

CHAPTER FOUR

A CRITIQUE OF BARR'S INTERPRETIVE CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate Barr's interpretation of II Timothy 3:16-17 and II Peter 1:20-21. Each of these texts will be introduced with a brief overview of its exegetical issues. Then Barr's interpretive conclusions about these passages and their bearing on the theology of inspiration will be critically analysed. Finally, the chapter will end with a comprehensive summary of Barr's exegetical deficiencies in interpreting II Timothy 3:16-17 and II Peter 1:20-21.

II Timothy 3:16-17

B F" (D" N- 2, ` B<, LFJ@H 6" Â é NX84µ@H BDĪ H *4" F6" 8\ "<, BDĪ H
!8, (µ` <, BDĪ H !B" < D2TF4<, BDĪ H B" 4*, \ " < J-< |< *46" 4@Fb<®, Ē<"
-DJ4@H¹ ÒJ@2, @2-<2DT B@H BDĪ HB < \$D(@< • (" 2Ī < |>ODJ4FµX<@H

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.(NIV)

Indeed, II Timothy 3:16-17 has been traditionally used over the years by evangelical scholarship to buttress the doctrine and extent of

biblical inspiration.¹ Some have concluded that II Timothy 3:16-17 affirms the divine authorship of all Scripture.² Others have also asserted that II Timothy 3:16-17 provides a basis for the doctrine of inspiration:

When Paul declares, then, that "every Scripture," or "all Scripture" is the product of the Divine breath, "is God-breathed," he asserts with as much energy as he could employ that Scripture is the product of a specifically Divine operation.³

The next section will identify exegetical issues raised in II Timothy 3:16-17.

Overview of Exegetical Issues of II Timothy 3:16-17

In his effort to define the concept of biblical inspiration Warfield admits that there are ambiguities in this passage:

There is room for some difference of opinion as to the exact construction of this declaration. Shall we render "Every Scripture" or "All Scripture?" Shall we render "Every [or all] Scripture is God-breathed and [therefore] profitable," or "Every [or all] Scripture, being God-breathed, is as well profitable?" No

¹ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 202.

² Clark H. Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation--The Foundation of Christian Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 55. Pinnock comments further, "What the Scripture says, God says. It is a God-breathed (*theopneustic*) document. For that reason Paul feels free to personify Scripture as God speaking (Gal. 3:8, 22; Rom. 9:17)."

³ Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (New York: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1948), 133.

doubt both questions are interesting, but for the main matter now engaging our attention they are both indifferent. . . . In both cases these Sacred Scriptures are declared to owe their value to their divine origin; and in both cases this Divine origin is energetically asserted of their entire fabric.⁴

Greek grammarians have shown us that the beginning part of II Timothy 3:16 is an ambiguous construction since we must decide whether B F" (D" N- 2, ` B<, LFJ@H“is predicate or attributive structure.”⁵

According to Porter, the Greek predicate structure is "a means of adding something to the qualities or characteristics of a substantive . . . by ascribing or predicating something to a substantive."⁶ In these constructions, predication is marked by the modifying word, usually an adjective, "not having an article, whether or not the substantive does."⁷ This automatically poses a potential ambiguity in cases where the substantive has no article. The context may or may not be decisive. However, usually the substantive and the adjective, or other word employed, would have to agree in case, gender and number.⁸

By contrast, an "attributive structure in Greek involves the direct attribution of qualities or characteristics to a substantive"⁹ by means of the following syntactical constructions:

⁴ Ibid., 134.

⁵ Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 120.

⁶ Ibid., 118.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 116.

‘Attributive structure’ observes that the tendency in Greek (though not the absolute rule) is that, when a substantive is in a group where a modifier (often an adjective) is also filling a slot, either they both have the article of the governing (or head) term (substantive) or they both do not. If they both do have the article, they may share the same article, with the adjective falling between the article and the substantive (article-adjective-substantive) (position 1) or the adjective may have its own article (article-substantive-article-adjective) (position 2).¹⁰

As a result, the ambiguity of the syntax of this verse allows for several different translations. There are, in fact, three key interpretive issues in II Timothy 3:16-17 that should be addressed, two of which hinge on these ambiguities: (1) the syntactical significance and meaning of $\beta \alpha \rho \iota \tau \epsilon \rho \alpha$ and the scope of the phrase $\beta \alpha \rho \iota \tau \epsilon \rho \alpha$ ($\delta \epsilon \nu \nu \alpha \iota \sigma \tau \alpha$); (2) the meaning of $\tau \omega \nu \beta \alpha \rho \iota \tau \epsilon \rho \omega \nu$ and (3) the placement of the implied or understood verb $\epsilon \sigma \tau \iota$ (*is*),¹¹ which is really the syntactical function of $\tau \omega \nu \beta \alpha \rho \iota \tau \epsilon \rho \omega \nu$ relative to ($\delta \epsilon \nu \nu \alpha \iota \sigma \tau \alpha$). It goes without saying that one's interpretive approaches to these issues determine the final interpretive conclusions on the meaning of II Timothy 3:16-17.

The next section will identify and critique Barr's interpretive conclusions with regards to these exegetical issues in II Timothy 3:16-17. What interpretive conclusions does he adopt in his exegetical treatment of II Timothy 3:16-17?

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ This is really an English translation problem since the verb $\epsilon \sigma \tau \iota$ does not even appear in the Greek text.

Barr's Interpretations of II Timothy 3:16-17

Issue One: The Meaning and Scope of ἅ ἡ γραφή

The first exegetical issue concerns the meaning of ἅ ἡ γραφή. There are several interpretive approaches to this grammatical issue: Should it be rendered "all," "the whole," or "every?" Some Greek scholars have concluded that the adjective ἅ ἡ γραφή means "all" when it is used substantively with the article and "every" when it is used without the article.¹² However, in certain technical constructions and in proper names this rule appears to be suspended.¹³ This construction may also be used to highlight the "partitive aspect of the expression, and, if this is so, the present phrase may mean Scripture as viewed in each separate part of it."¹⁴ Commenting on the difficulty of deciding on the meaning of ἅ ἡ γραφή, that is, whether it should be 'every,' 'the whole' or 'all,' Kelly says:

The problem is complicated by the fact that we cannot be sure how strictly this dogma was observed in the first-century Koine, but the balance of argument seems in favour of Every Scripture.¹⁵

¹² Bruce Corley, "Biblical Teaching on Inspiration and Inerrancy," in *The Proceedings of the Conference of Biblical Inerrancy* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 451.

¹³ Ibid. e.g. In Romans 11:26, ἅ ἡ Ἰσραὴλ means "all Israel."

¹⁴ Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), 163.

¹⁵ J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles: I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1963), 202.

Some scholars see no essential exegetical differences in rendering $\beta\ \phi$ 'all' or 'every' because, "'All Scripture' perceives scripture as a whole, and 'every scripture' perceives it in terms of all its components."¹⁶

However, we recommend that these two approaches be kept separate because in the final analysis, they lead to two distinct exegetical conclusions. 'All' Scripture implies that there is a complete, established, and collective body of scripture. 'Every' Scripture allows for an undefined, fluid, uncertain or perhaps fragmented body of scripture. Therefore, one's exegetical approach to this issue is quite significant, for that lays an interpretive base.

Barr's Interpretive Conclusions on $\alpha\ \phi$ ' δ NZ

On the meaning of $\beta\ \phi$ (δ NZ (*pasa graph'*), Barr explains:

When we say 'all scripture' we picture the entirety of the Bible. If the meaning is 'every scripture,' then the word 'scripture' does not designate the entirety of the Bible; rather, it is a word for each individual passage or sentence. For our purpose it will not be necessary to make a definite decision between these two, and it may not be possible to do so; but it is good to have in mind that both possibilities are there.¹⁷

Nonetheless, from examining Barr's writing,¹⁸ we can see that he

¹⁶ George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 445.

