenting the facts and the story regarding the translation of this verse, without getting mired down by all the data that supports this exposition. Here supporting evidence is kept to a minimum. The deliberate mistranslation of this verse needs to be exposed.

2 Timothy 3:16 is such a foundational cornerstone of our religious belief system that it almost seems like blasphemy to even question it in any way. And yet, *the facts* are that in the KJV this verse contains *three mistranslations*. On top of that this verse also contains a word that was wrongfully added to the text. **FOUR PROBLEMS** in this one verse.

There is also a **FIFTH PROBLEM** with this verse, and that is the **ABSOLUTELY INCORRECT** verse divisions that were imposed on this passage. And this fifth problem can be led back directly to two specific people. In one sense this problem is not as serious as the others. However, the motivation for the clearly incorrect division into verses here was to provide the glue for cementing the mistranslations in this verse.

One or even two problems in the translation of a particular verse could perhaps be seen as genuine mistakes, as a lack of understanding. But when we are faced with *four* problems (let alone five) in one little verse, we need to recognize that we are dealing with a deliberate plot to deceive us. And a plot it is. We'll see that the main characters in this plot were three scholars, all of whom lived in the 1500's: a Dutchman, a Frenchman and an Englishman.

The four problems are restricted to the first four words *in the Greek text* of this verse. The rest of the verse does not present any problems. Now while it is the Greek text of this verse that has been deliberately mistranslated, it is the Latin texts of this verse that have actually preserved **THE TRAIL** of how these mistranslations came to be almost universally accepted. In the Latin translations these *four Greek words* are represented by *five Latin words*. So the entire investigation comes down to carefully examining four Greek words and five Latin words (as well as two more easy Latin words). For the sake of simplicity these will be the only Greek and Latin words we'll examine in this condensed article. For more complete details see the full article.

Here is 2 Timothy 3:16 in the KJV.

ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD, AND *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

The 9 words in capital letters are supposed to be a translation of the 4 Greek words "**pasa graphe theopneustos kai**".

These four Greek words have the following meanings:

- 1) "**pasa**" is an **adjective** which means either "all" or "every", depending on the context;
- 2) "**graphe**" is a **noun** which means "writing";

3) "**theopneustos**" is an **adjective** which means "God-breathed" or "God-inspired";

4) "**kai**" is a **conjunction** which means "and".

And here are the seven Latin words we will meet later:

1) "**omnis**" is an **adjective** which means either "all" or "every", depending on the context;

2) "**tota**" is an **adjective** which means "the whole, all", and it excludes the meaning "every";

3) "**scriptura**" is a **noun** which means "writing";

4) "**divinitus**" is an **adverb** which means "divinely, from God";

5) "**inspirata**" is a form of the **verb** "inspiro" and means "to breathe into, to inspire";

6) "**est**" is the **verb** "is";

7) "**et**" is a **conjunction** which means "and".

Let's now examine each problem in turn.

THE DIVISION OF THE TEXT INTO VERSES

The Greek text of verse 16 does not contain a single verb. But there are two verbs in verse 17 of the Greek text. In the Greek text verses 16 & 17 have always been one sentence. Likewise, in all the Latin texts verses 16 & 17 have also always been one sentence. The absence of any verb whatsoever from the Greek text of verse 16 tells us that it is a mistake to consider verse 16 as a stand-alone statement. Without including the text of verse 17 in a discussion of verse 16, we are only examining the first part of a sentence, while ignoring the second part of that sentence. On its own *verse 16* will always lack *the correct focus* of Paul's real statement.

The first English language translation of the Bible was made by John Wycliffe from the Latin Vulgate text in 1380. But it was not until 1551 that the New Testament was ever divided into verses. So in 1380 John Wycliffe translated verses 16 & 17 as one sentence into English. In 1526 William Tyndale made the first English NT translation from the Greek text. Tyndale also presented the text of verses 16 & 17 as one sentence, the last sentence in chapter 3. The same is true for the Coverdale Bible in 1535 and the Matthew Bible in 1537 and the Great Bible in 1540 ... all of them presented verses 16 & 17 as the last sentence in chapter 3. This is also true for the 1522 German translation made by Martin Luther and the Latin text of the 1517 Complutensian Bible.

Later, when the Wycliffe Bible was printed, the text of verses 16 & 17 was simply presented as "verse 16". This is the only Bible version I have found that has correctly presented these two verses as one verse. The Wycliffe Bible has no verse 17 in 2 Timothy chapter 3. (Some modern editions of Wycliffe have changed this when they updated the spelling.)

The French printer Robert Estienne (also known as Stephanus and as Robert Stephens) produced several editions of the Greek New Testament. Because Stephens was a Protestant, he met with some opposition in France. So he fled to Geneva. There in 1551 he produced his 4th edition, in which Stephens for the first time ever introduced the division into verses into the text of the New Testament. Copies of this edition are extremely rare, and there is no way for us to now examine this 4th edition. However, it is known that Stephens made his divisions into verses rather arbitrarily and casually, and

some changes to his verse divisions were made in later versions and editions of the Bible. It is uncertain whether or not Stephens himself divided this sentence into two verses.

Stephens had come to Geneva, a city that was ruled by John Calvin. John Calvin's chief assistant and most loyal supporter was Theodore Beza. Five years after Stephens had published the 4th edition of his Greco-Latin text in Geneva, Beza published his own Latin text of the New Testament in 1556; and in 1565 Beza then published his Greek New Testament in three columns: a Greek column, the Latin Vulgate text, and the Latin text Beza himself had constructed. In his 1556 Latin text Beza had arbitrarily divided the last sentence in chapter 3 into two verses, verses 16 & 17, in spite of the grammatical evidence that contradicted such an arbitrary division. This same division was then repeated in his 1565 Greek text for all three columns. Beza very clearly WANTED verse 16 to be a stand-alone statement!

In 1557 William Whittingham, an English Protestant scholar and leader in Geneva, produced the English language NT, which later became the NT of the 1560 Geneva Bible. Internal evidence shows quite clearly that *for this specific verse* Whittingham followed Beza's personal Latin text, rather than translating the Greek text for this verse. Whittingham's English translation was the first ever English language version with verse divisions. And for this verse Whittingham very clearly followed the inappropriate lead that Beza had set one year earlier in his Latin version. Like Beza, Whittingham WANTED verse 16 to be a stand-alone statement.

To summarize this section: The division into verses was published for the first time ever in Geneva during John Calvin's rule there. It is uncertain whether or not Stephens himself actually divided the last sentence of chapter 3 into two verses or not. But Theodore Beza clearly separated this sentence into two verses, leaving the Greek text of verse 16 without a single verb. William Whittingham copied this division into two verses, and without any kind of textual justification provided a verb for verse 16 in his English translation, as we'll see.

