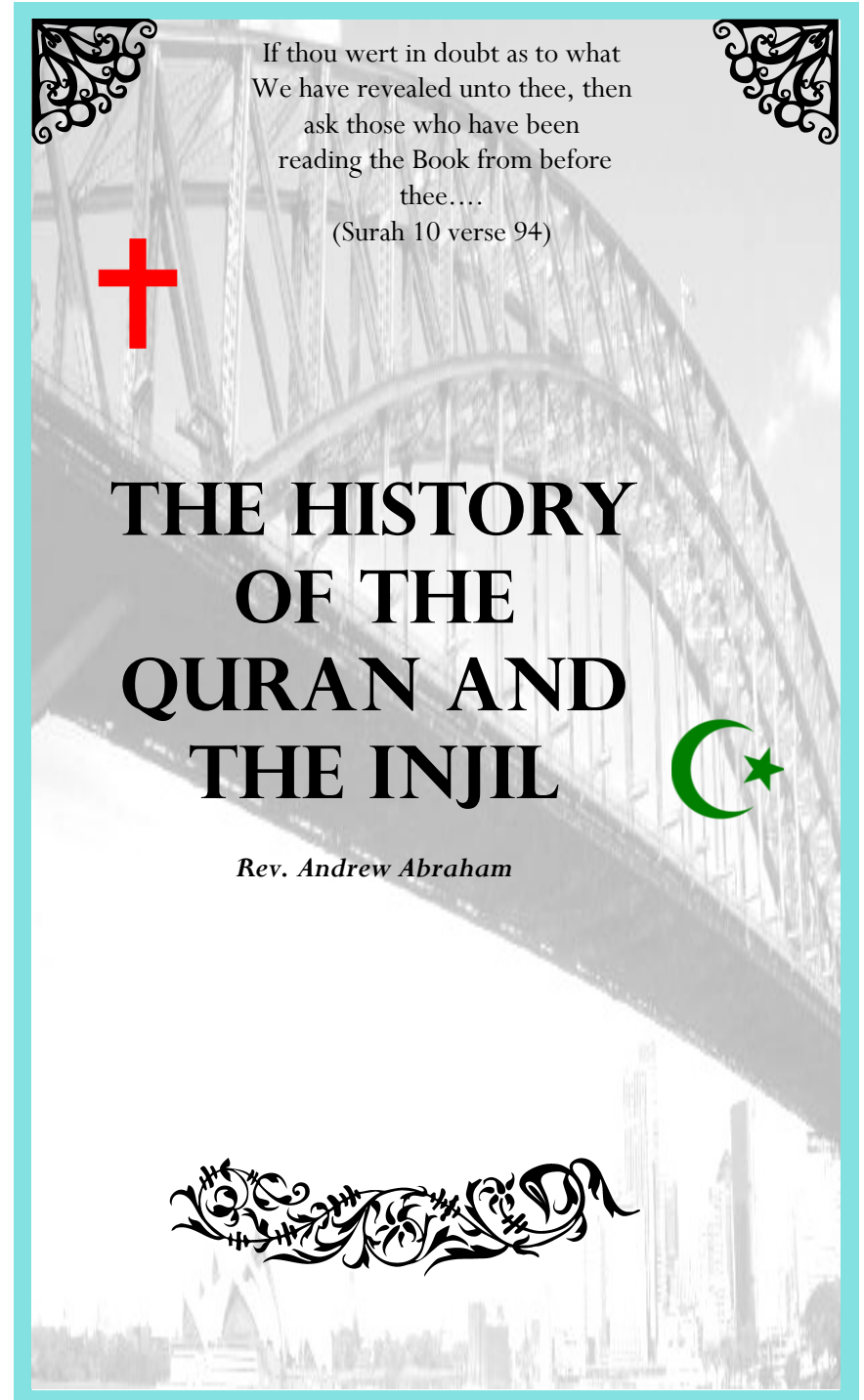


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THE HISTORY OF THE QURAN AND THE INJIL

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1. INTRODUCTION

Studying and understanding history has always been a vital tool in developing a correct view on any matter. In order to confirm the validity of the Injil, which is known as the New Testament, it will be necessary to look at its history. The development of the Quran will be looked at in the light of Muslim sources. Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali's translated version of 'The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an' (Amana Publications, U.S.A., 1989) is used as a reference.