¹⁷ Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

appears to have chosen to interpret B F" (D" NZ as an attributive phrase, 'every scripture' rather than 'all scripture.' To support his adoption of this interpretive conclusion, Barr argues from the standpoint of the author's intent:

Certainly for him there was a body of 'scripture,' and this scripture was inspired; but he shows no interest in defining which books were within it. It is possible that like other New Testament writers he was referring mainly to Old Testament books, which were the pre-existing scripture for early Christianity. . . . It is highly improbable that the writer had in mind exactly the same collection of New Testament books that we now have. Within older scripture, likewise, it is possible that some books within our present Old Testament were included by him. It is highly likely that he included other books which were accepted as religiously edifying or authoritative at the time and which had been counted as 'sacred writings' in Timothy's upbringing.¹⁹

As a result, Barr concludes that II Timothy 3:16 highlights that these "sacred writings - undefined - are inspired, they can be relied on to build up the reader in the Christian life and to supply his needs."²⁰ He argues further:

It is absolutely certain that II Tim. 3.16 cannot be taken as a clearly delimited definition of the unique inspiration of the sixty-six books of the modern Protestant canon. The idea is not that of a quality that attached uniquely to a precisely defined set of books: it is rather a quality that is possessed by the entire body of writings upon which Timothy has been educated and which are recognized in the church as religiously wholesome and authoritative.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 5.

²¹ Ibid., 4.

In summary, Barr argues that the meaning of $\text{B F}'' (\text{D}'' \text{NZ})$ is ambiguous and broad. Furthermore, it probably excludes some of the Old Testament canon as we know it and probably includes a variety of other non-canonical writings. Therefore, there is nothing to indicate that it should be linked to the sixty-six books of the modern Protestant canon. Consequently, II Timothy 3:16 should not be interpreted as making any special claim about the nature of a specific body of sacred literature. In essence, Barr submits that this verse, is simply a general statement about the spiritual value of *some body of sacred writings* known to Timothy. This interpretive conclusion posits a foundation for Barr's view of "scripture" we will see later.

Critique of Barr's Conclusions on $\text{A H/A F}'' / \text{A F}'' ' \text{D}'' \text{NZ}$

Barr's interpretive decisions on the meaning of $\text{B F}''$ and $(\text{D}'' \text{NZ})$ seem to create hermeneutical difficulties which tend to violate the grammar as well as the contextual meaning of this phrase, $\text{B F}'' (\text{D}'' \text{NZ})$. He overlooks some important grammatical constructions of this phrase. Firstly, to push $\text{B F}''$ to mean 'every' whenever the article is absent is exegetically unsound.²² Passages such as Acts 2:36 ' $\text{B H} @ \text{E} @ \text{H} [\text{FD}'' -8 -$ *all house of Israel;*' Rom. 11:26 ' $\text{B H} [\text{FD}'' -8 \text{FT} 2\text{ZF}, \text{J}'' 4 -$ *all Israel will be saved;*' Eph. 2:21 ' $\text{!} < \emptyset \text{B F}'' @ \text{E} @ * @ \mu \neg -$ *in whom all building;*'

²² For a technical discussion on B H with or without the article, see Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 119.

and Col. 4:12 ‘ὅτι ἡ ἐπιτομή τοῦ σώματος οὐκ ἐστὶν ἐν ὅλῃ τῆς θεοῦ’ - in all will of God’ demonstrate that ἡ ἐπιτομή does not always mean 'every' without the article.²³ Secondly, in the New Testament, (ὅλη ἡ γραφή is used exclusively with a sacred meaning of Holy Scripture - both “the individual Scripture passage” and “Scripture as a whole.”²⁴ Contrary to Barr's view, it is possible that such "Scripture" constitutes a defined, rather than an ambiguous, body of literature. Therefore, it appears there is good reason to propose that ἡ ἐπιτομή (ὅλη ἡ γραφή should be understood as a reference to a specific or defined body of sacred writings, that is, Holy Scripture. The point we are advancing here is that (ὅλη ἡ γραφή is actually a direct reference to a defined body of sacred literature,²⁵ and thus, ἡ ἐπιτομή ἡ γραφή becomes a modifier of this definite body of writings. Moreover, since the New Testament use of (ὅλη ἡ γραφή refers exclusively to the Holy Scriptures, to apply (ὅλη ἡ γραφή as a reference to an ambiguous and authoritative body of sacred writings would contradict its New Testament usage. It seems logical to conclude that II Tim. 3:16-17 is saying ‘all scripture, whether in all its parts or in its totality,’ as understood in the New Testament, is indeed God-breathed. Technically, the choice between "every Scripture" and "all Scripture" is of

²³ Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 163.

²⁴ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 166. In all its 51 occurrences in the New Testament, (ὅλη ἡ γραφή refers to Holy Scripture. See Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, and Kurt Aland, ed. *Konkordanz zum Novum Testamentum Graece* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), 342-343.

²⁵ See George V. Wigram, *The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament* (London: Samuel Bagster, 1903), 124-125. In the New Testament, (ὅλη ἡ γραφή is exclusively used with a sacred meaning of Holy Scripture.

minimal significance because if every Scripture is God-breathed, it goes without saying that all Scripture is God-breathed. The resultant nature and origin of “the Scriptures” is accented here. Furthermore, the unique source of “the Scriptures” is highlighted, thus singling out the source of the Scriptures, (D' NZ, from the source of other *non*-(D' NZ writings. Therefore, we may conclude that only Holy Scripture is God-breathed. In this book of II Timothy, Paul makes several other references to teaching and preaching the Scriptures (cf. 2:2, 14, 15, 24; 4:2). Certainly, it would be improper to label this "scripture" ambiguous and undefined because this is a definite body of 'holy writings.' Strictly, in its context, B F" (D' NZ may be understood as an expansion of the previous references to the Old Testament in I Timothy as a defined body of sacred writings²⁶ since the Old Testament was really the text of the New Testament. Actually, this understanding "provides a reason for Paul's use of B F" and for his change from Ê D (DVµµ" J" , an OT designation, to B F" (D' NZ, a possibly more inclusive term."²⁷ Moreover, it is very unlikely that Paul would have referred to this defined 'scripture,' as an undefined and ambiguous body of literature as Barr purports it to be. In addition, Knight is correct when he concludes that Paul's statement (in II Tim. 3:16-17) is not that certain (D' NZ are God-breathed, but that 'all' (D' NZ are God-breathed.²⁸ Again, the spot light is on the resultant origin of the Scriptures, that is, they are God-breathed.

²⁶ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 448.

²⁷ Ibid. See II Tim. 3:15, Ê D (DVµµ" J" @É" H

²⁸ Ibid.

Therefore, at best Barr's interpretive conclusions on B F" (D" NZ appear less likely than the alternative. More importantly still, Barr's interpretations on the meaning of B F" (D" NZ seem to be inconsistent with the larger body of sacred Scripture we have in the rest of the New Testament,²⁹ where we see that the use of B F" (D" NZ highlights the uniqueness of the origin of Scripture.

Issue Two: The Meaning of 1, ` B<, LFJ@H

The second key exegetical issue raised in II Timothy 3:16-17 concerns the precise meaning and implications of 2, ` B<, LFJ@H What does this word tell us about the nature of Scripture?

Barr's Treatment of 1, ` B<, LFJ@H

Barr concludes that II Timothy 3:16 is the only "explicit reference to the 'inspiration' of 'scripture.'"³⁰ Here, Barr's focus is on the fact that the word 2, ` B<, LFJ@H is a hapax legomenon. Therefore, he argues that we must not over interpret or read into its meaning without warrant.³¹ Commenting on the term 2, ` B<, LFJ@H 'God-breathed,' Barr

²⁹ See Nestle-Aland, *Konordanz Novum Testamentum Graece*, 342-343.

