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Comparative Study of the Compilation of the Qur'an and the Canonization of the Testaments

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Abstract

Most sacred texts were initially oral and were gradually written down over time. After the writing of these sacred texts, it is essential to examine the time frame in which they were compiled and finalized, and whether this process has affected their credibility? Another question is how many versions exist for these texts and whether there are discrepancies among them? This study, employing a descriptive-analytical method, concludes that the Qur'an was written down simultaneously with its revelation, whereas there was a gap between the revelation, writing, and final compilation of the Testaments. The time from writing to the compilation of the Qur'an was less than two years, while the distance from the writing to the Canonization of the Testaments took more than a thousand years. The Qur'an has a continuous and widely accepted chain of transmission, while the Testaments have a broken chain. The Qur'an exists in a single version, while the Testaments have multiple versions. Given the differences among the versions, the Testaments contain apocryphal texts, while the Qur'an, due to the lack of multiple versions, does not. The compilation of the Qur'an did not undermine its credibility, but the Canonization of the Testaments could not maintain their credibility.

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Introduction

Most sacred texts were initially oral and gradually became written, although some, such as the Qur'an and parts of the Old Testament, were written from the beginning (Tofighi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 227). The time gap between the revelation of a divine book and its writing, as well as the period between writing and canonization and consensus among its followers on a single version, is a significant issue because the credibility and authenticity of the sacred texts of religions hinge on it. The Qur'an and the Testaments are two sacred books that Muslims, Christians, and Jews believe in, making them the most widely adhered texts in the world. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the credibility of these two books concerning their compilation and canonization. This paper aims to comparatively analyze the compilation of the Qur'an and the Canonization of the Testaments using a descriptive-analytical method. While there have been articles and books written on the comparative study of the Qur'an and the Testaments, most of them relate to the content of these texts. Regarding the structure and form of the Testaments, the book "Christianity: Understanding and Analyzing the Testaments," authored by a group of writers and scientifically edited by Mohammad Kashani, discusses the authors and the canonization of the Testaments in lessons five to eight. Additionally, the book "Analytical Christianity," written by Mohammad Kashani, addresses the canonization of the Testaments in lessons eight and nine, but this issue has not been compared with the Qur'an. The book "Understanding the Qur'an and the Testaments," written by Javad Baghbani Arani, addresses

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the formation of the Qur'an and the Testaments in lesson three, but it merely outlines the formation and Canonization without conducting a comparative analytical evaluation between the Qur'an and the Testaments. The book "Comparing the Qur'an and the Testaments" written by Delara Nemati Pirali and Leila Houshangi also discussed this issue in the third chapter, but it only stated the Testaments and did not state about the compilation of the Qur'an. The article "Comparative Study of the Written Features of the Holy Book and the Qur'an," published in the first number of the Journal of the *Marifat Adyan* in (2009 AD/1388 SH), is closely related to the topic of this paper. The compilation of the Qur'an and the canonization of the Holy Book are minor parts of that article, which will be elaborated upon and analyzed in this paper. Thus, the novelty of this article lies in its comparative and analytical exploration of this issue. The main question of this paper is whether the Qur'an and the Testaments are credible after the processes of compilation and Canonization? Another question is whether these texts have differences in versions after the processes of compilation and Canonization, or if they have a single version? This paper will first discuss the compilation of the Holy Qur'an, then the Canonization of the Testaments, and finally, it will examine the compilation of the Qur'an and the Canonization of the Testaments in a comparative manner.

1. Compilation of the Holy Qur'an

The Qur'an is the word of God that was revealed gradually over 23 years, and the order of the revelation of the verses of the Qur'an differs from the current arrangement of the Qur'an. For instance, the initial verses of Surah *al-'Alaq* were the first verses revealed, while Surah *al-Fātiḥa* is placed as the first surah in the Qur'an. The question arises: who ordered

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the compilation of the Qur'an we have today, when was it done, and how?