So the two men most responsible for incorrectly dividing this one sentence into two verses were Theodore Beza and William Whittingham. And these men had a distinct ulterior motive for this very artificial and inappropriate division. We'll look at that later.

ATTRIBUTIVE vs PREDICATE

Now we should consider a point of grammar. An adjective can be either an attributive adjective or it can be a predicate adjective. The difference between these two constructions is as follows: an attributive adjective provides an incidental description of the subject, while a predicate adjective presents an additional statement. This concerns us because there are those who claim that in this verse "theopneustos" should be a predicate adjective, when in reality it is an attributive adjective.

A simple example with the adjective "red" illustrates the distinction between these two constructions. Red is attributive in the statement "the red book is lying on the table". Red is a predicate in the statement "the book is red and it is lying on the table". We see that the predicate construction has two requirements which are not needed by the attributive construction. First of all the predicate requires A VERB (here "is"); and secondly, in this sentence, the predicate requires A CONJUNCTION (here "and") to join it to the rest of the sentence that follows.

As our examples stand, there is not really much difference between the two statements. But when we now add the adjective "all" into this mix, then the implied meanings can differ considerably. Thus, the attributive statement would read: "all red books are lying on the table", while the predicate statement would read: "all books are red, and they are lying on the table". Now there is suddenly a big difference between these two statements. That is due to the effect of the adjective "all" on these statements.

Coming to 2 Tim 3:16: IF "theopneustos" is an attributive adjective, then this verse reads: "all (or every) God-breathed scripture is profitable for ...". But IF "theopneustos" is a predicate adjective, then this verse reads: "all scripture is God-breathed, and it is profitable for ...".

We see that in the KJV and in many other translations this verse has been translated as a predicate statement. That is wrong! Based on the rules of Greek grammar, in this sentence theopneustos is an attributive adjective.

The key factors in the Greek text of 2 Timothy 3:16 are: first of all there is no verb in the text to make theopneustos a predicate adjective. And secondly, there is no article in the first part of this Greek sentence, thus making theopneustos an anarthrous adjective. Now in anarthrous constructions (i.e. without using the article) in biblical Greek the predicate adjective normally precedes the noun, while the attributive adjective normally follows the noun (which is the case in this verse). So in this verse BOTH THESE FACTORS (the absence of a verb, and the adjective following the noun it describes) make this an attributive adjective construction.

Let's look at "Vincent's Word Studies", written by Marvin R. Vincent in the 1880's. Vincent was a professor of New Testament Greek, and this work combines a verse-by-verse commentary with a Greek lexicon. Regarding 2 Timothy 3:16 Vincent's Word Studies states the following:

THEOPNEUSTOS: from "theos", God and "pneo", to breathe. God-breathed. The word tells us nothing of the peculiar character or limits of inspiration beyond the fact that it proceeds from God. In construction OMIT /S, AND RENDER AS ATTRIBUTIVE of "graphe", "every divinely-inspired Scripture". (my emphasis)

Shortly we'll see statements by other scholars of Greek who make this same point, that in this sentence theopneustos is clearly an attributive adjective. Let's also keep in mind that in this sentence a predicate construction requires a conjunction (here "and") to follow the predicate. Without such a conjunction the adjective can only be an attributive. So let's now look at the 4th word in the Greek text of this verse, the conjunction "kai".

THE GREEK WORD "KAI" SHOULD NOT BE IN THIS VERSE

While I disagree with the religious views of most biblical scholars, I nevertheless recognize that many of them had specific areas of expertise. Their personal religious views do not diminish any qualifications they may have had in biblical Hebrew or Greek or Latin. Adam Clarke was a recognized scholar of all three of these ancient languages. He personally examined many manuscripts in all these languages.

In his Commentary on 2 Timothy 3:16 Clarke says:

Verse 16. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God". This sentence is not well translated; the original "pasa graphe theopneustos ophilimos pros didaskalian, k. t. l." should be rendered: "Every writing Divinely inspired is profitable for doctrine, etc.". *The particle "kai", "and", is omitted by almost all the versions and many of the fathers, and certainly does not agree well with the text.* (my emphasis)

First of all notice that Clarke has translated theopneustos as an attributive adjective! Clarke presents the text without "kai". And the omission of "kai" makes the attributive construction unavoidable.

Next, I have checked all the readily available versions of the Greek text, and have not found any Greek

text that omits the word "kai" in this verse. But in the Critical Edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament I came across a comment which states that "kai" is omitted in the Old-Latin, the Clementine Vulgate, and the Syriac Peshitta. No Greek manuscripts are listed in support for this statement. This does not mean that there aren't any such supporting manuscripts; it only means that the word "kai" (or the symbol for it) is not omitted from the manuscripts which TODAY are considered to be significant.

This could very easily be due to the dominant position which the Latin Vulgate text enjoyed for well over a millennium, that in some cases translators simply back-translated into the Greek from the Latin the word for "and", something that thereafter would have been copied by others. However, I believe the more likely possibility is that "and" was added to both, the Greek text and the Latin text, only in the Middle Ages. More on this later when we examine some of the old translations.

Regarding Clarke's statement that "many of the fathers" omitted "kai", I have found the following: "The fathers" Clarke is referring to all wrote in Latin. In his 4th century Latin commentary on 2 Timothy 3:16 the commentator Ambrosiaster leaves out the word or symbol for "and" in this verse. Ambrosiaster most likely used a Latin text known as "Itala", which pre-dated the Vulgate. I have not found statements by other "Catholic church fathers" regarding this point. A thorough search requires more time than I have available. But shortly we'll look at a number of Latin versions that leave out the conjunction "and" in this verse.

While there may perhaps be some uncertainty about finding a Greek text without the word "kai" in this verse, what is not uncertain at all is that the last part of Clarke's statement is certainly correct! It is a fact that in the Greek text of this verse the conjunction "kai" "CERTAINLY DOES NOT AGREE WELL WITH THE TEXT"!