³⁰ Barr, *Scope*, 119.

³¹ Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, 3-4. Barr argues, "The idea that II Tim. 3.16, because of its utterance about inspiration of scripture, was laying the foundation for a Christianity of evangelical-fundamentalist type arises from a simple cause: it arises from the practise of reading single texts in isolation from their context. At one time, this passage could pass as a proof-text; but, for anyone who prizes the reading of

explains:

The wording does not make it clear whether the writer thinks of the past or of the present, of the origin of scripture or of its present mode of operation. Does he mean that God 'breathed' in, or into, the original production of it, or does he mean that he now 'breathes' through it? Probably we cannot tell, and the reason is simple: probably the writer had no thought of the question.³²

Hence, he concludes that "one of the peculiarities of scripture was that by the nature of its own formation it obscured its own earlier history."³³ Furthermore, although the term appears in the Bible in II Timothy 3:16, he does not consider the epistle of II Timothy to be a central biblical document. He argues:

One other point: it is highly significant that the inspiration of scripture received explicit mention not only rarely (indeed here only) but also on the margin rather than in the centre of the New Testament.³⁴

He elucidates this point further:

I have just indicated how thin is the evidence, within the Bible itself, for any such belief: the famous text in which inspiration is mentioned, II Tim. 3.16, is a fairly marginal source, and it makes no connection whatever between inspiration and historical accuracy, it leaves it quite vague which books were the 'scriptures' under discussion, and above all it is notable for its low-key

passages in their context, it must be clear that the interests of the letter lay elsewhere."

³² Ibid., 1-2.

³³ Barr, *Scope*, 115.

³⁴ Ibid., 4.

treatment of the matter: though it says that all scripture is inspired, it does not for a moment suggest that this is the foundation of Christian doctrine or practice, all it says is that scripture, being inspired is 'profitable' for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. In other words, the inspiration of scripture, as defined in this famous text, has nothing to do with the accuracy of scripture or its primacy as the foundation of all doctrine, it is concerned with its practical effects as a 'useful' source of moral correction.³⁵

Here, Barr presents three exegetical conclusions. Firstly, he concludes that we cannot tell whether 2, `B<, LFJ@H indicates the origin of the writings referred to in this passage or their present mode of operation. Therefore, because of its ambiguity, 2, `B<, LFJ@H cannot bear substantial interpretive weight in the question under consideration. Consequently, it is evident from his writings that he does not give the word 2, `B<, LFJ@H its syntactical attention in relation to (D' NZ. Secondly, the 'term' does not carry any indications of infallibility or inerrancy. Lastly, he concludes that the book of II Timothy is a "marginal source of the New Testament."

Critique of Barr's Treatment of 1, `B<, LFJ@H

Barr unfairly deprives 2, `B<, LFJ@H of its rightful theological content and implications to the doctrine of inspiration. Indeed, the word is a hapax legomenon, but it embodies a distinct image of the Scriptures worth noting. There are three points we raise about Barr's conclusions on 2, `B<, LFJ@H and its related interpretive significance.

³⁵ Ibid., 63.

Firstly, Barr fails to weigh, if not deliberately avoids, the theological significance of $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ in his treatment of this text. Indeed, $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ is a unique biblical term.³⁶ It rightly highlights the divine authorship or source of Scripture. The term $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ refers to the character of Scripture not to the mode in which Scripture came into existence.³⁷ Thus $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ is a special term that highlights the origin as well as the resultant nature and quality of scripture: "All Scripture is God-breathed." Therefore, to advance that $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ is an ambiguous term would fit sound logic.³⁸

The term $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ itself puts the spotlight on the fact that God is the source, the origin of the writings under consideration in II Timothy 3:16. There seems to be good reason to suggest that $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ is to be applied to all Scripture, that is, "all Scripture is God-breathed." Indeed, $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ affirms the divine origin of the Scriptures. The term reflects God's creative activity in the production of the Scriptures,³⁹ that is, He is the source of the Scriptures.

³⁶ See Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 679. Considering the meaning of $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$, "breathe out," the Scriptures, the Old Testament in this case, are understood to be God's words in written form. Grudem is probably correct when he proposes that "since it is the writings that are said to be "breathed out," this breathing must be understood as a metaphor for speaking," (Wayne Grudem, "Scripture's Self Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture." In *Scripture and Truth*, eds. Donald Carson and John Woodbridge. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983, 39).

³⁷ For further detail see Sinclair B. Ferguson, "How Does the Bible Look at Itself?" in *Inerrancy and Hermeneutics*, ed. Harvie M. Conn (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 55.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

³⁹ Gordon D. Fee, *New International Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Peabody: Hendricksen Publishers, 1984), 279.

Furthermore, because of the resultant origin of this Scripture, that is, it is "God-breathed," it seems logical to infer the accuracy, infallibility, and authority of Scripture. Hence, the evangelical camp subscribes to the Scriptures as the standard for measuring what Christians ought to believe and how they ought to conduct themselves on this side of eternity.

Secondly, it is evident that Barr does not view the Bible as a direct reference to the source of all scripture when he concludes that "the Bible does not have the property of perfection, which belongs only to God himself."⁴⁰ Actually, he believes that inspiration of Scripture, as defined in II Timothy 3:16, "has nothing to do with accuracy or its primacy as the foundation of all doctrine, . . ."⁴¹ On the contrary, we believe that Scripture is God-breathed, thus giving the Scriptures authority and trustworthiness as the standard for truth.⁴² In the larger context, the attitude of Bible authors toward the nature of the Bible is rather clear. The Bible's words were viewed as the words of God.⁴³ Knight rightly comments on the essential characteristics of God's breath as the ultimate

⁴⁰ Barr, *Scope*, 55.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁴² Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 20-21.

⁴³ Grudem, "Scripture's Self-Attestation," 39. Grudem points out, "The Old Testament writings are regarded as God's words in written form. God is the one who spoke (and still speaks) them, although using human agents to write them down." See also Ferguson, "How Does the Bible Look at Itself?" 50-52. In both the Old Testament and New Testament, there is clear consciousness on the part of the Bible authors that what they wrote or said was on par with the revelation, the Pentateuch - *the Torah*, God had given previously. Individuals like Moses, David, Elijah, Paul, Peter, Timothy, et cetera, confirm this point.

source of all scripture:

This is another way of saying that scripture is God's word (cf. Jesus' use of "scripture" and "word of God" in apposition to each other in Jn. 10:35). The same thing is also said when the NT uses "God says" for what is found in scripture, whether the words were originally spoken by God or not (see Warfield, *Inspiration and Authority*, 299-348) and when Paul insists that the message he speaks consists of words taught by God's Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12-13; cf. Heb. 3:7; Acts 1:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).⁴⁴

There is an abundance of related biblical data that espouse this perception of the identity of God's words with the words of Scripture. According to Archer, the term 'God-breathed' implies God's personal involvement, controlling, and guiding the human authors to "write down just exactly what God intended them to write."⁴⁵ Archer is probably correct in making such a tight link between God's involvement in the lives of the human authors and the nature of the final document they produced under God's supervision.

However, Barr is absolutely correct to point out that 2, `B<, LFJ@H as it stands in II Tim. 3:16, has nothing to do with accuracy or infallibility of the Scriptures.⁴⁶ Indeed, although inerrancy or infallibility is pertinent to the doctrine of Scripture, it is not the focus of the text. Nevertheless, for Barr to raise this point here is rather confusing because there is no textual basis to warrant such an argument. Actually,

⁴⁴ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 447.

⁴⁵ Archer, *Bible Difficulties*, 417.

⁴⁶ Barr, *Scope*, 63.

his view appears to be eisegetically driven since the infallibility of scripture is not even an exegetical issue raised directly by the passage under consideration. However, in chapter five, the section dealing with biblical authority issue, we will analyse Barr's reasons for this reference to infallibility of Scripture.

