

*Real Questions  
People Ask*

***How can I know  
the Bible is reliable?***

# One Man's Opinion

Dear Ann,

Please stop pushing religion! Anyone with half a brain knows that your readers are simple-minded dimwits who can't face life without a crutch. Doesn't it bother you when you advise about the laws of God—a 2,000 year old fairy tale? The most preposterous bit of irrational hokum ever dreamed up is the baloney found in the scriptures. Such nonsense is for weaklings and idiots who can't think for themselves.

# What's your beef?

- *“The Bible's just a bunch of myths”*
- *“Man just made it up”*
- *“It's not accurate—too long ago, too many copies”*
- *“There are too many contradictions”*

# Testing Reliability

*Is it **accurate**?*

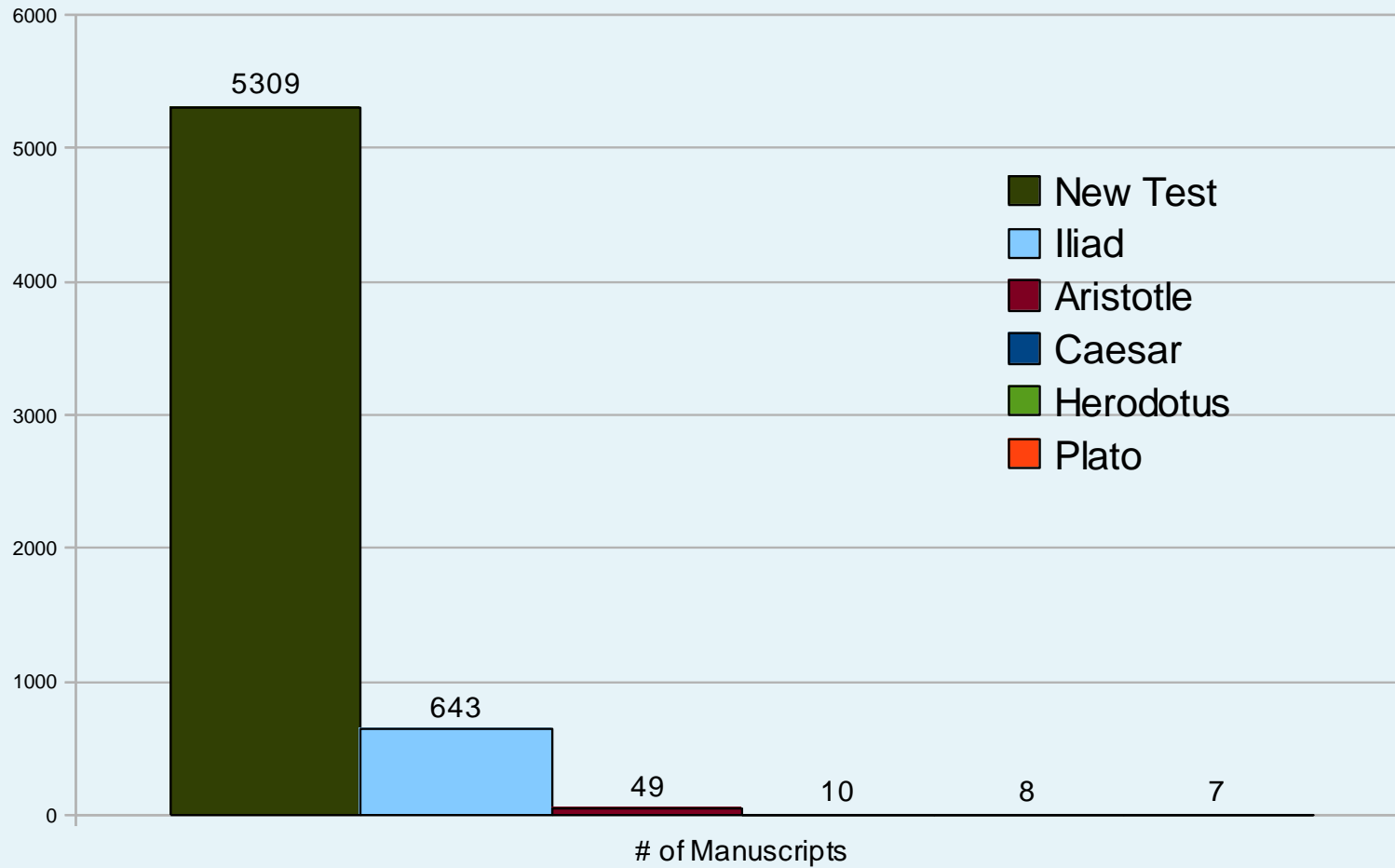
*Is it*

***authentic**?*

# Accuracy

- How many manuscripts do we have?
- How old are the manuscripts?
- How closely do these agree?