You don't have to be an expert on Greek grammar to understand this. Here are the facts:

- 1) "Kai" is a CONJUNCTION which means "and".
- 2) Conjunctions join together words, clauses, phrases and sentences.
- 3) When this conjunction is used at the start of a sentence, the purpose is to join what follows to the previous sentence. That is not the case in this verse.
- 4) When joining two clauses, this conjunction MUST be preceded by at least one verb. That is also not the case in 2 Timothy 3:16, since there is no verb anywhere before "kai".
- 5) The only words that precede "kai" in 2 Timothy 3:16 are one noun and two adjectives.
- 6) So A CONJUNCTION SIMPLY DOES NOT MAKE ANY SENSE IN THIS CONTEXT!
- 7) That is why the literal English translation of the first four Greek words (i.e. "every God-breathed writing AND") does not make any sense!
- 8) A conjunction is inappropriate after the three Greek words "pasa graphe theopneustos".

NO WONDER ADAM CLARKE SAID THAT KAI CERTAINLY DOES NOT AGREE WELL WITH THE TEXT!

Clarke was a highly qualified scholar of biblical Greek. And in his Commentary he repeatedly points out anomalies in the numerous texts to which he had access. The point is that using the conjunction "kai" in

this context implies that the Apostle Paul would have had a very poor grasp of Greek grammar, that he only knew "pidgin Greek". And that is simply not true, as is evident from the rest of Paul's writings.

Let's consider a statement by Henry Alford (1810 - 1871), the great philological scholar of the NT who wrote "New Testament in Greek" (4 volumes). This work is not so much theological in character, as it is philological, being an examination of the Greek words in the text in relation to grammatical requirements, without a real focus on the theological implications of such an examination. Even though Alford argued in favor of "kai" in 2 Timothy 3:16, he nevertheless acknowledged that the presence of "kai" in this verse is an awkward one, which really deprives the sentence of symmetry. This admission tacitly acknowledges that in this verse we are dealing with an attributive construction, which is how Alford himself also presents this verse in his "Authorized Version Revised" (published in London in 1870, copy in Harvard Theological Library). And Alford's admission is in agreement with Adam Clarke's assessment, that "kai" does not agree well with the text.

Let's also consider the 1729 Daniel Mace English translation of the New Testament, made from ancient Greek manuscripts available to Mace at that time. Here is this translation.

for all divinely inspired writings are conducive to instruction, to conviction, to reformation, and the practice of virtue; (2 Timothy 3:16 Daniel Mace N.T., 1729)

Daniel Mace did not include a translation for "kai" in the first part of this verse, and he clearly translated this as an attributive construction. This strongly suggests that the Greek manuscripts Mace consulted did not include the conjunction "kai".

Now let's examine some early translations which also leave out the conjunction "and" (or "et" in Latin). They all support the point Adam Clarke made in his Commentary.

SOME EARLY TRANSLATIONS

1) 1380 John Wycliffe New Testament

For al scripture inspirid of God is profitable to teche, to repreue, to chastice, to lerne in riytwisnes, that the man of God be parfit, lerud (i.e. instructed) to al good werk. (2 Ti 3:16, John Wycliffe NT, 1380, original spelling)

John Wycliffe translated from the Latin text. He translated this as an attributive statement, and he did not include "and" in this text (which covers verses 16 & 17). This implies that "and" was not in the Latin Vulgate text used by Wycliffe for his translation.

2) Martin Luther's 1522 unrevised German translation

Denn alle Schrift, von Gott eingegeben, ist nutze zur Lehre, zur Strafe, zur Besserung, zur Zchtigung in der Gerechtigkeit, (2Ti 3:16 ULU)

A translation of this German text with Luther's own punctuation reads:

"All writing, inspired of God, is useful for doctrine, for correction, for self-improvement, for instruction in righteousness".

Martin Luther, translating from the Greek while also consulting the Latin Vulgate text, translated this as an attributive statement, and he did not include "and" in this text. This also implies that "and" was not a part of the Greek and Latin texts Luther used for his translation.

3) William Tyndale's 1526 New Testament

For all scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable to teach, to improve, to inform, and to instruct in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, and prepared unto all good works.
(2Ti 3:16-17 William Tyndale NT, 1526)

Tyndale, translating from the Greek while also consulting the Latin, also translated this as an attributive statement, and he also did not include "and" in the first part of this verse. This implies that "and" was also not a part of the Greek and Latin texts Tyndale used. This is significant because the Greek text of Erasmus, produced 10 years earlier, includes the word "kai" in this passage, and Tyndale was supposedly translating from the Erasmus Greek text. Yet Tyndale omitted "and", showing he had access to a Greek text without "kai" in this verse, a text that differed from the text Erasmus had produced.

[COMMENT: "For all scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable" is an attributive statement, while "for all scripture IS given by inspiration of God, and is profitable" is a predicate statement. Tyndale clearly avoided making a predicate statement.]

4) The Coverdale Bible (1535) and the Matthew Bible (1537) and the Great Bible (1540) all make the identical point to the Tyndale translation: an attributive statement and no word "and" in the first part of this verse.

5) 1582 Douay-Rheims Translation

All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice:
(2Ti 3:16 Douay)

This was the first Catholic translation into English, and it was made from the then official Latin Vulgate. This translation also presents an attributive statement and does not include the word "and". This strongly implies that the Latin Vulgate of 1582 did not include the word "and" in its text for this verse.

6) We have already seen the 1729 Daniel Mace translation, which makes the same points.

So here we have the first ever English language translation, made from the Latin, and the first ever English translation made from the Greek, and the first German translation, and the first Catholic English translation ... and all of them present this as an attributive statement and all of them omit the conjunction "and". This is strong support for Clarke's statement.

7) These same points are also true for the following Latin texts: the Latin Gutenberg Bible (first book ever printed) of the 1450's, and the 1517 Latin Complutensian text, and the 1565 Latin Vulgate text presented by Theodore Beza, alongside his own Latin text.

To summarize this section: all of these translations we have looked at, covering the period from 1380 to 1729, and covering both Greek and Latin source documents, present this verse as an attributive statement, and they all leave out the conjunction "and". They all clearly support the statement made by Adam Clarke. Remember: without "and" there can be no predicate statement in this verse.

Now let's examine the three mistranslations in this verse.

THE GREEK WORD "PASA"

Most of us don't think about the enormous implications that are involved here. However, the scholars who vigorously discuss this question are well aware of the distinction between translating "pasa" as "all" or as "every" in this verse.

Simply put:

The translation "ALL God-breathed scripture is profitable for ..." at least allows for the possibility to try to translate this as an affirmative statement that is all-inclusive, like "all scripture is God-breathed and it is profitable for ...". Translating "pasa" as "all" in this verse is really needed as a prerequisite for claiming that "theopneustos" is a predicate adjective.