Thirdly, Barr's questioning of the significance and authority of the book of II Timothy as a New Testament document violates his emphasis on the believing community as having interpretive authority.⁴⁷ Over the past hundreds of years of Church tradition, the book of II Timothy has neither been questioned nor considered to be a "marginal source" of the New Testament.⁴⁸ It is true that (D" NZ in II Timothy 3:16 refers to the Old Testament. However, (D" NZ should not be limited to the Old Testament. This seems to be the view the apostle Peter had when he says, “. . . just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of those matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other, (D" N l, Scriptures, to their own destruction,” II Peter 3:15-16. Paul's letters (writings) are placed in the same category as (D" NZ.

Therefore, Towner is correct when he extends (D" NZ to embrace the New Testament as well. He explains:

⁴⁷ Ibid., 111. Barr says, "The Bible takes its origin from within the continuing life of these communities; the standard of its religious interpretation is the structure of faith which these communities maintain; and it has the task of providing a challenge, a force for innovation and a source of purification to the life of these communities."

⁴⁸ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1011.

Paul has in mind the Old Testament Scriptures, not because the apostles' teaching lacked authority but probably because the opponents had so misused them. At that time the Old Testament represented the revelation of God, His communication to human beings, that had been written down; but it is certainly correct to extend His meaning to include the New Testament.⁴⁹

If "all scripture" - both Old and New Testament, is indeed "God-breathed" as we have already established, Barr's view of regarding the book of II Timothy as a "marginal source" becomes an unlikely interpretive conclusion. His position reflects acceptance of the popularized historical-critical view of authorship and dating, a judgment not drawn from within Scripture as such. In a word, this "late and marginal source" argument posited by conventional critical theories lacks scriptural or textual support. The point we are making here is that persuasive theological conclusions should be based on sound exegesis or contextual considerations. Barr's view displays the presuppositions that shape his view of Scripture. This topic will be dealt with in chapter five. However, we see that Barr's theological decision to regard the book of II Timothy as a "late and marginal document" would be contrary to the New Testament understanding of (D" NZ and 2, ` B<, LFJ@H⁵⁰ It becomes unclear why a

⁴⁹ Philip H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 200. See also Vine, Unger, White, "Scripture" *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985, 552. "Graph' - of the OT Scriptures (those accepted by the Jews as canonical) and all those of the NT which were to be accepted by Christians as authoritative, 2 Tim. 3:16; these latter were to be discriminated from the many forged epistles and other religious 'writings' already produced and circulated in Timothy's time."

⁵⁰ See Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 679.

Church tradition preserved for centuries should suddenly be deemed wrong by a twentieth-century scholar. Obviously, Barr's views are not equivocal because of their incongruity with the conventional ethos. We are not advocating that Church tradition, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy, is always right. In fact, Barr challenges us to see the need to be analytical and critical of our ways of doing theology, especially with the knowledge of the strength of our theological traditions. This is not an easy task at all because our presuppositions are always tinted by our theological traditions. Thus, we agree that "religious tradition, however, is not always a good thing. When it attempts to stifle all development and every attempt at rethinking one's cultural or religious heritage, tradition becomes something that is impoverishing rather than enriching."⁵¹ Again, Barr's interpretive decision to view the book of II Timothy as a "late and marginal document" reflects his presuppositions on the nature of the Scriptures, an area that will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter five.

In summary, we conclude that the meaning of $\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu\sigma\mu\alpha$ in this passage suggests a clear picture that expresses vivid truth about the nature and origin of scripture. Furthermore, the use of the term $\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu\sigma\mu\alpha$ is intensified when it is understood in the context of a body of literature that accords the highest respect to the Scriptures. We propose that $\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu\sigma\mu\alpha$ be understood as a direct reference to a defined body of sacred literature distinct from non- $\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu\sigma\mu\alpha$ which would not be God-

⁵¹ Hill, Brennan, Paul Knitter and William Madges, *Faith, Religion and Theology: A Contemporary Introduction "Approaches to Scripture and Tradition"* Mystic: Twenty-Third Publications, 1990, 272.

breathed.

Issue Three: How 1, `B<, LFJ@H Relates to 'D" NZ

In the past, those who have limited themselves to the English text (Bible) have presented this issue as the placement of the implied missing verb, |FJ\<.⁵² Where in the verse should we supply |FJ\<: after (D" NZ or after 2, `B<, LFJ@H? These two different placements lead to two entirely different meanings and conclusions. Supplying the understood verb |FJ\< after (D" NZ reads "Scripture is God-breathed. . . ." If placed after 2, `B<, LFJ@H it would read "God-breathed scripture is. . . ." ⁵³ The placement of this implied verb |FJ\<, either favours or implies a defined body of scripture or an undefined body of scripture. Another related translational issue becomes the grammatical purpose of 6" \, whether it serves as "a conjunction between 2, `B<, LFJ@H and éNX84u@H (God-breathed and profitable)" or as an adjunctive adverb "also" ("God-breathed scripture is also profitable").⁵⁴

Indeed, the placement of the implied verb |FJ\< and the grammatical purpose of 6" \ influence our understanding of the meaning of this passage. These are crucial issues that need to be addressed as we seek to establish the meaning of this passage. A more direct way of approaching these pertinent and crucial exegetical issues in this text

⁵² Corley, "Biblical Teaching," 451.

⁵³ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 444.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

would be: How does λ relate to $(D)N$? Is λ an attributive adjective or a predicate adjective? If λ is attributive it attributes something to $(D)N$, "all/every God-breathed Scripture (is) . . ." If λ is predicate it predicates something to $(D)N$, "all/every Scripture (is) God-breathed. . . ." One's exegetical decision leads to two distinct interpretive conclusions about the meaning of this text.

How then does Barr settle this key issue in II Timothy 3:16 on the syntactical relationship between λ and $(D)N$? What interpretive approaches does he adopt in establishing his conclusions?

Barr's Answer to How λ Relates to $(D)N$

Based on his writing, it seems Barr has adopted the view that understands λ attributively, thus interpreting $B F (D)N$ λ to mean "every/all God-breathed scripture is profitable" since he believes that there are some other scriptures not included or ignored in our present Bible that were also religiously useful and authoritative.⁵⁵ A prima-facie observation appears to lead to the conclusion that he understands $B F (D)N$ λ predicately, but his conclusions reveal otherwise.

Barr concludes that II Timothy 3:16-17 is not directing us to a specific inspired body of sacred scripture but rather stating that these

⁵⁵ Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, 4.

"sacred writings--undefined--are inspired,"⁵⁶ and are also profitable. Furthermore, from his writing it appears that he understands 2, `B<, LFJ@H has an adjective in the attributive slot when he says:

The idea is not that of a quality that attaches uniquely to a precisely defined set of books: it is rather a quality that is possessed by the entire body of writings upon which Timothy has been educated and which are recognized in the church as religiously wholesome and authoritative.⁵⁷

Hence, he concludes that the author of II Timothy did not define the concept of inspiration because he meant not to explain it for us. According to Barr, Paul mentions the inspiration of scripture "almost in passing."⁵⁸ As a result, commenting on the meaning and significance of 2, `B<, LFJ@H and how it relates to (D" NZ as indicated in II Timothy 3:16-17, Barr says that "because these sacred writings--undefined--are inspired, they can be relied on to build the reader in the Christian life and to supply his needs."⁵⁹ He appears to portray the view that understands the relationship between (D" NZ and 2, `B<, LFJ@H in the predicate structure. However, his interpretive conclusions show that he favours the attributive view. Commenting on his understanding of the scope and primary emphasis of II Timothy 3:16-17, Barr asserts:

Why is it important, according to II Timothy, that scripture is inspired?
Because of its practical effects, in teaching and training. Used in this way, it