There are three main viewpoints among scholars of Qur'anic sciences regarding the time of the compilation and writing of the Qur'an:

1) First Viewpoint: The compilation of the Qur'an occurred after the passing of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Prophet's will was to compile the Qur'an so that it would not be lost like the Torah of the Jews (Qummī, 1984 AD/1363 SH: 2, 451). After the Prophet's passing, Ali (AS) acted according to his will and compiled the Qur'an but was not accepted for various reasons. However, since the Qur'an was the most crucial reference for the legislation of Islam and the foundation of the Islamic community, it was necessary for the caliphs to utilize other scribes of the divine word to compile the Qur'an from pieces of wood, bone, and the memories of the People who memorized the Qur'an, thereby making up for the loss of many Qur'an memorizers who were martyred in the Battle of *Yamāmah*. Thus, *Abū Bakr* asked *Zayd ibn Thābit* to compile the Qur'an. *Zayd* said:

"*Abū Bakr* called me and after consulting with 'Umar said: Many of the reciters and memorizers of the Qur'an have been killed in the Battle of *Yamāmah*, and there is a fear that others may also be killed, leading to a significant portion of the Qur'an being lost. He then proposed the compilation of the Qur'an. We said: How can you do what the Prophet (PBUH) did not do? They said: "This matter is necessary and must be done." They insisted until I accepted it. Then *Abū Bakr* said: "I see you are a wise young man and we never harbor ill thoughts towards you. You were the scribe of the revelation of the Messenger of God, pursue this task and do it well." *Zayd* said: "The weight of this task imposed on me was heavier than carrying a mountain, but I reluctantly accepted and

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compiled the Qur'an which was written on pieces of stone and wood." (Diyamī, 2007 AD/1427 AH: 119-121; Hosseinizadeh, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 86; Jalali Naeini, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 19-20; Nasihyan, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 19-20; Amirkhani, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 30; Kourani, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 133-134)

The reasons of the followers of this viewpoint are as follows:

A) It was not possible to compile the Qur'an considering the scattered nature of the revelation of the divine message during the time of the Prophet (PBUH);

B) There is a narration supporting this viewpoint which has been mentioned.

2) Second Viewpoint: The compilation of the Qur'an in its current form (the arrangement of verses and Chapters) occurred during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This viewpoint has prominent supporters such as Ayatollah *Khu'ī* and Allamah Hassan Zadeh Amoli, who do not accept the first viewpoint and critique it (*Khu'ī*, n.d.: 256; Hassan Zadeh Amoli, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 46-47; Mir Mohammadi Zarandi, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 130; Karimpour et al., 2021 AD/1400 SH: 106; Burton, 2022 AD/1401 SH: 310; Darwaza, 1980 AD/1359 SH: 86-87; *Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ*, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 73).

Khu'ī presented the following arguments to justify his viewpoint:

- The hadiths indicating the compilation of the Qur'an outside the time of the Prophet (PBUH) appear contradictory. In some, *Abū Bakr* is mentioned, and in others, *'Umar*, and in others, *'Uthmān*. These hadiths contradict the hadiths indicating the compilation of the Qur'an during the time of the Prophet.

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- These hadiths oppose rational judgment regarding the necessity of the Prophet's (PBUH) attention to the compilation and preservation of the Qur'an.
- These narrations also contradict the consensus of the Muslims on the preservation of the Qur'an by *Tawātur* (widely accepted transmission).
- A later compilation cannot completely eliminate the suspicion of distortion of the Qur'an.

3) Third Viewpoint: The compilation of the Qur'an occurred in three stages:

- The first stage: The arrangement and organization of the verses alongside one another, which took shape during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
- The second stage: The collection of scattered manuscripts in one place and the preparation of a cover for them, which took place during the time of *Abū Bakr*.
- The third stage: The gathering of all Qur'ans written by the scribes of revelation to prepare a single copy of the Qur'an as a reference and to create unity in its recitation, which occurred during the time of *'Uthmān*. Supporters of this viewpoint have provided evidence for their claims, which can be found in the relevant Qur'anic literature (Ma'arif, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 84-85; Al-Durī, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 85-117; Hujjatī, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 235-246; Anvari, 2023 AD/1402 SH: 124; Ma'arif, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 153; Feqhizadeh, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 29.)