But the translation "EVERY God-breathed scripture is profitable for ..." very clearly implies that there are indeed scriptures that are NOT "God-breathed". And THAT is a possibility that is simply not acceptable to certain people. So while many of us may not immediately grasp this significant distinction between here rendering "pasa" as "every" versus rendering "pasa" as "all", we need to understand that there is a very clear reason why so many people argue very vociferously against the translation "every". They NEED this verse to say "ALL scripture" to uphold their doctrinal position, even when their position is contradicted by the rules of biblical Greek grammar.

Note! It is the presence of the attributive adjective "theopneustos" that creates this particular controversy. Without this adjective the argument over "ALL scripture" versus "EVERY scripture" would disappear. Without additional qualifications "all scripture" and "every scripture" could refer to the identical body of writing. But when we introduce the adjective "God-breathed" into this mix, THEN there is suddenly a big distinction between "every" and "all" in this expression. And the push to change "theopneustos" into a predicate adjective is also an attempt to nullify the significance of "every" in this particular verse.

Around 1930 Archibald Thomas Robertson wrote a commentary on the Greek text of the NT, entitled "Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament" (RWP). In RWP we find the following comment for 2 Timothy 3:16.

"EVERY scripture inspired of God is also profitable (pasa graphe theopneustos kai ophelimos). There are two matters of doubt in this clause. One is the absence of the article "he" before "graphe, whether that makes it mean "every scripture" or "all scripture" AS OF NECESSITY IF PRESENT." (my emphasis)

What Robertson (1863 - 1934) is saying is that, BECAUSE THERE IS NO DEFINITE ARTICLE IN THE GREEK, THEREFORE this should really be translated as "EVERY scripture inspired of God", and that is also how Robertson himself presents this in the above quotation.

Robertson was very much aware of the enormous implications in the distinction between "all" and "every" in this verse. He also knew that there is enormous resistance on the part of many people, including those in his own denomination (he was a Baptist), against translating this as "every", because such a translation would threaten their claims for the whole text of the Bible. That is why Robertson worded this rather cautiously, to try to avoid giving offence.

As a scholar of Greek Robertson KNEW that the correct translation here is "EVERY scripture inspired of God". Yet he also knew that this translation opened the door to there being other scriptures which are

NOT "inspired of God", a possibility many people strongly oppose.

While the presence of the article would make this text, OF NECESSITY (note!), mean "ALL scripture", Robertson held back from stating that THE ABSENCE of the article OF NECESSITY makes this mean "EVERY God-breathed scripture", even though Robertson himself knew this to be the case.

"Every God-breathed scripture" clearly opens the door for there to be some other scriptures that are NOT God-breathed! "All scripture" (with the attributive adjective "theopneustos" converted into a predicate adjective), on the other hand, at least seems to offer the possibility of taking a position against there being other scriptures that are not God-breathed.

We should be able to see the ulterior motive on the part of all those who vehemently argue against the grammatically correct translation "EVERY God-breathed scripture". The people who argue for the translation "all" argue equally vehemently for the predicate construction "is given by inspiration", because they need BOTH these factors to make their case.

Scholars of biblical Greek know that in this context "pasa" must be translated as "every" and NOT as "all"! Many translations have acknowledged this fact. Some of the translations that render "pasa" as "every" in this verse include: 1870 Henry Alford's Authorized Version Revised, 1877 Englishman's Greek New Testament, 1884 Darby Translation, 1885 English Revised Version, 1898 Young's Literal Translation, 1901 American Standard Version, 1902 Rotherham New Testament, 1912 Weymouth New Testament, 1985 Green's Literal Translation, 1951 German language Schlachter Translation, etc.

Let's also not forget Robertson's own translation as "EVERY scripture inspired of God". And lastly, Joseph Henry Thayer (1828 - 1901) in "A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament" under entry #1124 for the word "graphe" presents the translation of "pasa graphe" as "EVERY scripture" (see page 121, Baker Book House Edition).

To summarize this section: In this context "pasa" must be translated as "every". But this also effectively undermines any claim for a predicate statement in this verse.

THE GREEK WORD "GRAPHE"

"Graphe" is an old **GREEK** word that means: writing, written characters, written statement, piece of writing. It has no inherent religious significance, and certainly didn't have any religious significance 2000 years ago.

The **LATIN** word "scriptura" means: writing, composition, document. It also is a secular word without any special religious significance in old Latin. "Scriptura" is in fact the perfect translation into Latin of the Greek noun "graphe".

Our **ENGLISH** word "scripture" is clearly derived from this Latin word "scriptura". And several centuries ago this English word "scripture" still had a more diverse meaning from what this word means today.

The Unabridged edition of Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary presents four definitions for the word "scripture". Those four definitions are given in this order:

- 1) **OBSOLETE**: a writing, anything written, as manuscripts, documents, etc.
- 2) THE BOOKS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS; THE BIBLE
- 3) a passage or text of the Bible

4) any sacred or religious writing or books. (my emphasis)

The point is that since the Middle Ages the meaning of the English word "scripture" has been narrowed down! It USED TO MEAN the same as the Greek word "graphe" and as the Latin word "scriptura", i.e. it referred to ANY piece of writing. But today that more general meaning is OBSOLETE! Today the English word "scripture" has an EXCLUSIVELY religious meaning.

Thus for us today "writing" is the objectively correct translation of the Greek word "graphe", while "scripture" is a subjective interpretation of "graphe". One is objective and the other is a subjective interpretation, meaning it depends on the degree of personal understanding with which we approach this verse.

So where the Apostle Paul wrote "every God-breathed WRITING", it is not strictly correct to translate this TODAY as "every God-breathed SCRIPTURE", because the Apostle Paul simply did not use a word that had an exclusively religious meaning to his audience. Rather, he used an attributive adjective to pinpoint the specific category of writings he was speaking about.

Consider also the following:

It is really only the English language that has evolved to the point of having two distinct words to classify all writings: the word "writings" covers all writings, whereas the word "scripture" TODAY covers only the writings that make up the Bible. This distinction does not exist in other languages (Greek, Latin, German, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, etc.). Those languages do not have one word to designate "all writings" and another word to designate "the writings that make up the Bible". They only have one word to designate ALL writings. And when a language does not have a specific word to designate only the writings of the Bible, then it is vital to provide a qualifying word or expression (an adjective, etc.) whenever the writer wants to direct his readers exclusively to the writings of the Bible.

It is only in English that translators (for both, religious and secular texts) have to choose between "writing" and "scripture" when they translate the Greek word "graphe". Translators into other languages are not faced with such a choice for the translation of "graphe". Translators into other languages are always forced to translate "graphe" as "writing", because that is the only option available in their language, even as Greek itself 2000 years ago had only one word available.