⁵⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁷ Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, 4.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

conduces to righteousness. It equips the man of God for every good work: that is, its effect is ethically beneficial.⁶⁰

Barr is correct when he concludes that the emphasis of II Timothy 3:16-17 is on the practical effects of Scripture. Indeed, this is an important point in Paul's mind as indicated in verse 15, "and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings (ἅγια γράμματα, Holy Scriptures) that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ." However, there are two points Paul highlights in II Timothy 3:16-17: (1) he is making a statement about the source of the Scriptures, that is, it is God-breathed, and (2) because Scripture is God-breathed, it is useful. Towner is on target when he concludes that "the divine origin of scripture ensures its usefulness in leading to salvation (v.15) and for teaching and training (v.16-17)."⁶¹ In a word, the usefulness or effectiveness of the Scriptures depends on their divine origin. This is a two-fold emphasis that should not be overlooked. Indeed, the two points are inseparable. This seems to be Barr's oversight here. He concludes that the primary concern of the passage is basically the effectiveness (usefulness) of Scripture without acknowledging the basis for such usefulness, which, in this case, is the resultant origin of the Scriptures, 2, ἅγια γράμματα

Therefore, according to Barr, ἐπιχρηστέα (profitable or useful) must be understood in the same weaker sense as 2, ἅγια γράμματα without the significant or much weightier concepts of inspiration and authority

⁶⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁶¹ Towner, *1-2 Timothy*, 200-201.

that are common in current Protestant theology.⁶² In addition, he concludes that it "serves as an adjunctive adverb to read "All/every God-breathed scripture is also profitable. . . ."⁶³

Critique of Barr's Answer to How 2, ̄ B<, LFJ@H Relates to ' D' NZ

We have already established that the placement of the implied verb ̄FJ< is basically a translational issue (the English text trying to make sense of the Greek text) relative to the main exegetical issue of how (D' NZ and 2, ̄ B<, LFJ@H are related. Is 2, ̄ B<, LFJ@H an adjective in the attributive slot or an adjective in the predicate slot? Here, we propose that this is the key exegetical issue of this passage upon which its entire interpretation hangs.

We have already observed that there are at least two possible ways of solving this issue: In the attributive, the adjective (2, ̄ B<, LFJ@H) is understood grammatically as supplying a statement about some body of material in the sentence. In the predicate, the adjective (2, ̄ B<, LFJ@H) is making a pronouncement about the subject, which is essentially the primary purpose of the sentence.⁶⁴

From the syntax of our text, B F" (D' N- 2, ̄ B<, LFJ@H . . . , we

⁶² Ibid., 4-5.

⁶³ Barr, *Scope*, 119. "The scope of the inspiration of scripture is essentially *practical*: scripture is 'profitable' (a very low-key word, strikingly contrasted with what has been made of this text in later times) for teaching, for correction, for training in righteousness, in order that the man of God may be complete and well equipped."

⁶⁴ For further discussion see William D. Chamberlain, *An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1941), 42-46.

observe that $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ does not follow an article. Actually, there is no article in the construction. $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ also agrees in case, gender, and number with $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ which it modifies. In addition, if there was an article before $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ this would have been certainly attributive.⁶⁵

To make the attributive/predicate issue clearer here, we are proposing that the adjective $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ should be understood predicatively based on the following three reasons: First, the position or location of the adjective $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ in the sentence does not support the attributive structure.⁶⁶ Exegetically, the presence of the adjective without the copula favours the predicate understanding.⁶⁷ Therefore, we propose that $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ be understood as an adjective in the predicate slot. Second, again, we propose that $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ ("all, every or the whole Scripture," should be understood as referring to a definite body of sacred literature. It would be unlikely for Paul to employ $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ as a reference to an ambiguous or undefined body of sacred writings. Therefore, $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ becomes analogous to an articular construction which yields, in effect, a predicative syntax for $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ that is, no-article-adjective. It seems more likely that since both $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ and $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ are exegetically related as adjectives, logically yields only a

⁶⁵ See A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), 656.

⁶⁶ Chamberlain, *Exegetical Grammar*, 41.

⁶⁷ See Robertson, *Grammar*, 656. See also A.T. Robertson and W. Hersey Davis, *A New Short Grammar of the Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1931), 277. "An adjective may be attributive (instead of predicate) without the article as in $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ (I Cor. 5:6) *a little leaven*. But if the article is used before the adjective it is certainly attributive like $\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\iota$ (Matt. 12:35) *the good*

predicate usage in their contexts. The point here is if B F" (D" NZ is "definite" by virtue of B F" and (D" NZ (B F" (D" NZ as tantamount to a proper noun), then the adjective 2, `B<, LFJ@H must be predicate as must éNX84u@H. The third point concerns the probability that 2, `B<, LFJ@H and éNX84u@H would have to stand in the same syntactical relation to (D" NZ and that they would, therefore, be either predicate or attributive. We have proposed that there is more evidence to hold 2, `B<, LFJ@H and éNX84u@H as predicating something to (D" NZ than understanding it attributively. As a result, it seems the predicate view would be more unlikely than the alternative.

To sum up, 2, `B<, LFJ@H should be viewed as an adjective in the predicate slot. It is making a declaration about (D" NZ, that is, "all/every scripture (is) God-breathed. . . ." The origin or source of scripture as well as its usefulness become the two key points of emphasis in this text. In this regard, the predicate view is an exegetically convincing view over the attributive position. Therefore, we may confidently conclude that Scripture is both inspired and profitable. In other words, because the origin of the Scriptures is God, 2, `B<, LFJ@H they are useful for guiding Christian faith and practice. Fee is correct when he concludes that II Timothy 3:16-17 makes two affirmations: Scripture is God-breathed and Scripture is useful.⁶⁸

We believe that a proper study of II Timothy 3:16-17 leads the exegete to embrace the conviction of the Scripture it embodies. Knight is

man."

⁶⁸ Fee, *NIBC: 1 and 2 Timothy*, 279.

right when he elaborates:

Its particular significance lies in its absoluteness, first that relating to the extent of scripture (B F" (D" NZ) and second that relating to the character of scripture (2, ` B<, LFJ@H). Because "all scripture is God-breathed" Paul can state categorically that it is "useful for teaching, . . ." and that as a result of its fourfold work in one's life that "the man of God" is adequate and equipped (v.17).⁶⁹

II Peter 1:20-21

The other passage Barr evaluates in his attempt to establish his preferred view of biblical inspiration is II Peter 1:20-21. The purpose of the next section is to analyse critically Barr's interpretive conclusions on II Peter 1:20-21. The section will begin with a brief overview of the exegetical issues raised in this passage. Next, Barr's interpretive conclusions on these exegetical issues will be examined. Finally, it will conclude with a critique of his interpretive conclusions on II Peter 1:20-21.

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (NIV)

J@Q@ BDä J@< (4f F6@<, H Ó4 B F" BD@NOJ, \ " (D" N-H Æ\ " H
;B48bF, TH@J (\<, J" 4q @J (D 2, 8Zµ" J4• <2Df B@ 2 <XP20 BD@NOJ, \ "
B@X, • 88 ßBÍ B<, bµ" J@H (\@L N, D' µ, <@4 ;8V80F" < • BÍ 2, @Ø

⁶⁹ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 447.