Those who do not attribute the compilation of the Qur'an to the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) have responded to the questions posed by the late Ayatollah *Khu'ī*, believing that the issue of the compilation of the Qur'an is a historical event, not a rational matter. Therefore, one must refer to historical texts regarding this. This group responds to the

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question of why the compilation of the Qur'an did not occur during the time of the Prophet (PBUH) by stating that the Prophet's attention was to the arrangement and compilation of the verses. However, the compilation and arrangement of the Chapters akin to a single manuscript is a task that took place after his passing; the reason for this is that during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the revelation was still ongoing, and with the uninterrupted nature of the revelation, compiling the Qur'an in the form of a book was not feasible. Thus, when the Prophet observed signs of death and was certain of the interruption of revelation, he advised Ali (AS) to compile the Qur'an. According to this viewpoint, after the passing of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the prominent companions, based on their knowledge and competence, undertook the collection of the verses and the arrangement of the Qur'an's Chapters, each compiling them in their specific manuscripts. Consequently, with the expansion of the Islamic governance's territory, the number of Qur'ans being recited in different regions increased. Some of these manuscripts gained greater fame in the Islamic world, depending on the status and position of their compilers. The compilers of the manuscripts were multiple and had no communication with one another, nor were their capabilities and skills uniform. Therefore, each version of the Qur'an differed in terms of method, arrangement, recitation, and the like. Naturally, this difference in manuscripts led to discrepancies among the people. Thus, the groundwork was laid for 'Uthmān to unify the manuscripts. He appointed a group of four men named *Zayd ibn Thābit*, *Sa'īd ibn 'Āṣ*, *'Abdullāh ibn Zubayr*, and *'Abdul Raḥmān ibn Hārith ibn Hishām* for this task. They, along with eight others, first gathered the manuscripts from various parts of the Islamic governance and wrote the Qur'an known as the Imam or *'Uthmānic*

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manuscript. All other manuscripts were ordered by 'Uthmān, the third caliph, to be burned or thrown into boiling water. Four copies of the 'Uthmānic manuscripts were sent along with knowledgeable individuals to the significant Islamic centers of the time so that all could use those copies for the replication and teaching of the Qur'an. The Imams (AS) endorsed the existing Qur'an and recommended its recitation (Ma'rifat, 1996 AD/1375 SH: 84-103). Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī states, "Although Imam Ali (AS) had previously compiled the Holy Qur'an in the order of revelation and had shown it to the community but was not accepted and was not included in either the first or second compilation, he nevertheless exhibited no opposition or resistance and accepted the circulating manuscript, and even in his lifetime, during his caliphate, he did not speak against it. Likewise, the Imams and the family of the Prophet (PBUH) who are his successors and descendants never questioned the credibility of the Holy Qur'an, even to their close associates, but consistently referred to it in their statements and instructed their followers to adhere to the recitations of the people." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1974 AD/1353 SH: 195)

Based on the first and third viewpoints, which state that the Qur'an was compiled and finalized during the time of the first caliph, the time from the completion of the revelation of the Qur'an and its writing to its compilation was less than two years. This is because according to the narration mentioned, after a year and a half from the passing of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Battle of *Yamāmah* occurred, and the first caliph ordered the compilation of the Qur'an to be in the form of a book. However, according to the second viewpoint, there is no gap between the revelation and writing of the Qur'an and its compilation and finalization, as the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) compiled and finalized

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it himself. Regardless, all scholars of Qur'anic sciences agree that the Qur'an was completely written down during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and the only difference lies in whether it was presented in the form of a book during his lifetime or during the time of the first caliph. This does not impact the unbroken chain of transmission of the Qur'an.