Some translations that demonstrate the correct meaning of "graphe" by using the word "writing" and not the word "scripture" in this verse include:

- 1865 New Testament Diaglot with "ALL WRITING",
- 1898 Young's Literal Translation with "EVERY WRITING",
- Dutch language Statenvertaling with "AL DE SCHRIFT" (Dutch = writing)
- Luther's German Translation with "Denn ALLE SCHRIFT" (German = writing)
- 1953 Afrikaans Translation with "DIE HELE SKRIF" (Afrikaans = writing).

It is certainly true that in practical terms the word "graphe" is never used in the NT to refer to anything other than parts of the Bible, the Scriptures. And in the context of speaking to a Jewish audience (i.e. throughout the gospels) it would have been extremely unlikely for the audience to expect anything else. However, even then the context often provides additional clues that "graphe" is indeed a reference to books of the OT. But, just as with our example with the adjective "red" above, we need to recognize that

the introduction of the word "every" (or "all") really introduces a new element, which demands some qualifying statement.

While the noun "graphe" is used 51 times in the NT, there are ONLY TWO PLACES where "pasa" and "graphe" are used in the same expression. The one place is here in 2 Timothy 3:16, and the other place is Luke 24:27, which reads:

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:27)

Here the Greek expression for "in all the scriptures" is "en pasais tais graphais". This represents the following: "en" is the Greek preposition for "in"; "pasais" is the dative case feminine plural of "pas", meaning "all"; "tais" is the dative case feminine plural of "he", the definite article (i.e. "the"); "graphais" is the dative case feminine plural of "graphe", meaning "writing".

Notice that in this verse we have the plural, and we also have the definite article. So HERE this particular expression certainly means "in ALL the writings" (plural), rather than "in every writing". Notice also that here THE CONTEXT has already identified that the "writings" which are being talked about are two specific sections of the OT known as "the Law" (i.e. Moses) and "the Prophets".

A few verses later, in verses 44 - 45, all three sections of the OT are clearly defined as "the scriptures". So while here in Luke 24:27 "all the scriptures" are not qualified by any adjectives, they are nevertheless clearly linked to "Moses" and to "all the prophets". This does not leave any room for doubts regarding which "writings" are being talked about, and there is no need for any further adjectives to qualify "all the writings". Note also that "inspiration" does not enter the discussion in this verse.

In 2 Timothy 3:16, on the other hand, Paul was writing to a man who was half-Greek and who lived within a Greek culture, and who was a minister to other Greek people. And this passage is the only recorded place where the Apostle Paul ever used the words "every" (or "all") and "writing" within the same phrase. And because this is the only recorded time that Paul ever used the expression "EVERY writing" he of necessity had to qualify this in some way.

So the Apostle Paul used a common word that means "WRITING", and he then qualified this common noun with two adjectives: every + God-breathed. It should be apparent WHY the Apostle Paul had to use the adjective "God-breathed". Surely we can all recognize that the predicate statement "EVERY WRITING IS GOD-BREATHED" (as rendered in Young's Literal Translation) IS WRONG, UNLESS IT IS QUALIFIED IN SOME WAY! The writings of Plato and Socrates and Aristotle were a part of "every writing" for people living in the Greek culture of the first century; and those writings had to be emphatically excluded from the statement Paul wished to make. Paul achieved this exclusion with the attributive statement "every GOD-BREATHED writing".

We can reason that in most cases Paul could have expected his non-Jewish readers to know that any reference to "writings" would mean either books of the OT, or it would be a reference to Paul's own writings. But when Paul introduced the adjective "every" (or "all") into any statement about "writings", then it was imperative that Paul would establish distinct parameters to clearly define which "writings" he had in mind. Paul's use of the attributive adjective "theopneustos" perfectly fits this requirement.

We might also consider the following point.

The correct translation of the Greek text should read "every God-breathed writing is profitable". "Scripture" is an interpretation of the Greek word "graphe", rather than being a translation. However,

when we correctly understand that this should A) read "every" and not "all", B) that the conjunction "and" should not be in this text, and C) that this is an attributive statement and not a predicate statement, THEN there is no problem with translating "graphe" as "scripture", because such an interpretive translation no longer poses any problem of being misunderstood.

So there is no problem with translating this as "every God-breathed SCRIPTURE is profitable". While the attributive statements "every God-breathed writing" and "every God-breathed scripture" refer to the identical body of writings, there is a huge difference between the predicate statements "all scripture is God-breathed" and "all WRITING is God-breathed". We should also keep in mind that the Apostle Paul simply did not have the luxury of a Greek word that had the exclusive meaning of "scripture". That is why Paul used an attributive adjective.

THE GREEK WORD "THEOPNEUSTOS"

It is well-known that "theopneustos" is a Greek adjective. It should be translated as "God-breathed" or as "God-inspired". Translations which have rendered it as "God-breathed" include the 1898 Young's Literal Translation, the 1902 Rotherham New Testament, the 1985 Literal Translation by Jay Green, the 2007 Analytical Literal Translation by Gary Zeolla, etc.

There are also a number of translations which, while not translating this as "God-breathed", nevertheless have made an effort to retain the attributive characteristics of the Greek adjective in this verse, rather than translating this as a predicate statement (as done in the KJV). These basically correct versions include:

- the 1851 Murdoch NT, which reads "all scripture THAT WAS WRITTEN by the Spirit is ..."
- the 1865 Diaglot which reads "all writing INSPIRED OF GOD and profitable for ..."
- the 1885 ERV which reads "every scripture INSPIRED OF GOD is also profitable ..."
- the 1750 Douay-Rheims which reads "all scripture, INSPIRED OF GOD, is profitable ..."
- the 1901 ASV which reads "every scripture INSPIRED OF GOD is also ..."

All of these versions have avoided rendering "theopneustos" as a predicate. They have all basically retained the attributive trait of the adjective. None of them have introduced the artificial double focus that results from a predicate statement.

Note! The wording "inspired of God" in the ERV, Douay-Rheims, ASV, etc. is a direct translation of the Latin Vulgate text, as I will show, rather than being a translation of the Greek word "theopneustos".

To summarize this section: In this verse "theopneustos" is an attributive adjective. There are many translations that have made an effort to convey the attributive nature of the adjective involved here. The KJV is clearly wrong in presenting this verse as a predicate statement.

We have now examined all five problems with the translation of this verse. Those problems are: 1) The text of verses 16 & 17 should be presented as one verse. 2) The Greek word "pasa" must here be translated as "every" and not as "all". 3) The Greek word "graphe" really means "writing" rather than "scripture". However, when the other problems in this verse have been corrected, then the interpretive translation "scripture" is quite acceptable. 4) The Greek adjective "theopneustos" should be translated as "God-breathed" and not as the predicate expression "is given by inspiration of God". 5) The Greek conjunction "kai" is not a part of the original text written by Paul and should be omitted.