-<2DT B@4

Church tradition, *the believing community*,⁷⁰ and evangelical scholarship have usually understood II Peter 1:20-21 to be supporting the divine origin (inspiration) of the Scriptures. Commenting on the passage's contribution to our understanding of biblical inspiration, Erickson remarks:

Here Peter is affirming that the prophecies of the Old Testament were not of human origin. They were not produced by the will or decision of man. Rather they were moved or borne along (N, D@u, <@4) by the Spirit of God. The impetus which led to the writing was from the Holy Spirit. For this reason, Peter's readers are to pay heed to the prophetic word, for it is not simply man's word, but God's word.⁷¹

Erickson comments further that Peter's reference to the 'prophetic word' (2 Peter 1:19) and every 'prophecy of scripture' (v.20) leads us to conclude that "the whole of the collection of writings commonly accepted in that day is in view."⁷² Warfield also concurs with this view that the "prophetic word" refers to the Scriptures.⁷³

Overview of Exegetical Issues in II Peter 1:20-21

⁷⁰ See Barr, *Scope*, 112. He prefers this label for the people of God.

⁷¹ Erickson, *Theology*, 201.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 210.

⁷³ Warfield, *Inspiration*, 135.

Firstly, our understanding of the key clause $\beta\ \delta\ \nu\ \omicron\ \iota$ ($\delta\ \nu\ \omicron\ \iota\ \epsilon\ \nu\ \omicron\ \iota\ \beta\ \delta\ \nu\ \omicron\ \iota\ \epsilon\ \nu\ \omicron\ \iota$, $\beta\ \delta\ \nu\ \omicron\ \iota$) ultimately determines our interpretive conclusions on the meaning of the passage. There are two dominant interpretations of this clause: (1) "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation," that is, the church must interpret prophecy, the interpretation should be that intended by the Holy Spirit or the individual's interpretation is not to be private; and (2) "no prophecy of Scripture derives from the prophet's own interpretation."⁷⁴ In other words, the key interpretive issues here are whether the primary concern of the main clause is referring to: (1) the interpretation of prophecy of scripture; (2) the source of prophecy of scripture;⁷⁵ (3) the divine operation in the production of scripture; or (4) the divine origin or source of the prophecy.

Secondly, attention should also be given to the meaning of $\beta\ \delta\ \nu\ \omicron\ \iota$ a hapax legomenon. What does $\beta\ \delta\ \nu\ \omicron\ \iota$ refer to in this text: the contemporary interpretation/exegesis in general or that of the original author of the prophecy? In addition, the connection or the relationship between $\epsilon\ \nu\ \omicron\ \iota$ and $\beta\ \delta\ \nu\ \omicron\ \iota$ should be defined.

Therefore, since word meanings depend as much on their usage in the clause as the clause depends on the word meanings, we shall seek to understand this passage within its context.

⁷⁴ Richard J. Bauckham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Jude, 2 Peter* (Waco: Word Books Publisher, 1983), 229.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Issue One: The Meaning of $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ Hand $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$, TH

These two words are syntactically related in that they are both in the genitive case. It is crucial to note that, with genitives, it is the item restricted which might be placed in the genitive case, or the item in the genitive case might be restricting something else.⁷⁶ As a result, the exegetical conclusions on one affects the other.

Firstly, there is a general agreement on the meaning of $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ H that is, it refers to "someone's own" and not the Spirit's interpretation.⁷⁷ However, as already pointed out, it is not clear whether $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ H means "one's own" or "the prophet's own."⁷⁸ An exegetical decision must be made here. There are two dominant interpretations of $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ H in this text: (1) No prophecy of Scripture comes out of the prophet's own interpretation since its source is God, or (2) No prophecy of Scripture is to be privately interpreted since interpretation of prophecy is a task of the believing community, the Church.⁷⁹ As Green puts it, "In the first case it is the prophet's understanding of his prophecy which is the issue, in the second it is our interpretation of the prophet's words"⁸⁰ under consideration. Obviously, favouring one choice over the other affects the

⁷⁶ Porter, *Idioms of the NT*, 92. However, in any case, Greek grammarians agree that the essential feature of the genitive case is restriction. See also Blass, F, A Debrunner and R.W. Funk, trans. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961, 83-100.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Green, *2 Peter*, 89-90.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

interpretation of the passage. Where then, does the spotlight fall in the text? Does the accent fall on the prophet's own interpretation or on one's own present exegetical or interpretive approaches? Secondly, a related interpretive issue concerns the meaning of זָּרַחַת and how it relates to זָּרַחַת .⁸¹ What does זָּרַחַת mean within its contextual canonical framework?

In the light of these exegetical issues, what approaches does Barr adopt on the meaning and syntax of זָּרַחַת ?

Barr's Conclusions on the Meaning of זָּרַחַת

Barr makes his interpretive conclusions on the meaning of זָּרַחַת evident when he says the author insists "that the understanding of scripture, or of prophecy, is not a matter of one's own interpretation."⁸² In other words, he adopts the view that a proper study of זָּרַחַת should lead to the conclusion that the author is concerned about the significance of proper interpretation of prophecy of scripture. Barr's interpretive conclusion is even clearer when he says:

⁸¹ Bauckham, *2 Peter*, 230-231.

⁸² Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, 5.

The interpretation of prophetic scripture is not something that the individual can legitimately do. It is a matter therefore that lies in the hands of the church community and its tradition of understanding. The writer is concerned by the outgrowth of wild and undisciplined interpretations of prophecy, with their consequent violent effects upon the Christian expectation of the end of the world.⁸³

In addition, considering that "the prophecies came not by human impulse, but through the movement of the Holy Spirit, therefore they are not a matter for private interpretation."⁸⁴ According to Barr, this passage stresses that the believing community should take responsibility for interpreting the Scriptures as opposed to individual interpretations of the Scriptures.

Critique of Barr's Conclusions on 2 Pet 1:20-21

Barr's interpretive decision on the meaning of 2 Pet 1:20-21 within its context lacks convincing biblical support. He believes that the primary concern under consideration here is the interpretation of the prophecy of scripture and not the origin of it.⁸⁵ Indeed, we realize and acknowledge that some scholars have adopted a similar interpretive conclusion about the essence of this text.⁸⁶ Hence, others have attempted

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 6-7.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁸⁶ Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Anchor Bible: 2 Peter, Jude* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1993), 182. "The issue in 1:20-21, however, is not the source of prophecy but its interpretation."

to offer various interpretations of ἡ ἐκείνη ἡ ἐκείνη ἡ ἐκείνη.⁸⁷ However, it seems these various views, including Barr's, appear to be less likely in view of the context of the biblical data under consideration.⁸⁸ Indeed, the fact that ἡ ἐκείνη ἡ ἐκείνη ἡ ἐκείνη "interpretation, analysis," is a hapax legomenon⁸⁹ contributes to our difficulty in understanding its meaning. In addition, the verb ἐκείνη, "to loosen, interpret, or settle,"⁹⁰ appears only twice in its related forms in the New Testament, that is, Mark 4:34 and Acts 19:39.⁹¹

Grammatically, here, ἡ ἐκείνη ἡ ἐκείνη ἡ ἐκείνη is in the genitive case. Thus, either the item in the genitive case is restricted or the item restricted may be the one placed in the genitive case. In other words, "*the essential semantic feature of the genitive case is restriction.*"⁹² Such an understanding of the genitive is quite different from the merely

⁸⁷ D. Edmond Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville: Unusual Publications, 1989), 82. There are four different views proposed on the meaning of ἡ ἐκείνη ἡ ἐκείνη ἡ ἐκείνη (1) The individual (private) believer does not have the ability to interpret prophecy and so needs ecclesiastical direction; (2) One must not interpret a prophecy in isolation without the light of its unfolding fulfilment; (3) Prophetic predictions should not be interpreted in isolation from other scriptures; and (4) It is not the individual but the Holy Spirit who must interpret prophecy, as well as inspire it.

⁸⁸ Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter* (Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1978), 112. See also Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 182 and Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 234.

⁸⁹ See J.B. Smith, *Greek-English Concordance* (Scottsdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1955), 144.

⁹⁰ See Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, ed. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 31.

⁹¹ *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, London: Samuel Bagster & Sons Ltd, 1794, 158. See also Smith, *Concordance*, 144. In Mark 4:34 it is used of interpretation of a parable, and in Acts 19:39 it refers to a decision in the regular assembly of the people.

