

## I Timothy 3:16

### ΘΖ - the Greek abbreviation for "God" (Theos)

Papyri - none  
Uncials - D<sup>3</sup>KLP  
Cursives - approximately 250  
Lectionaries - nearly all (33 of 36)  
Fathers - 17 in 47 quotations + 5 references  
Versions - three  
(total: 289 manuscripts, 3 versions, upwards of 20 Greek fathers)

### ΟΖ - the Greek word "he" or "who"

*(this reading is also very poor Greek grammar:  
the word "mystery" in Greek, a neuter noun cannot be followed by a masculine pronoun  
"who"*

*nor is the verse a complete sentence when read this way)*

Papyri - none  
Uncials - A(?), C(?), F(?), G(?)<sup>1</sup>  
Cursives - 17, 73(?)  
Lectionaries - three  
Fathers - four (all questionable)  
Versions - Gothic  
(6 manuscripts, one version for certain, and not for certain by a single Greek Father)

### Ο - the Greek word "which"

Papyri - None  
Uncials - D  
Cursives - none  
Fathers - two  
Versions - five  
(one manuscript, 5 ancient versions, 2 late Greek fathers)

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<sup>1</sup>Note the following:

- (1) in A is often impossible to distinguish Θ from Ο.
- (2) earlier scholars including the first editor, claim to have been able to see Θ, now not evident in A:- Berriman (1741) - "If therefore at any time hereafter the old line should become altogether undiscoverable, there will never be just cause to doubt but that the genuine, and original reading of the MS. was ΘΖ."
- (3) C has been treated with chemicals so many times that the letters are now indecipherable, though earlier editors were divided as to whether the strokes were present or not.
- (4) F and G have ΘΖ, which never elsewhere = ΟΖ.
- (5) F and G have in two other places ΘΖ written as ΟΖ.

## The Modern Versions

NIV - translates "He" with note, "Some manuscripts *God*"

RV - translates "He who" with note, "the word *God*, in place of *He who*, rests on no sufficient ancient evidence"

RSV - translates "He" with note, "Greek *Who*; other ancient authorities read *God*; others, *Which*"

NASB - translates "He" with note, "Some later mss. read *God*"

### Arguments in favor of retaining "God" in I Timothy 3:16

#### Manuscripts

- (1) the overwhelming manuscript support (approximately 290 of 300 manuscripts preserve the word "God.")
- (2) the alternative readings can easily be accounted for.
  - (a) the fading or absence of the vertical lines.
  - (b) the subsequent grammatical correction to "which" since "he" is very bad Greek grammar
- (3) the evidence of the texts themselves which shows how marks can fade, be obliterated, be mistaken or overlooked by scribes.

#### Fathers

- (4) the overwhelming support of the early Fathers which counters the fact that @ is an very early manuscript. Some of these fathers are: The Apostolical Constitutions (3<sup>rd</sup> century); Barnabas (2<sup>nd</sup> century); Chrysostom (4<sup>th</sup> century) - 3 times; Cyril of Alexandria (5<sup>th</sup> century) - 2 times; Didymus (4<sup>th</sup> century); Diodorus of Tarsus (4<sup>th</sup> century); Dionysius of Alexandria (3<sup>rd</sup> century); Epiphanius (8<sup>th</sup> century); Gregory of Nyssa (4<sup>th</sup> century) - 22 times; Gregory Naziansus (early 4<sup>th</sup> century); Gregory Thaumaturgus (3<sup>rd</sup> century); Hippolytus (2<sup>nd</sup> century) - 2 times; Ignatius (1<sup>st</sup> century) - three times; John Damascene (8<sup>th</sup> century) - 2 times; Theodoret (5<sup>th</sup> century) - 4 times.

#### The Text Itself

- (5) the grammatical incorrectness of OϞ as well as the fact that the grammatically correct O has almost no support.
- (6) that there is no mystery in *man* manifest in the flesh, nor is Christ ever called "Mystery."

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"All this, however, is as nothing in comparison of the scandal occasioned by the co-optation into your body of Dr. G. Vance Smith, the Unitarian Minister of S. Saviour's Gate Chapel, York. That, while engaged in the work of interpreting the everlasting Gospel, you should have knowingly and by choice associated with yourselves one who, not only openly denies the eternal Godhead of our Lord, but in a recent publication is the avowed assailant of the fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, as well as of the Inspiration of Holy Scripture itself, - filled me (and many beside myself with sorrow. You were respectfully memorialised on the subject; but you treated the representations which reached you with scornful indifference." John Burgon to Charles Ellicott, Letter, 1883.