Now let's look at a correct translation of this verse within its context. After that we'll examine the trail left behind by those who were instrumental in introducing these errors into the text of this verse.

2 TIMOTHY 3:14 -17 EXAMINED

Verse 14 reads as follows:

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; (2Ti 3:14 AV)

Paul himself had instructed Timothy in the OT scriptures. Here Paul is telling Timothy to continue in the way of life which Timothy had learned in that process, and to hold fast to the whole Old Testament.

Then Paul said:

And that from a child thou hast known THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2Ti 3:15 AV)

By "the Holy Scriptures" Paul very clearly meant the whole OT. In our context today this means the whole Bible! Notice what Paul is actually saying here.

In this verse Paul implies that through his Jewish mother Timothy had been exposed to the teachings of the whole OT in his youth. Timothy was like someone today who has grown up in the Church of God. Now look at the purpose for which Timothy was to use the whole OT.

Paul told Timothy that the whole OT (today read "the whole Bible") reveals God's plan of salvation. So by studying the whole Bible we can become wise and we can come to understand God's plan for mankind. As far as learning wisdom and getting understanding is concerned, the whole Bible is vital in that process. And so the whole Bible is rightly called "the Holy Scriptures". "The HOLY writings" are writings that are SEPARATED from all other writings, conforming to the modern meaning of the English word "scriptures".

It is important to understand what Paul has actually told Timothy in verse 15, because Paul's next statement is going to BUILD ON WHAT HE HAS ALREADY SAID! The Apostle Paul is here developing a line of reasoning. In verses 16 -17 Paul does not repeat what he has already said in verse 15! No, Paul builds on what he has already told Timothy.

In verse 15 Paul addressed ALL "the Holy Scriptures". And in his next statement Paul ZOOMS IN ON VERY SPECIFIC PARTS OF THE WHOLE BIBLE. Can we understand this?

The WHOLE Bible is holy, and reveals God's plan of salvation, and is indispensable to us receiving real wisdom and true understanding of God's plan and purposes. And so it is certainly appropriate for us to quote from the whole Bible in our sermons.

But within that context of the whole Bible it is THE GOD-BREATHED WRITINGS that are very specifically provided by God for establishing right doctrines, and for reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness.

It was GOD who decided to produce the Bible as a collaborative effort between God and man, with men at times recoding many direct statements from God and writing under divine inspiration, and with men at

other times presenting information from their own perspectives. It was THE PROTESTANT REFORMERS who decided to elevate everything in the Bible to the level of divine inspiration. This they did through the deliberate mistranslation of this verse, because there is no other statement anywhere else in the Bible that would have allowed them to draw the conclusion that "ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God".

Verses 16-17 should correctly read as follows:

Every God-breathed writing (or scripture) is profitable for (establishing) doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness so that the man of God may become mature (perfect) and fully equipped to produce all good works (in his life).

By "every God-breathed scripture" Paul was not speaking about every verse in the Bible; Paul was focusing only on the "God-breathed statements" within the context of the whole Bible.

Isn't it obvious that we are not to establish doctrines by looking at the Books of Job or Ecclesiastes or Psalms or Proverbs or the Song of Solomon or Esther or Ruth or the Books of Kings and Chronicles? All of these books are certainly a part of "the Holy Scriptures" of verse 15, and they serve important purposes. But they were NOT included in the Bible by God for us to search for the purpose of establishing doctrines. These books can SUPPORT doctrines and present guidance and examples in how to live a righteous life, but these books were NOT given to ESTABLISH doctrines, etc. It is a matter of priorities.

The whole Bible is helpful for giving us understanding; but when it comes to seeking to understand the right doctrines, when it comes to seeking reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, THEN Paul here tells us to focus on all those scriptures that "have proceeded out of the mouth of God", all those scriptures that are "God-breathed". This includes all direct "do" and "don't" statements, as well as all statements of principles.

2 Timothy 3:16 is nothing more than Paul's way of stating Matthew 4:4 and Deuteronomy 8:3, that man is to live "by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God". It is Paul's focus on all those words that were spoken by God Himself.

Paul was not putting down any part of the Old Testament. He was simply showing THE HIGHER PURPOSES for very specific parts of the Bible, those parts that God Himself spoke for our benefit. Paul was ELEVATING THE WORDS THAT GOD HIMSELF HAS SPOKEN TO THEIR RIGHTFUL LEVEL within the context of the whole Bible, as does also Matthew 4:4.

Let me give you some biblical analogies in this regard.

Solomon built the Temple for God. The whole Temple was "holy". But there was an inner area that was known as "the Holy of Holies". So was every part of the Temple as important as every other part of the Temple? NO, IT WAS NOT! Well then, was there any part of the Temple that was not holy? No. But without contradiction the Holy of Holies was more important than the rest of the Temple. It had a higher status which was never applied to the rest of the Temple.

God created a large number of spirit beings, to whom we refer collectively as "angels". But within that group some spirit beings are designated as "cherubim" (Genesis 3:24, etc.), and some others are designated as "seraphim" (Isaiah 6:2, 6). So are all created spirit beings equal? No, they are not, because they are not all also "cherubim" and "seraphim".

Jesus Christ selected 12 apostles. But when the time came to give them a vision of the yet future Kingdom of God (i.e. the vision of the transfiguration), did Christ give this experience to all 12 of them? No, He did not. He specifically selected only three men (Peter, James and John) to experience this vision. This experience conferred additional responsibilities on these three men, which were not conferred on the other nine men, who had not been given this experience.

The whole OT has always been divided into three parts: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. Are these three parts of equal value and importance before God? No, they are not. THE LAW is without question the most important part of the whole Old Testament. And even as with the Temple, this in no way questions the importance of the rest of the OT. Just like the Holy of Holies was the most important part of the Temple, even so the Law is the most important part of the Old Testament.

Regarding the above examples: it is not a matter of questioning the importance of "the rest of the Temple", or "the rest of the spirit beings", or "the rest of the apostles", or "the rest of the Bible". It is simply a matter of recognizing that "a certain part of the Temple" served a higher purpose, and that "a certain part of the created spirit beings" were given higher responsibilities, and that "a certain part of the twelve apostles" were likewise given higher responsibilities, and that "certain parts of the Bible" were given for very specific purposes, which purposes do not necessarily apply to the rest of the Bible.