⁹² Porter, *Idioms of the Greek NT*, 92.

descriptive function that views the genitive very much like an adjective.⁹³

The question then is: How is the genitive ἡ γενεῆς λειτουργία functioning? There are various categories for the genitive which include: quality, definition, or description; partitive; possession, ownership, origin or source; apposition; objective; subjective; comparison; time or space; and object.⁹⁴ The key observation here is that ἡ γενεῆς λειτουργία seems to fit more into the *origin/source* use than all other categories. Commenting on the classification of the genitive of possession, ownership, origin or source, Porter explains:

Each of these classificatory terms reveals some sort of dependent or derivative status for the governing (head) term in relation to the word in the genitive. Pronouns are often used in this construction.⁹⁵

In this case, the source of βασιλεία οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς (D^o N-H (*all or every prophecy of scripture*)) becomes a key concept here. Such an understanding follows logically Peter's further explanation in verse 21 of how this prophecy of scripture came about. Here, Peter states that "prophecy of scripture did not occur or emerge from one's own interpretation."

The New International Version interprets ἑαυτοῦ (*one's own*) as referring to the prophet himself, thus making the text read, ". . . no

⁹³ James A. Brooks and Carlton L. Winbery, *Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Lanham: University Press, 1979), 8.

⁹⁴ Porter, *Idioms of the Greek NT*, 92-97.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation." Although the word "prophet" does not appear in the Greek text, this interpretive decision seems to capture and express a more likely understanding of this text. It is only the context of this phrase that will provide its meaning and syntax here. In other words, according to the author of II Peter 1:20, the main point here is not that interpretation of prophecy of scripture emerged from the prophet himself, "but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God," (v.21) and the conjunction καὶ (and) carries a lot of weight in determining that exegetical connection. καὶ is serving as an important conjunction in the explanatory sense here. It beautifully links verses 20-21 to the preceding ἡ ἀκριβὴς καὶ μεγάλας ἐπαγγελίας τοῦ Θεοῦ (II Pet. 1:4), the precious and great promises of God (II Pet. 1:4). Furthermore, the meaning of καὶ also supports this origin relationship with the scriptural image of prophecy as indicated in II Peter 2:1 where false prophets bring in heresies,⁹⁶ since their source is Satan. In addition, the 113 occurrences of καὶ in the New Testament denote belonging to an individual, one's own, as opposed to what belongs to another.⁹⁷ The verb ἀναμάρτητος "marks the axiomatic character of the negation,"⁹⁸ thus making strong evidence to conclude that καὶ ἡ ἀναμάρτητος εἰσαγγελία focuses on the prophet's own interpretation and not just anyone's interpretation of the prophecy of

⁹⁶ Hiebert, 2 Peter, 82.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 81.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

scripture. Lenski explains:

The fact that ἡ ἐρμηνεία means "interpretation" is beyond question. In Gen. 40:8 it is so used with reference to a dream; in Mark 4:34 the verb is used with reference to parables. The genitive is an ablative (R.514). οὐκ ἐκ τῆς προφητείας does not refer to the prophecy of Scripture and does not convey the idea that this prophecy does not supply its "own interpretation." *Scriptura* undoubtedly *ex Scriptura explicanda est*; in this way the Spirit interprets Scripture. οὐκ ἐκ τῆς προφητείας with its ablative = "does not occur from," come or originate from. It is not the interpretation of anyone that governs the prophecy, but the prophecy governs the interpretation.⁹⁹

Indeed, verse 21 introduces a very clear declaration,¹⁰⁰ οὐκ ἐκ τῆς προφητείας ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐλάλησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι (not for by [the] will of man was brought prophecy at any time, but [the] Holy Spirit being carried [along] spoke from God men).¹⁰¹

Barr's conclusions about the meaning of II Peter 1:20-21 as an instruction on the interpretation of prophetic scripture as a task of the church community as opposed to individual or private interpretation¹⁰² does not appear to fit the essential thrust of the text. He seems to have

⁹⁹ Richard C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of Epistles of Peter, John, and the Epistle of Jude* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1945), 297.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁰¹ See C.F.D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of the Greek New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 73. These men spoke what was derived from God. Thus οὐκ ἐκ τῆς προφητείας is reinforcing that God controlled these men as prophecy of Scripture came into being.

¹⁰² Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, 5.

taken such an interpretive decision in order to allow himself room to attack premillennial dispensationalism, the production of the Scofield Reference Bible, the veneration of great evangelists, radio pastors and other attention attributed to individuals' works (rather than to the community) within fundamentalism.¹⁰³ Barr believes such regard to individuals disregards the teaching of II Peter 1:20-21 to have the church community interpret the prophetic scripture.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, his point about the fundamentalists' propensity to elevate individuals at the expense of the entire believing community should be carefully noted and taken seriously. However, such an application of this passage cannot be derived from the text under consideration. The text clearly concerns the prophet's own interpretation of prophetic scripture in view of the fact that Scripture did not come into being through the will of man but rather through the active participation of the Holy Spirit.

The interpretation of the prophecy of scripture under consideration here concerns the prophet's own interpretation and not just anyone's interpretation. The point here is that the origin of prophecy of scripture is not the prophet himself. Therefore, to conclude that *Æ\ " H |B48bF, TH* argues for a communal interpretation of the prophecy of scripture would be an eisegetical interpretation of a phrase that best suits as a reference to the origin of prophecy as not coming from an individual but from the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Barr's interpretive conclusion does not seem to fit the seemingly proper meaning of this phrase under

¹⁰³ Ibid., 6.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

consideration.

Issue Two: The Primary Meaning of the Main Clause

An exegetical decision must be made in order to establish the meaning of the main clause and its relation to the meaning of the entire passage. What is the main clause highlighting or referring to in light of the essential meaning of this text?

The major task here is to determine whether the passage's main emphasis is on the origin (source) of prophecy of scripture or the interpretation of prophecy of scripture. This is the key exegetical issue that will determine the theological meaning of this text.

Barr's Interpretive Conclusions about II Peter 1:20-21

Commenting on the essential meaning of this passage, Barr concludes:

Important for our writer as the place of scripture is, his emphasis is not on the efficacy of scripture as the controlling force within the church - for scripture can be distorted, can be misunderstood and can mislead, which is the reason why the whole matter arose in the first place – but on the centrality of the church's communal understanding and custom as the locus for the interpretation of scripture. . . . Particularly interesting is the direction of the argument: because the prophecies came not by human impulse, but through the movement of the Holy Spirit, therefore they are not a matter for private

interpretation.¹⁰⁵

He explains further:

One may reasonably ask for the meaning of the biblical text taken in itself; or for the meaning as perceived by scholarship; or for the meaning as perceived by the church as a whole. But if one says that one must follow the evangelical interpretation, or the conservative interpretation, or some other partisan understanding, then one is likely to transgress the guidance of II Peter 1:20-21.¹⁰⁶

Barr also believes that it is not certain that what the author says about prophecy is applicable to scripture in general.¹⁰⁷ In other words, he sees a distinction between the interpretation of prophecy of scripture and the interpretation of scripture in general.

There are two significant observations we make about Barr's understanding of the meaning of II Peter 1:20-21. First, he concludes that a proper study of this text shows the importance of the church's communal task of interpreting scripture as opposed to private, individual interpretation. Second, he advances that we cannot be certain that what the text says about interpretation of prophecy of scripture also applies to the interpretation of scripture in general.

Critique of Barr's Conclusions about II Peter 1:20-21

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 6-7.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 5.