It may occur to the audience that if a figure like the third caliph had existed in the history of the compilation and Canonization of the Testaments, gathering Jewish and Christian scholars and burning all versions that contradicted the original version, today there would have been no discrepancies in the Testaments. In response, it must be said that the credibility of any divine book can be established in two ways: one is through the historical and connected chain of that book to its bringer, the prophet, whose prophethood is validated through miracles. If we are certain that this book reaches the same prophet and that the version in our hands is precisely what that infallible prophet brought, then this book is credible and trustworthy. The second way is that the book itself is a miracle and challenges everyone to engage in competition, which the Qur'an is validated through both ways. It has been firmly established that the Qur'an is a miracle, and this paper does not have the space to discuss that. Moreover, the Qur'an written during the time of the third caliph was accepted by everyone, and Imam Ali (AS) and the Imams after him accepted it as well. Another point is that a similar incident occurred with the Testaments, where Jewish and Christian scholars formed councils and agreed on a single version in those councils; however, the Testaments lacked these two credibility-building pathways. They did not have a connected chain and were not miracles, and moreover, there was not a consensus among everyone. That is, after these councils,

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disagreements over this version approved by the councils did not cease, leading to the existence of multiple versions throughout the history of the Testaments.

2. Canonization of the Testaments

Since Christians also regard the Jewish Bible as credible, their Holy Scriptures include the Jewish Bible that is known as the "Holy Bible" or the "Testaments." In most European languages, a title derived from the Greek word "Biblia," meaning "Books," is used for it.

The Christian Bible consists of two main sections:

- The Old Testament, which constitutes more than three-quarters of this book and is recognized by both Christians and Jews.
- The New Testament, which is only accepted by Christians

2.1. Old Testament

This collection, which is said to have been written over centuries by various authors, contains diverse materials such as history, law, wisdom, prayers, poetry, and prophecy. This collection comprises 39 books. However, as will be explained, the Catholic and Orthodox Christian denominations believe that the Old Testament consists of 46 books.

2.1.1. Historical review of the Old Testament from the Perspective of the Old Testament

According to Jews, God communicated the Torah to the Children of Israel through Moses in the form of five books, and thus belief in the divine origin of the Torah is considered a necessity of Judaism (Weir, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 2, 623-624; Altmann, 1996: 3, 655). However, there is no single passage in the Torah explicitly stating that Moses wrote or brought all five books (Sarna, 1993: 2, 158). Of course, the Torah refers to the entire Jewish Bible, i.e. the Old Testament, which is a common practice among Jews (Anterman, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 72).

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The Old Testament begins its account in Exodus Chapter 24, where Moses and Aaron, along with several elders of the Children of Israel, went to Mount Sinai, and Moses alone approached God to receive the tablets that were God's handwriting (Exodus 31:18; 32:15-16). Afterward, when Moses returned to his people and saw the calf worship of the Children of Israel, he became angry and threw the tablets, which broke and disappeared (Exodus 32:19). Following Moses' again meeting with God in the Tabernacle, God instructed Moses to prepare two new tablets like the first ones. After preparing the two tablets, Moses stayed on Mount Sinai for forty nights and days, during which God again wrote the Ten Commandments on the two stone tablets (Exodus 33:7-23 and 34:1 and 28). The same content is mentioned with slight differences in the Book of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 4:44; 5:22; 9:9-18; 10:1-5). Further, in Deuteronomy Chapter 31, it is stated that when Moses was nearing his death, he wrote the Torah and entrusted it to the Levitical priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant and to the elders of the Children of Israel, advising them to read these laws and teachings every seven years during the Feast of Tabernacles for all the Children of Israel. The Book of Joshua also states that he wrote the Torah on the stones of the altar at Mount Eibal and read all the written matters in the Torah, both the blessings and the curses, to all the Children of Israel (Joshua 8:30-35).

From the study of the Old Testament, it is evident that the Torah had a primary core presented by Moses on the tablets, which gradually became more complete over time. The narrative of the Old Testament continues to show that Moses elaborated on it (Deuteronomy 31:9), and Joshua later established laws and regulations for the people, which he also wrote in the Torah (Joshua 24:25-26). The difference between the Qur'an and

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the Torah is that the core and central revelation, namely the Qur'an, remains intact, with the details of this revelation reflected in the narrative books, while the Torah was mixed with its interpretation and elaboration. In the story of the fate of the book of Moses in the Old Testament, we encounter a war between the Palestinians and the Children of Israel, during which the Ark of the Covenant was captured (1 Samuel 4-5), and the Holy Scriptures were also included in that ark. After this period until the reign of Solomon, there is no news of the Torah until it is stated in the first Book of Kings and the second Book of Chronicles that Solomon ordered the Ark of the Covenant to be opened, and they saw the two stone tablets that Moses had received at Horeb (1 Kings 8:9 and 2 Chronicles 5:10).