We see this pattern continuing even into the future. There will be a distinction between those who enter God's Family at the time of the first resurrection, and those who will come from the millennium and from the second resurrection. When the Family of God is finally complete, every member of the Family will then be "holy". But that does not mean that all will be equal. Those who will be in the first resurrection will clearly have positions that will not be available to those who come from a later resurrection.

Within the things God does and plans it is quite common for some things to be more important than some other things. That is what the above examples illustrate. It is the principle of the potter deciding from the same lump of clay to make some things of greater value than some other things (see Romans 9:21). WHY should it be strange that God all along intended for some parts of the Holy Scriptures to be more important than some other parts of those Holy Scriptures?

Surely we can see that the words which God Himself took the trouble to speak for our benefit (e.g. the ten commandments, prophetic statements, etc.) are on a higher level than some statement in the Book of Kings about the age of a certain king at a certain point in time? Can we not see that a statement God Himself has made must be accorded a greater value than some statement king Solomon may have made in the Book of Ecclesiastes or in Proverbs, or some statement made by Job or by queen Esther?

We need to recognize that God expects us to use THE GOD-BREATHED STATEMENTS IN THE BIBLE to establish doctrines, and for correction and reproof and instruction in righteousness. Whatever has first been ESTABLISHED by appeals to God-breathed statements can THEN BE SUPPORTED by statements and examples from all the other parts of the Bible. But we need to keep our priorities sorted out correctly. The God-breathed statements are without question the most important parts of the Holy Scriptures.

We need to recognize that the God-breathed statements within the Bible are to the rest of the Bible what the Holy of Holies is to the rest of the Temple. That is what Paul in essence pointed out to Timothy in this verse.

INSPIRATION IS THE WRONG FOCUS

As far as the whole Bible is concerned, before God the chief criterion has always been THE TRUTH. The first point listed regarding the things we are to focus our minds on is "whatsoever things are true"

(Philippians 4:8). That was the dominant focus of Christ's ministry. In the Gospel of John alone we have the following verses that show this focus on the truth: John 8:32, 45-46; 14:6,17; 15:26; 16:7,13; 17:17,19; 18:37. When something is TRUE, then whether or not it was also "inspired" is of secondary importance. Yes, the things that were inspired are true, certainly! But very many things that were not inspired are equally true.

This focus by God the Father and by Jesus Christ on truth was changed by the Protestant reformers to a focus on supposed inspiration. The reformers changed the focus from "yes, but is it TRUE?" to a focus of "look, it is ALL inspired and THEREFORE it is also all true".

THAT IS THE PROBLEM IN A NUTSHELL!

The truth is that there are very many statements in the Bible which were not inspired at all. And therefore we must evaluate all of those statements on their own merits, as to whether or not they are true. IF they are true (i.e. the vast majority), then for all practical purposes they are just as good as statements that were inspired.

Truth is never divided into "inspired" and "uninspired".

And if it turns out that those statements are not true (e.g. statements by Satan and by other individuals who lied or who were misinformed or who lacked certain understanding), then we need to recognize this without being blinded by appeals to supposed inspiration.

In determining the value of the Bible it is a serious mistake to make inspiration versus non-inspiration the focus of our attention. The correct focus in determining the value of the Bible must be, and should always have been, on the TRUTH! That is the priority of Philippians 4:8. Truth and not inspiration should always have been the main criterion. And "whatsoever things are true" for all practical purposes have the same value as if they were inspired, since God's Spirit is the spirit of truth (see John 15:26; 16:13).

We need to focus on truth and not on inspiration.

Now let's look at the trail of how the errors in this verse came to be accepted. We'll do this in two stages. First we'll examine different Latin translations of this verse. After that we'll look at different English translations.

COMPARING 7 DIFFERENT LATIN VERSIONS

The correct Latin equivalent for the Greek term "pasa graphe" is "omnis scriptura". The Greek adjective "theopneustos" has been generally translated by the Latin expression "divinitus inspirata", which means "divinely inspired". Though not a strictly correct translation, this need not become a problem, provided we very conscientiously retain the attributive characteristics of the original Greek statement. But we should recognize that the English expression "inspired of (or by) God" is really a translation of the Latin "divinitus inspirata", rather than being a translation of the Greek "theopneustos". "Inspired" is a translation of the Latin verb "inspirata". While the actual meaning of the Latin expression isn't necessarily a problem, translating a Greek adjective into a verb in Latin (and in English) can easily result in a change of focus for the original Greek statement. We should always be aware of this potential problem.

Now let's look at the first 7 or 8 words of the Latin text of this verse in different versions. This will reveal a trail that has been obscured in the Greek texts we have available today.

1) 1450's = Gutenberg Vulgate = **omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata utilis est ad ...**

2) 1517 = Complutensian Vulgate = **omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata utilis est ad ...**

3) 1565 = Beza's Vulgate Text = **omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata utilis est ad ...**

These 3 texts fully agree. They all make the attributive statement: "every scripture divinely inspired useful is for ...".

These 3 texts are also in agreement with the 1380 John Wycliffe Translation, the 1522 German Luther Translation, the 1526 William Tyndale Translation, and the 1582 Douay-Rheims Translation. So this Latin text was commonly accepted at least between 1380 and 1582.

4) 1516 = Erasmus Latin text = **omnis scriptura divinitus, inspirata et utilis ad ...**

5) 1522 = Erasmus Latin text = **omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata, et utilis ad ...**

These two texts are worded identically, except that in 1516 Erasmus placed a comma after "divinitus", while in 1522 Erasmus moved the comma to after "inspirata". So where Erasmus' 1516 text reads: "every scripture divine, inspired and useful for ...", his 1522 text reads: "every scripture divinely inspired, and useful for ...". This difference is due to the comma.

However, the most important point to notice is that Erasmus has introduced the word "AND" (Greek "kai", Latin "et") into this verse! None of the three Latin texts quoted above contain this conjunction. So where did Erasmus get this word "and" from?

He didn't get it from the Latin text used between 1380 and 1582 (see above). And he didn't get it from the Greek text Luther used in 1522 or the Greek text Tyndale used in 1526. It is very likely that Erasmus himself simply provided this conjunction because HE THOUGHT it was needed. The comma between divinitus and inspirata in his 1516 edition was clearly dishonest, since the two Latin words "divinitus inspirata" are the translation for the one Greek word "theopneustos", and Erasmus had effectively placed a comma between "theo" and "pneustos".