Barr's interpretive conclusions as to the essential meaning of II Peter 1:20-21 are unlikely exegetical decisions. His views do not seem to arise from a convincing exegetical analysis of the text under consideration. His first interpretive conclusion derives from his decision not to identify grammatically that ἡ προφητεία is a genitive in the predicate.¹⁰⁸ This function of the genitive in the predicate favours the origin of prophecy of Scripture rather than its interpretation based on the context because there is “some sort of dependent or derivative status for the governing (head) term in relation to the word in the genitive.”¹⁰⁹ The main focus of this text is on knowing that all prophecy of Scripture is of divine origin. God revealed the Scriptures. Hence, this divinity of the Scriptures must be acknowledged in the first place. Peter's further explanation of the source of prophecy of Scripture in verse 21 argues for such an exegetical decision. To put the spotlight on "one's own" in attempting to emphasize the believing community's interpretation of prophecy of Scripture instead of the source of the prophecy of Scripture would not fit the context and syntax of the text as indicated in verse 21. Indeed, the main thrust of this text is the origin of the prophecy of Scripture according to II Peter 1:21.

In addition, in keeping with good exegesis, we have to bear in mind that the individual terminologies Peter employs in this passage

¹⁰⁸ In other words, the text highlights that the prophet's interpretation of the prophecy of Scripture is anchored in God, who is its author. The prophecy of Scripture did not emerge from the prophet's own volitions. God is the source of Scripture. See Porter, *Idioms of the Greek NT*, 93, for a further explanation on the genitive.

¹⁰⁹ Porter, *Idioms of the Greek NT*, 93.

should be studied in the light of the main teaching of the epistle. Hence, we have to consider the relationship of verse 20 to verse 21 in the light of the context of the passage and the rest of the epistle. Green is correct when he comments:

In the preceding paragraph, Peter is not talking about interpretation but authentication. His theme is the origin and reliability of the Christian teaching about grace, holiness and heaven. The same God whom the apostles heard speak in the transfiguration spoke also through the prophets. Thus the argument in verses 20, 21 is a consistent and indeed necessary conclusion to the preceding paragraph, i.e. we can rely on Scripture because behind its human authors is God. The prophets did not make up what they wrote. They did not arbitrarily unravel it.¹¹⁰

In view of this contextual analysis of II Peter 1:20-21, the accentuation is on the *divine origin of prophecy of Scripture*, not on *its accurate interpretation*. This is a logical conclusion because if interpretation was the author's subject in verse 20, then verse 21 would be utterly irrelevant to his argument. In a word, according to Peter the apostle, the prophecy of Scripture is to be understood and carried out in light of its origin, that is, its divine origin. The Holy Spirit becomes the indispensable guide in our endeavour to analyse and understand Scripture. Hiebert explains:

"For no prophecy ever came by the will of man" sweeps away all false views concerning the origin of prophecy. "Ever" (B@X), placed emphatically at the end of the statement, means "at some time or another in the past." Joined with

¹¹⁰ Green, *2 Peter and Jude*, 90-91. These prophets, in the words of John Calvin, "did not blab their inventions of their own accord or according to their own judgments."

the negative (α) at the beginning, the assertion is that at no time in the past was it true that Biblical prophecy "came by the will of man" (2, 8Zμ" J4 • <2Df B@L ² <XP20 BD@NOJ, \"), was brought to men by what any individual willed. Although the Old Testament prophecy is in view here, "prophecy" (BD@NOJ, \"), used without the article, is sufficiently broad to include New Testament prophecy as well. Only false prophets shaped their prophecies to declare what they wanted to happen.¹¹¹

In addition, by having the participial clause βΒÎ B<, bμ" J@H (\@ N, D` μ, <@ placed before the finite verb ©8V8OF" <, the author highlights that it is the Holy Spirit who is the driving agent in this origination of the prophecy of scripture.¹¹² Commenting on the significance of the passage and its relation to the false teachers, Bauckham elucidates:

They rejected the authority of the OT prophecy by denying its divine origin. They said that while it may be true that the prophets received signs and dreams and visions, their prophecies were their own human interpretations of these, not God-given interpretations. The OT prophecies were therefore just products of the human mind, like the apostolic message (v 16a). . .

In reply, the author denies this view, and reasserts, in the standard terms used by Hellenistic Jewish writers, the divine origin of OT prophecy. No prophecy in the OT Scriptures originated from initiative or imagination. The Holy Spirit of God inspired not only the prophets' dreams and visions, but also their interpretations of them, so that when they spoke the prophecies recorded in Scripture they were spokesmen for God himself.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Hiebert, *Second Peter*, 83.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 235.

Therefore, a study of II Peter 1:20-21 within its immediate context shows that Peter highlights the divine and human cooperation in the origin or production of the prophecy of scripture. Furthermore, although the author is addressing the origin of the prophecy of scripture primarily, the same principle can be argued for the origin of scripture in general, especially in light of the New Testament authors' view of the nature of scripture.¹¹⁴ In light of the origin of the Scriptures, Knight is correct when he advances that Bible authors equated their writings with the very words of God because God was the ultimate source of their works. In this case, the same would be true of the origin of all prophecy of scripture.

In view of this analysis, we may conclude that this passage highlights the fact that the Holy Spirit was very active in the process of committing scripture to paper.¹¹⁵ Indeed, "Scripture was not initiated by man, the result of human research. Scripture is of divine origin."¹¹⁶ Commenting on the nature of inspiration in light of II Peter 1:20-21, Pinnock rightly concludes:

Holy Scripture was written by men in the style, vocabulary and modes of their day. The Spirit controlled the human writers but did not obliterate them. Each had a message to deliver. Yet, in the very mentioning of the human side of Scripture, the apostle makes it abundantly clear that the initiative lay with

¹¹⁴ Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 447.

¹¹⁵ Edward Curtis Professor of New Testament at Prairie Graduate School, Three Hills, Alberta, interview by author, 10 August, 1997, Langley, British Columbia.

¹¹⁶ Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation*, 57.

God, and the literary product was divinely authored. Their work has a divine stamp upon it. For they were moved by the Spirit, and their word was endowed with singular power and truthfulness.¹¹⁷

The author of this text does not seem to have concerned himself to any extent with the specifics of God's working alongside the human authors in this creative literary work, but he does show us what was done, the end product. Therefore, II Peter 1:20-21 becomes a significant passage in developing a better understanding of the doctrine of inspiration.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have analysed Barr's interpretive conclusions about II Timothy 3:16-17 and II Peter 1:20-21. We find a common pattern in his exegesis. There are at least two exegetical tendencies Barr reflects in his treatment of these two passages. In both cases his interpretive conclusions are not well supported by the biblical data. Consequently, he adopts interpretive approaches that seem to have lesser exegetical support. Why, then, does he adopt such interpretive conclusions? We see that his reasons appear to be less exegetical than polemical. In his attempt to clarify and redefine the doctrine of biblical inspiration, he ultimately confuses the key exegetical issues. As a result, he fails to wrestle adequately and convincingly with the key exegetical issues of the text under consideration. As a consequence, he can be seen to have chosen these exegetical decisions with a view to bolstering his

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

preferred theological views. He appears to be so heavily bent on attacking the fundamentalist views on the texts that his overall approach is seriously distorted by this theological bias.

Therefore, from the grammatical and linguistic characteristics of the key texts we have analysed, we hereby conclude that Barr's exegesis and conclusions about these two passages, namely, II Timothy 3:16-17 and II Peter 1:19-20, are unlikely. Hence, we affirm that the traditional view of interpreting these two passages in favour of the 'origin of scripture' has superior textual support for a more convincing view of the meaning of biblical inspiration than what Barr advocates.

The purpose of the next chapter is to evaluate critically Barr's view of biblical inspiration or the origin of Scripture as summarized by his four propositions about inspiration, namely, (1) Inspiration is not a central doctrine in the Bible; (2) Inspiration applies to the community of faith; (3) Inspiration includes the contemporary effects; and (4) Inspiration means Scripture is inspiring.