After Solomon, during the reign of his son Rehoboam, Shishak, the Pharaoh of Egypt, attacked Jerusalem and plundered it, and it is unclear what happened to the copy of the Torah (2 Chronicles 12:9). Nonetheless, there is no explicit mention or emphasis in the Old Testament on the loss of the Torah, but from the content of the Old Testament, it appears that the Torah was completely lost during certain events, and no one was aware of it.

After Solomon and his son Rehoboam, there is no news of the Torah until the eighteenth year of King Josiah's reign, when a priest named Hilkiah claimed to have found the Holy Scriptures (2 Chronicles 34:8-20 and 2 Kings 22). He informed Josiah that the Book of the Torah had been found in the House of God and sent it to the king. Upon hearing this, the king tore his clothes, distressed and saddened that his ancestors had not acted according to this book, and ordered the people of Jerusalem to gather and read it to them and commanded them to act accordingly.

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These statements indicate that at that time, the Torah was either lost or hidden, which Hilkiah claimed to have found. The narrative strengthens the possibility of the story being fabricated. Will Durant believes that considering the chaotic state of the Jews, the priests decided to bring a message from God to the people and compile a law that would strengthen religion and moral foundations. This idea was endorsed by Josiah (Will Durant, 1991, vol. 1, p. 374). Another witness supporting the possibility of fabrication is that the narrative does not clarify how Josiah and his associates recognized that Hilkiah's copy was indeed the Torah of Moses, and no evidence or proof was requested to validate the authenticity of the Torah from Hilkiah.

The narrative regarding the Holy Bible continues with the attack of Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, on Jerusalem, during which everything that was in the Temple of Solomon was destroyed and burned, and the Children of Israel, along with the items from the Temple, were taken captive to Babylon. Since the Holy Scriptures were kept inside the Temple, they were either burned or pillaged (2 Chronicles 36:17-20; 2 Kings 24-25). When many years later, after their liberation from captivity, the Children of Israel returned to Jerusalem, they asked Ezra the priest to bring the Torah of Moses and read it to them, and Ezra and his assistants read it from dawn until noon on the first day of the seventh month for the people and interpreted it. They continued this until the seventh day, which was the seventh day of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles (Nehemiah 8:1-8). The text of the Holy Scriptures implies that the Jews had taken the Holy Scriptures with them and, upon returning, asked Ezra to bring it and read it to them. Some, however, believe that Ezra rewrote the Holy Scriptures again through divine inspiration (Qorqasani, 1939: 1, 15, and

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al-Hindī, n.d.: 1, 212). Others believe that among the documents referenced by Ezra, there were incomplete documents, but he did not recognize them (al-Hindī, n.d.: 1, 227) and even accused him of forging the Torah (Hijazi al-Saqa, 1976: 73).

Even if we accept that Ezra's version was the original Torah, the subsequent events that occurred cannot lead us to believe that Ezra's version remained intact, as it certainly would have been lost during the attack of Antiochus. Antiochus Epiphanes ascended to the throne of the Seleucid Greeks in 175 BCE and after taking control of Egypt, invaded Jerusalem in 169 BCE, destroying it and plundering all its treasures and valuables, burning all the copies of the Torah and other books of the Old Testament, and declaring that anyone found with a copy of the Torah or Old Testament books would be killed, conducting inspections monthly (Apocrypha of the Old Testament, 2004 AD/1383 SH; 1 Maccabees 1:11-61, pp. 383-388).

The story of the Old Testament regarding the Holy Bible ends at this juncture, but history records that in 70 CE, Titus gathered an army of Romans and attacked Jerusalem. When the city fell to the Romans, Titus proposed conditions to the residents of Jerusalem, but they rejected them, leading him to order the burning of their temple, resulting in the deaths of many Jews (Klaperman, 1970 AD/1349 SH: 2, 169-173).