The most significant consequence of Erasmus' comma (in both positions) was that it FORCED THE TEXT TO BE READ AS A PREDICATE STATEMENT! The reader is forced to provide the verb "is" for the section before the comma. And a predicate statement required the conjunction "and". Therefore Erasmus provided this conjunction in his Latin text. As a scholar he should have known what Marvin Vincent knew, that this verse makes an attributive statement. But this didn't matter to the Catholic scholar Erasmus. And Erasmus also provided the word "kai" for his Greek text (since neither Luther nor Tyndale used a Greek text with "kai" in this verse).

Note! Comparing the two texts from Erasmus with the text of the Gutenberg Bible, and the Complutensian Bible, and Beza's Vulgate text, and the Douay-Rheims translation shows Erasmus to be at odds with those before and after him. Erasmus' self-willed approach to presenting the text of the Bible is well documented. He also altered the text in other places as he saw fit. See the full article for details.

So in his Latin text Erasmus was the first one to present a predicate statement for this verse. Now let's look at the next Latin version.

6) 1556 = Beza's own Latin text = **tota scriptura divinitus est inspirata, et utilis ad ...**

This translates as: "the whole scripture is divinely inspired, and useful for ..."

This is Beza's personal Latin text, which he published alongside the Latin Vulgate text quoted above (though the Vulgate text above is quoted from his 1565 NT edition). We see that Beza not only accepted the conjunction "and" that Erasmus had provided; but that Beza then went a step further.

For a start he also provided the verb "is", which Erasmus had only inferred. Beza was now dogmatically forcing his reader to accept a predicate statement here. Beza also knew that the Latin "omnis", like the Greek "pasa", also has the meaning "every". So in an effort to completely exclude any possibility of an attributive statement, Beza then exchanged the Latin "omnis" for "tota". This Latin word means "all, the whole lot, completely taken up with", etc.

This was dishonest. "Tota" is not a correct translation for the Greek "pasa". It is clear that Beza wanted to force a specific meaning into this verse. That brings us to the present.

7) Today = The Vulgate text = **omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata et utilis ad ...**

This translates as: "every scripture divinely inspired and useful for ...". This is identical to the 1522 text of Erasmus' Latin version (but without the comma).

So here is what we have seen:

From the 1300's to the late 1500's this verse was presented as an attributive statement, and it did not include the conjunction "and". Later scholars (Clarke, Vincent, Alford, Robertson) also confirm this. But in 1516 Erasmus switched the meaning of this verse to a predicate statement by use of punctuation, and by providing the conjunction "and". In so doing he was at odds with his contemporaries. 40 years later Beza took this a step further by also providing the verb "is", and by changing "every scripture" to "the whole scripture". Later versions of the Vulgate accepted the text Erasmus had authored. Today's Latin Vulgate text is not the same as the Gutenberg text and the Complutensian text.

Now let's look at some English translations.

EARLY ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

In 1380 John Wycliffe translated this as: "For all scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach", etc.

In 1526 William Tyndale translated this as: "For all scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable to teach", etc.

The Coverdale Bible (1535) and the Matthew Bible (1537) and the Great Bible (1540) basically repeated the Tyndale text.

While Tyndale had very unfortunately introduced the word "given" into the text of this verse, he nevertheless clearly retained the attributive character of the Greek text. "Given by inspiration" was still an attributive of "scripture". And Tyndale did not provide the conjunction "and".

In 1557 William Whittingham produced the New Testament of the Geneva Bible. It reads as follows:

"For THE WHOLE scripture IS GIVEN by inspiration of God, AND is profitable to teach", etc.

Here Whittingham introduced the following changes into the English translations that had preceded him: First of all he converted the attributive statement "given by inspiration of God" into the predicate statement "is given by inspiration of God". To make this change fit, Whittingham then also provided the conjunction "and". For this he could appeal to the text of Erasmus. And then Whittingham changed "all"

into "the whole" to avoid any possibility of an attributive statement. On top of this, he then made a verse division in the middle of this sentence. These last two changes he very clearly got from the Latin text Beza had published in the previous year.

So Whittingham was the first one to ever present a predicate statement for this verse in any English language translation.

In 1568 the Bishops Bible translated this verse as follows: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable to doctrine", etc. (spelling of the 1595 edition). While they changed "the whole scripture" back to "all scripture" (thus rejecting Beza's and Whittingham's alteration), they did retain the predicate statement "is given" and the conjunction "and". And they also retained the artificial division into two verses.

In 1582 the Douay-Rheims translation rejected both, the predicate statement and also the conjunction "and". This translation reads: "All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach", etc.

However, the Bishops Bible became the foundation for the 1611 KJV, which was later revised in 1769. Both KJV editions had the same text as the Bishops Bible (predicate statement plus "and").

In between the 1611 KJV and the 1769 KJV there appeared in 1729 the Daniel Mace NT, which reads: "for all divinely inspired writings are conducive to instruction", etc. Daniel Mace correctly reverted back to the attributive statement, and he also left out "and", effectively taking this verse back to the translations of John Wycliffe and William Tyndale.

So here is the picture that emerges:

For 160 years (from 1380 - 1540) all the English translations treated this verse as an attributive statement, and they all did not contain the conjunction "and". These translations were made from both, the Latin text and the Greek text. Two later translations, one from the Latin text (Douay) and the other from the Greek text (Mace), also retained the attributive and also omitted "and".

But in 1516 Erasmus had authored a Latin text that forced a predicate statement into this verse. In 1551 the first ever NT with verse divisions was published in Geneva by Stephens. In 1556 Beza published his Latin text in Geneva, also with verse divisions, which made this verse a strong predicate statement. The next year Whittingham copied Beza's innovations into the English text of the Geneva Bible.

So the misrepresentation of this verse in our English versions goes back primarily to the Dutch Catholic scholar Erasmus and to the French Protestant scholar Beza and to the English Protestant scholar Whittingham.

The Protestants in Geneva, led by Calvin and Beza and Whittingham, had taken the doctrinal position "sola scriptura" (by scripture alone), a position that placed every verse in the Bible on an equal footing to every other verse in the Bible. You might call that position "**textual communism**". The whole Bible was supposedly inspired and therefore all verses were equal in importance. So these Geneva Protestants absolutely needed a verse somewhere in the Bible to spell out this position they had taken. Therefore Beza and Whittingham obligingly provided such a statement by twisting the translation of 2 Timothy 3:16. Both these men produced what we would have to call "denomination specific translations" for their followers.

Unfortunately they managed to deceive a far larger group of people than just their own followers. Their translations of this verse have influenced many subsequent translations, not only into English, but into other languages as well.

For more details regarding all of these points, and for the ramifications of this understanding please see the full length article on this subject.

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