2. CONTENTS OF THE INJIL

In the Holy Book of Islam Christians are referred to as the people of the Injil. (Surah 5, Al Ma'idah, 47) The literal meaning of the word is

Until the end of the fourth century there was common agreement among the Christians as to which books were part of the Gospel. The Roman Catholic Church accepted some heretic writings as part of the Bible, but only in 1563, as a reaction to the Protestant Reformation. By doing so they legitimized their reference to them in disputed doctrinal matters. ('Answers to tough questions', by Josh McDowell, 1980, page 37) The oldest existing copies still in existence of almost half of the New Testament are dated about 200 AD, that is 130-174 years after they were originally written. It is important to realize that all the main Christian doctrines are contained therein! The oldest copy of the complete New Testament (Gospel) which still exists today is dated around 350 AD, that is 280-324 years after it was first written down.

15. CONCLUSION

The first written accounts of both the Quran and the Gospel were made during the life of Muhammad and Jesus respectively. In both cases the transmission took place mainly orally. The Quran was passed on in that way for about 43 years, the Gospel for 29-44 years. Muslims and Christians alike believe that God inspired their holy book and that He watched over the process when it was memorized and later written down. In spite of numerous variant readings in both books, Muslims and Christians believe that they possess essentially what God had intended them to receive. For good reasons both communities believe that their books have been carefully preserved from the beginning and ever since. This leads to a problem. Both books differ regarding Jesus Christ who forms the center of Christian beliefs. Some articles which can be ordered from The Bridges Option which deal with that challenging fact. They establish that the Jesus described in the Bible is right when he claims: 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.' (John 14:6).

14. OLDEST COPY OF THE INJIL AS KNOWN TODAY

The present translations of the New Testament (the Gospel, Injil) are based on the following, oldest manuscripts:

A) P 75

It is dated around 200 AD and originally contained 'Luke' and 'John' on 144 pages. 102 pages (about 70%) still exist today.

B) P 46

It is also dated around 200 AD and originally contained 10 books of the New Testament, written by Paul. Of the 114 pages, about 75% (86 pages) exists today.

Translations of the New Testament into Latin and Syriac were made between 150-180 AD. Copies of them from the fourth and fifth century AD exist today. They confirm the 70-75% existing texts of the manuscripts P 75 and P 46. Therefore it is valid to assume that the 25-30% and the rest of the New Testament books which have not survived from around 200 AD, also agreed

C) Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus

They are both dated around 350 AD, shortly after the beginning of monasticism, and contain all 27 New Testament books. According to the Quran (Surah 57, Al Hadid, verses 27-28) true Christians were still around at that time. Since one can only be a true Christian if he possesses and lives according to the true teaching of the New Testament, this is further evidence that the two codices remained unchanged. They both confirm the manuscripts P 75 and P 46 and also the Latin and Syriac translations. Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus are used to translate those parts of today's New Testament, which are missing from P 75 and P 46. Different early Christian communities accepted as authentic the 27 books that together form the New Testament. Because of the fast expansion of Christianity and the growing number of heretic writings it became necessary to write down officially the names of the New Testament books. There was no need for this process until around the end of the fourth century when the Syriac Church accepted some false writings to be part of the Bible. This happened even though the Peshitta, the Syriac Bible of the second century AD did not contain them, (the prophet of Islam faced the same problem in Musailama, who claimed to have received revelations too; see 'Dictionary of Islam' by P. Hughes, 1988, p.422).

'Good News,' or 'Gospel'. It is used in three ways:

First, it refers to the Good News that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, on our behalf, and that he rose from the dead. (Mark 14:61-62) Second, the word 'Gospel' has been used to describe the written accounts of Jesus' words and deeds in the first four books of the Injil. (e.g. the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John). Third, the term is used in the Quran to describe what is known to Christians as the New Testament, including the four Gospels already mentioned and the 23 other parts written by some of the early followers of Jesus under the inspiration of God. (Surah 5, Al Ma'idah, 111-113).