At this point in time, Yohanan ben Zakkai, one of the prominent scholars and a distinguished member of the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, fled the city while it was under siege by the Romans and established a new assembly of scholars in the city of Yavne, which was recognized by most Jews in Palestine as the reference for all religious and moral issues (ibid: 2, 180-

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185). This center is where the writings of the Holy Scriptures were revived.

Therefore, examining the historical process of the Holy Scriptures indicates that the current Torah lacks any credibility in terms of its document and cannot be trusted.

What strengthens the argument against the credibility of the Holy Bible is that in ancient Judaism, there was a group known as the scribes or "Soferim" who copied the Holy Scriptures. Jeremiah stated about them: "The pen of the scribes is in vain." (Jeremiah 8:8) The Holy Qur'an also refers to this: "So woe to those who write [the distorted book] with their own hands, and then say, 'This is from God,' to gain a small price; so, woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they earn" (al-Baqarah/79) (Kashani, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 210-211).

2.1.2. Canonization of the Old Testament

According to existing evidence, the Old Testament was written over a period of a thousand years (1400-400 BCE) by at least thirty different authors, with some authors of certain books remaining unknown (Schultz, n.d.: 2; Deeb, 1985: 5-6). Others have believed that the writing and compilation of the Holy Bible occurred over a thousand years from 1100 to 100 BCE (Voorst, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 42-43). However, researchers have accepted the second viewpoint and believe that these books underwent editing by the priests in multiple periods. Its writing began around 1100 BCE after the Children of Israel entered Palestine, and the song of Moses and Miriam (Exodus 15) was written, possibly continuing until 400 BCE, when the priests of Jerusalem completed and edited it in its current form. The editing of some books, such as Isaiah 24-27 and Ezekiel 38, as well as Daniel, was completed in 160 BCE, and the basic writings were essentially compiled around 100 BCE, but the status of some books, like Esther and the Song of Songs, remained

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disputed (Voorst, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 42-43; Weir, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 2, 607).

After the completion of the writing and editing process, discussions began regarding the preparation of a list of these numerous books, determining which of these books were sacred and which were not, processes referred to as "Canonization." The Jewish council in Yavne (around 90 AD) accepted the official books, but it took several years for this decree to be widely accepted (Mohammadiyan et al., 2001 AD/1380 SH: 5; Barclay, 1972: 40).

In Christianity, the affirmation of the sanctity and credibility of the Old Testament books occurred at the Council of Hippo in 393 AD. In this council, the view of the Jewish council in Yavne, which rejected the Greek version of the Holy Bible, was not accepted, and the validity of the Greek version of the Holy Bible was confirmed. This view was also accepted and validated in two councils of Carthage held in 397 and 419 AD. This view was accepted by Christians, and there was no dispute regarding it until the Reformation. During the Reformation, Luther did not express any objections regarding the canonical texts, and nothing was mentioned about the canonical texts in the Augsburg Confession (1530 AD). However, Zwingli and Calvin mentioned the canonical books, recognizing them as the same books from Genesis to Malachi (i.e., 39 books). Faced with this issue, the Catholic Church convened the Council of Trent and declared that the opinions of the councils of Hippo and Carthage were valid and accurate, affirming that the books from Genesis to Malachi were primary canonical texts, while other books in the Greek translation were secondary canonical texts (the priest Samuel Yusuf Khalil, "Introduction to the Old Testament," p. 45).

2.1.3. Apocrypha of the Old Testament

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Two versions of the Old Testament exist that have significant differences from each other. The emergence of these two versions is attributed to the invasion of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE, which led to the dispersion of Jews throughout the empire and, over time, the gradual forgetting of their mother tongue (Hebrew) in favor of Greek. The translation of the Torah into Greek began for the benefit of the Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria in the third century BCE and was eventually completed around 132 BCE (Sarna, 1993: 2, 155). According to Jewish and Christian traditional narratives, during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE) in Egypt, at the suggestion of Demetrius the royal librarian, the king asked Eliezer (the chief priest of the Jews) to have the Torah translated into Greek. This task was carried out by a group of seventy individuals, which is why it is known as the Septuagint (the translation of the seventy). This translation was widely used among the Jews scattered in the Mediterranean regions during the time of Jesus Christ and was also considered the Holy Bible of the early church (Merrill C. Tenney, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 1, 30).

