

## The Number of New Testament documents we have in contrast to other documents of the ancient world, *and why it's important*

Author	Book	Date Written	Earliest Copies we have	Time Gap	Copies
Homer	Iliad	800 BC	c 400 BC	c 400 years	643
Herodotus	History	480-425 BC	c AD 900	c 1,350 years	8
Plato		400 BC	c AD 900	c.1,300 years	7
Caesar	Gallic Wars	100-44 BC	c. A D 900	c.1,000 years	10
New Testament		AD 50-100	c.AD 114 (fragment) & earlier c. AD 200 (books) c. AD 250 (most of N.T.) c. AD 325 (complete N.T.)	+50 years 100years 150 years 225 years	5366 original lang plus 15,000- translations
Gnostic Gospels	Gospel of Judas Gospel of Thomas and, at the most, 10 others	AD 150-300	c.AD 200-300	+50 years	1-3

### What the chart about has to do with the reliability of the New Testament

Though we only have 8-10 manuscripts from some of the most famous writers of classical times, we consider these sources adequate for true history concerning them. In addition, in spite of an over 1,000 year gap between when most were written and the copies we have today, we consider them trustworthy because of the care and precision of the scribes who copied them.

On the other hand, for the New Testament we have an overwhelming number of copies of manuscripts—many thousands and from a very short period of time from when they were originally written.

By manuscript evidence alone (and there is much more evidence for the life and actions of Jesus when we look at historically contemporary writers, archeology, and even writers antagonistic to the Christian faith), we can say with great assurance that the New Testament and what it says about Jesus is true to the events as they happened. What a person decides to do with the facts presented in them—that Jesus lived, died, rose again and offers eternal salvation to all who believe in him—is an entirely different issue, but it is not intellectually credible to say that the biographies in the New Testament about him were written hundreds of years after he lived or the stuff of myths and legends.

This chart also shows the manuscript evidence for the Gnostic Gospels and provides evidence for why they are not included in the canonical New Testament. In summary they were written later, we have very few copies, and they do not come close to the historical verification of the canonical New Testament manuscripts.

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