Surah 61, Al Saff, 14 mentions true Christians who prevailed in the time of Jesus, in the 1st century AD. Surah 57, Al Hadid, 27 speaks about true believers in Christ who received their due reward at the beginning of monasticism, in the 4th century AD. Surah 85, Al Buruj, 4-9 talks about believers who were ready to die for their faith. Hamidullah identifies them in the footnotes to his translation of the Quran as Christians who were persecuted in the sixth century by Dhu Nuwas, a Jewish king of Yemen. S. Abul A'la Maududi and Yusuf Ali also refer to that tragic incident as a possible explanation in the comments on those verses in their translations of the Quran. Surah 5, Al Ma'idah, 66 mentions that some Jews and Christians were on the right course in Muhammad's time, the sixth century. In verse 114 of the same Surah the followers of Jesus are called 'al-hawariyun' in Arabic. Abdullah Yusuf Ali wrote in a footnote regarding Surah 44, 54 in his translation of 'The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an' (1989) concerning that word: 'Hur implies the following ideas: (1) purity; possibly the word Hawariyun, as applied to the first Disciples of Jesus, is connected with this root...' People could only be called 'true Christian believers' and 'the pure ones' if they were in possession of the Injil (Gospel), the New Testament given by God; otherwise they would not have been commended as they were.

History tells us what was part of the book they followed. The 27 parts that together make up the New Testament, as we know it today in the twenty first century, had been already been accepted as single letters in the first century AD. by a great majority of the early Christians. In order to be better equipped against false teachings, a list (called 'canon') of the 27 books contained in the New Testament was officially approved by the Church in 397 AD at the Third Council of Carthage. ('Introduction to New Testament'

by D. Carson, *Apollos*, 1992, page 493) F.F. Bruce, Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester, England confirms this fact by saying: 'One thing must be emphatically stated. The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and generally apostolic authority, direct or indirect. The first ecclesiastical councils to classify the canonical books were both held in North Africa- at Hippo Reius in 393 and at Carthage in 397 - but what these councils did was not to impose something new upon the Christian communities but to codify what was already the general practice of those communities.' (*The New Testament Documents, Are They Reliable?* IVP, England, 1994, page 27) The formation of the definite canon took place on the basis of criteria, such '...as apostolic authorship, reception by the churches, and consistency of doctrine with what the church already possessed.' (*Bakers's Dictionary of Theology*, by E.F. Harrison, Baker Book House, USA, 1994, page 95) It is this whole New Testament teaching that the Christians before and in Muhammad's time were following. See also the booklet [Was The Injil Changed At Nicea?](#) available from The Bridges Option.

They are described in the Quran verses above as:

- 'The pure ones,' those 'who believed and received due rewards' in the fourth century.

- 'Believers who died for their faith' in the sixth century.

- Those who 'were on the right course' in the sixth century.

Such favourable terms can only be used for those who followed the complete, unchanged, God given book. Therefore, both, Quran and history, confirm that the Arabic word 'Injil' ('Gospel') used in the Quran, is identical with 'the New Testament.'

The following comparison shows that both, the Muslim and the Christian books, have gone through similar stages of developments. Therefore, if someone concludes and is doubtful, that the Injil was changed in the course of time one would have to apply the same skepticism to the Quran as well.

3. THE BEGINNING OF THE QURAN

Revelations were given to Muhammad from around 610 AD. until

copy of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Quranic materials whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burned. Zaid bin Thabit added, 'A verse from Surah 33, Alizab, (verse 23) was missed by me when we copied the Quran and I used to hear Allah's Apostle reciting it. So we searched for it and found it with Khuzaima bin Thabit Al-Ansari...' (Bukhari, VI, No.510)

In spite of the radical measures taken there still is a verse missing in today's Quran:

'Abdullah bin Abbas reported that Umar bin Khattab sat on the pulpit of Allah's messenger and said: 'Verily Allah sent Muhammad with truth and he sent down the book upon him, and the verse of stoning was included in what was sent down the book upon him, and the verse of stoning was included in what was sent down to him. We recited it, retained it in our memory and understood it. I am afraid that with the lapse of time, the people (may forget) and may say: 'We do not find the punishment of stoning in the book of Allah, and this go astray by abandoning this duty prescribed by Allah...' (Bukhari, VIII, No.816, Muslim, III, No. 4194) The verse can not have been abrogated because the messenger of Islam was the only one who was authorized to do so. By the time the problem arose he was dead. The only reference found in today's Quran reads:

'The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication, flog each of them with a hundred stripes...' (Surah 24, Nur, verse 3)

Perhaps for reasons such as this Ibn Masud opposed the new official version of the Quran with the following words: 'The Prophet taught me to recite 70 Surahs which I had mastered before Zaid had even become a Muslim. How can you order me to recite the readings of Zaid, when I recited from the very mouth of the Prophet some 70 Surahs? Am I to abandon what I acquired from the very lips of the Prophet?' (*Masahif* by Ibn Abi Dawud)

After having studied the early surviving Quran manuscripts very thoroughly John Gilchrist states: 'The oldest manuscripts of the Quran still in existence date from not earlier than about one hundred years after Muhammad's death.' He comes to this conclusion because two of the oldest manuscripts, the Samarqand and Topkapi codices are both written in the Kufic script. It 'can generally be dated from the late eighth century depending on the extent of development in the character of the script in each case.' (*Jam' Al-Qur'an*, page 146,153)

tomb. They said nothing to anyone. They were afraid for...' The last word in this verse is a translation from the Greek conjunction 'gar'. Metzger, a leading scholar in New Testament Greek says that in all Greek literature 'no instance has been found where 'gar' stands at the end of a book.'

He lists two possible solutions to this problem:

- 1) Mark was interrupted in his writing and prevented (maybe by death) from finishing.
- 2) The last leaf was lost before other copies could be made. Verses 9-20 therefore presents a marginal note that accidentally became part of the text. ('Text of the New Testament' by Metzger, pages 226-229)

John 7, verse 53-8, verse 11

In these verses Jewish teachers bring a woman who has committed adultery before Jesus. They want to test how he judges her. 'This story may not have belonged originally to the Gospel of John. It is absent from almost all the important early manuscripts, and those that have it sometimes place it elsewhere. But the story may well be authentic.' (N.I.V. Study Bible, 1985, p. 1611)

The famous historian Philip Schaff said that none of these variant readings affect 'an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching.' ('Companion to the Greek Testament and English Version' by Philip Schaff, Harper, New York, 1883, page 177)

13. OLDEST COPY OF THE QURAN AS KNOWN TODAY

The many variant reading caused Muslim soldiers from Iraq who followed Ibn Masud's collection, and soldiers of Syria who took Ubay's collection to be the correct one, to accuse each other of lying. Uthman's reaction in 653 AD is recorded in the following Hadith:

Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, 'Send us the manuscripts of the Quran so that we may compile the Quranic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you'. Hafsa sent it to Uthman, Uthman then ordered Zaid bin Thabit, Abdullah bin Az-Zubair, Said bin Al-As and Abdur Rahman bin Harith bin Hisham to rewrite the manuscripts in perfect copies. Uthman said to the three Quraishi men, 'In case you disagree with Zaid bin Thabit on any point in the Quran, then write it in the dialect of Quraish as the Quran was revealed in their tongue.' They did so, and when they had written many copies, Uthman returned the original manuscripts to Hafsa. Uthman sent to every Muslim province one

shortly before his death in 632 AD. They lasted about 23 years. ('Ullum Al-Quran', by Ahmad von Denffer, 1985, pages 54-55) During the time the prophet of Islam received revelations the Muslims were encouraged to memorize them. Uthman bin Affan quotes the prophet as saying 'The most superior among you are those who learn the Quran and teach it.' (Bukhari, VI, No. 546, all of Bukhari's English translations in this comparison are taken from: 'The translation of the meaning of Sahih al-Bukhari', 9 volumes, by Khan Muhammad Mushin, Istanbul, 1978)