In the two centuries before the advent of Christianity and a century after it, many Jews and Christians used this version until around 100 AD when Jewish leaders convened a council and voted to recognize the official 39 books, declaring the seven books present in the Septuagint translation as non-canonical. However, Christians regarded this version as valid and continued to use it until the Protestants returned to the Hebrew text in the sixteenth century, declaring these seven books as unofficial (the priest Samuel Yusuf Khalil, "Introduction to the Old Testament," p. 45).

Protestants refer to the seven extra books in the Septuagint as "Apocrypha," meaning "Hidden and concealed," while Catholics and

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Orthodox Christians refer to them as "Secondary canon," meaning they hold a degree of lower authority. It is worth noting that the versions of the Holy Bible containing apocryphal texts differ in both the number of books and their arrangement. In addition to the well-known seven books, one can also mention additional texts such as the Additions to Esther, the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men, the Story of Susanna, and the Story of Bel and the Dragon (Charlesworth, 1993: 2, 174).

Now we come to the question of how to ascertain the divine inspiration of these books regardless of who wrote them. Was the Canonization the will of God? In the history of Judaism, there existed no reliable criteria for distinguishing sacred books from non-sacred ones, nor any rational or legal authority for determining the legal status of these books. This claim is evidenced by the differences among various Jewish and Christian denominations regarding the sanctity of some books. A more important question is who granted authority to the Jewish and Christian councils to decide on the divine inspiration of the Holy Bible? If it is stated that the Holy Bible conferred this authority, we will fall into a circular reasoning trap. There is no authority beyond the Holy Bible in Judaism and Christianity to validate the credibility of both (Kashani, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 211-213.)

2.2. New Testament

The second part of the Holy Bible is the New Testament, which is only accepted by Christians. This section consists of books and letters with various contents .

The New Testament includes twenty-seven books and letters written by nine authors, and if Paul is considered the author of the Letter to the Hebrews, the number of authors of the New Testament decreases to eight. These books were written over a period of approximately just over

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half a century, from around 45 AD to about 100 AD (C. Tenney, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 1, 136).

One point to note about the New Testament is that Christians believe that Jesus Christ never brought a book and did not need to bring one at all; because prophets, as intermediaries between God and humans, bring messages and books from God. However, Jesus Christ is believed to be God Himself and the embodiment of revelation (Miller, 1981: 66), and therefore, his behavior and sayings are sufficient for humanity, and the Gospels were written by others after the death of Jesus Christ. It should be noted that Christian beliefs differ from those found in Islamic culture and texts regarding Jesus Christ and his book. Christians do not consider the authors of the New Testament books to be prophets, but they believe that all of them acted with divine inspiration in everything they wrote (ibid: 51; 70.)

The four Gospels are traditionally attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; however, the original titles of the Gospels are unknown. The names of most Greek books are explicitly appended to their authors. For example, we say: "Homer's Iliad" or "Plato's Republic." In contrast, for the Gospels, the phrase "According to..." is used, for example, "The Gospel according to Matthew," which seems to avoid directly attributing these books to their traditional authors (Robertson, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 19-20.)

Recent scholars of the Holy Bible argue that with the exception of half of the letters attributed to Paul, the authors of the other books cannot be definitively identified (Haqani Fazl, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 62). Therefore, regarding the transmission of the New Testament, there is no established continuous chain and confirmed tawatur (widely accepted transmission).

2.2.1. Canonization of the New Testament

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One of the problems that the early church faced was the existence of multiple Gospels, with new ones being added every day, and some sects, such as Marcion's, only accepted the Gospel of Luke and ten letters from Paul. Even in the third and fourth centuries, there was still no consensus regarding the New Testament books, and some churches did not recognize the Letter to the Hebrews, James, the second and third letters of John, the Letter of Jude, and the second letter of Peter, and the Revelation of John as part of the sacred texts (Voorst, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 121).