# How many manuscripts?



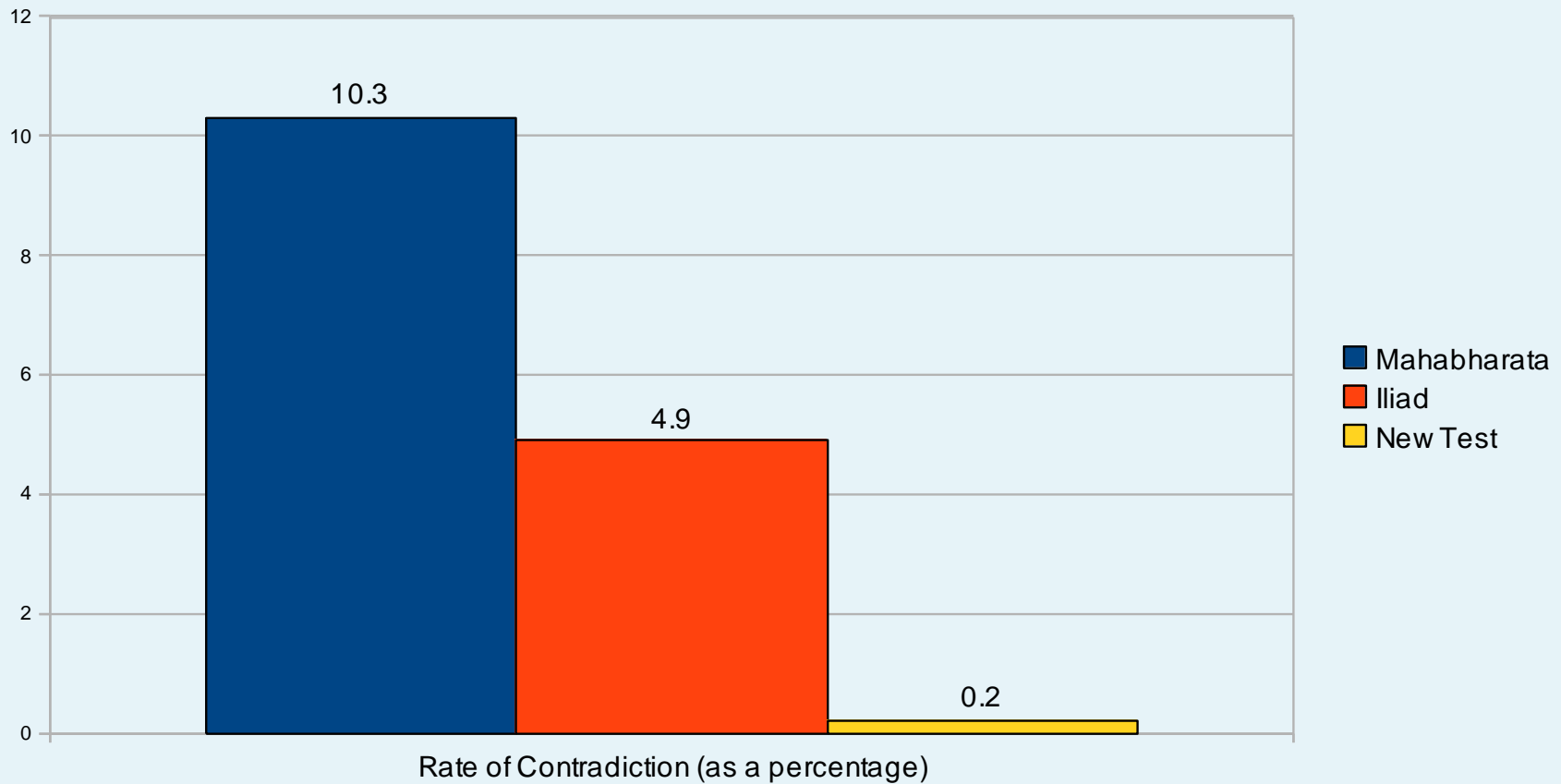
Don't Ask Me That!

# How old are the manuscripts?

Years between the date of writing and the earliest known manuscript

Aristotle	1450
Herodotus	1350
Plato	1250
Caesar	950
Homer	500
Virgil	300
New Testament	100 (25)

# How accurate are the manuscripts





# Variant Readings

John 5:3-4

John 7:37 -38

John 7:53-8:11

# Authenticity

Two sources:

*External*

*Internal*

# **External Confirmation**

Historical accuracy

Contemporary writings

Archeology

# Archeology

## Alexamenos graffiti



# Archeology

- Alexamenos graffiti
- Ossuary prayers 50 A.D.
- Luke's "politarchs" (Acts 17:6)
- Jerusalem crucifixion victim
- Pilate cornerstone in Caesarea

# Internal Evidence

## The power of the eyewitness

*The most compelling argument that the gospels have been recorded accurately is that they do not perfectly agree!*

# Textual Contradictions?

What did the sign say?

Matthew 27:37

Mark 15:26

Luke 23:38

John 19:19

# Textual Contradictions?

How did Judas die?

Matthew 27:5

Acts 1:18



# The Power of Prophecy

Place of birth (Micah 5:2)

Born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)

Descendant of David Psalm (132:11)

Rejected by his brothers (Psalm 69:8)

Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12)

Buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9)

Casting lots for his clothes (Psalm 22:18)

None of his bones broken (Psalm 34:20)

# Common Complaints

***There are too many mistakes and contradictions!***

Which ones in particular bother you?

***The Bible is just a bunch of fairy tales!***

How do you know? Did you sail with Columbus?

***All sacred writings contain the truth.***

All contain some—only one contains the truth.

***I don't believe the Bible!***

What do you understand the message of the Bible to be?

# Defending the Faith

**Fact**

**Reason**

# Defending the Faith

Fact

Reason

Faith

Rebirth