The process of Canonization and selection of the 27 books of the New Testament from among the many existing books and letters spanned from the early second century until the Council of Carthage in 397 AD (Mohammadiyan et al., 2001 AD/1380 SH: 5; Voorst, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 120-121; Schniedwind, 2005: 3). Thus, the process of canonization of the New Testament took approximately 300 years (Barclay, 1972: 45); of course, this list was reaffirmed by the Council of Trent (1545-1563) (Lofmark, 1990: 27).

The writers of early Christianity, in addition to the 27 books of the New Testament, wrote other Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, letters, and revelations that were not included in the official list of the New Testament. These writings later became known as the "Apocrypha of the New Testament." (Baghbani Arani, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 90)

2.2.2. Apocrypha of the New Testament

The early Christians, in addition to the existing books of the New Testament, wrote other Gospels, books, and letters about the Acts of the Apostles and revelations, which are referred to as the "Apocrypha" or "Hidden books" of the New Testament. The church has not accepted these writings, some of which still exist, as official books and does not categorize them as sacred texts.

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A version of the "Gospel of Judas Iscariot" was discovered in Egypt in 1978. This Gospel presents Judas not as a villain in the story of the crucifixion of Jesus, but rather as a hero. Other apocryphal books include the "Infancy Gospel," "The Story of Joseph the Carpenter," and "The Ascension of Mary," which contain narratives similar to those in the Qur'an concerning Jesus and his mother, Mary. For example, the account of Jesus speaking in the cradle appears in this Gospel. Other apocryphal books include "The Acts of Peter," "The Acts of Paul," "The Acts of John," "The Acts of Thomas," "The Acts of Andrew," as well as "The Letters of Clement," "The Letter of Barnabas," "Paul's Third Letter to the Corinthians," and "Paul's Letter to the Laodiceans," along with other apocalyptic writings (Rasoolzadeh et al., 2010 AD/1389 SH: 489).

An important question arises: how did the church confer authority and credibility upon these books? If the answer is that the Holy Bible granted this authority, a circular reasoning trap arises. The church grants authority to the Holy Bible and the same Holy Bible confer authority to the church. In Christianity, there is no authority beyond the Holy Bible and the church to validate the credibility of both (Kashani, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 236.)

However, Muslims have a reference beyond the Holy Bible and the church that has confirmed the Testaments to some extent, and that is the Qur'an. Accordingly, all heavenly books must be presented to the Qur'an for validation (Naqavi, 2022: 107-108; Naqavi, 2011: 19; Naqavi and Eftekhari, 2024: 314). It was previously discussed in the compilation of the Qur'an that the chain of transmission of the Qur'an is connected and certainly reaches its bringer, the Prophet of Islam (PBUH), and is assuredly from God. Rationality and religious law dictate that if a book is attributed to God, and we are certain that another text is from God, the

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book attributed to God must be validated against the book that is certainly from God. Therefore, the Qur'an can serve as a reference for all heavenly books. On the other hand, it has been firmly established that the Qur'an is a miracle and is certainly from God, and thus can also serve as a reference for all heavenly books.

Conclusion

Based on what has been presented in this paper, the findings can be summarized as follows:

1. The Holy Qur'an was written down simultaneously with its revelation, whereas the Testaments experienced a gap between their revelation and final writing;
2. The time from writing to the compilation of the Qur'an was less than two years, while the time from writing to the Canonization of the Old Testament took over a thousand years, and the time from writing to the Canonization of the New Testament took about three hundred years;
3. The process of compiling the Qur'an did not damage its continuous chain of transmission, thereby preserving its documentary credibility, while the process of Canonizing the Testaments has undermined their documentary credibility, rendering them lacking in such authority;
4. The Qur'an has a single version (the *'Uthmānic* version) and does not contain apocryphal texts, whereas the Old Testament has various versions (Hebrew, Greek, and Samaritan), and the New Testament also has multiple versions. Thus, the Testaments possess apocryphal texts.

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