4. THE BEGINNING OF THE INJIL

Jesus started his public ministry in about 26 AD. This is known because in Luke 3, verse 1 it is related to the '...fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar...' Secular history verifies that Tiberius had authority in the provinces concerned beginning in 11 AD. (N.I.V. Study Bible, 1985, p.1540. The mentioning of three annual Jewish Passover feasts (John 2, 6, 12) leads to the conclusion that he preached and taught for about three years until 29 AD. What Jesus said and did was memorized during his public ministry. This can be taken as certain for two reasons:

1. The first followers of Jesus were all Jewish. Jews have a strong tradition of memorizing their Scriptures and the teaching of their rabbis. The Mishna (rules for right living and a commentary on the Torah) says: "A good pupil is like a plastered cistern that loses not a drop." (Aboth ii,8)
2. The seriousness of Jesus' teaching made a memorization absolutely necessary:

Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ...But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete." (Luke 6, verses 46, 49)

5. FIRST WRITTEN ACCOUNTS OF THE QURAN

The revelations Muhammad claimed to have received were written down during his lifetime on various writing materials. However, they were not bound into one single book. This is confirmed by a report that says "when people came to Medina to learn about Islam, they were provided with copies of the chapters of the Quran, to read and learn them by heart." ("Sahifa Hammam ibn Munabbih," by Hamidullah, 1979, p.64)

6. FIRST WRITTEN ACCOUNTS OF THE INJIL

What Jesus said and did during his public ministry was also written

down during his lifetime. Papias, a hearer of John, one of Jesus' disciples wrote down the following tradition, or 'Christian Hadith', sometime between 120 and 130 AD, 'Matthew compiled the sayings (of Jesus) in the Hebrew language.' ('Church History' V.33,4.1, by Eusebius) Furthermore, Luke who wrote his account of the Gospel probably sometime between 59 - 63 A.D. started by saying, "*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us...*" (Luke 1:1).

7. MAINLY ORAL TRANSMISSION OF QURAN FOR 43 YEARS

The revelations Muhammad received were passed on mainly orally for 43 years from 610 AD until 653 AD. At that time the Quran was officially written under the command of Uthman. During the first 22 years of this period the prophet of Islam was still alive. In case of doubt his followers could have consulted him immediately. Many of them also memorized the revelations under his personal guidance. More than 20 of those are mentioned by name in the Hadith. Among them were well known persons, such as Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Ibn Masud, Abu Huraira, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin Amr bin al-As, Aisha, Hafsa and Umm Salama. ('Itqan' by Suyuti, I, p.124). Others went over the contents of the Quran with the prophet before his death. "Narrated Qatada said I asked Anas bin Malik: 'Who collected the Quran at the time of the prophet?' He replied, 'Four, all of whom were from the Ansar: Ubai bin Ka'b, Muadh bin Jabal, Zaid bin Thabit and Abu Zaid.'" (Bukhari, VI, No.525) After the prophet's death they could be consulted and correct each other if there was any dispute that arose. The tradition of memorizing the Quran has continued for many centuries throughout all generations until today.

Secular history makes it clear that Islam spread within the first 25 years of the Hejira (the departure of Muhammad from Makkah) into many other countries outside Arabia. Damascus and Syria were taken in 13 AH. One year later Muslim armies made inroads into Persia. In 19 AH Egypt fell into Muslim hands. By 25 AH Islamic warfare brought success in Armenia, in northern Turkey. A lot of soldiers and leaders who conquered those far away countries had memorized at least part of the Quran. They also knew about the historical events with regard to its beginnings. Within a short period of time the revelations Muhammad received spread in this way from Egypt to Persia and from Turkey to Arabia. Any changes within the Quran would surely have met with fierce

would make the explanation of such errors clear.

b) Variations because New testament Greek was written with no spaces between the words. Look at the possible variant meanings in trying to understand the phrase "Isawabundanceonthetable." Looking at the context of the phrase and the variants themselves would make it clear what was the correct reading.

c) Variants caused by inclusion of marginal notes or exclusion of corrections. Sometimes corrections to copyist errors were put in the margins, other times explanatory notes were placed there. Infrequently, in subsequent copies the correction might be dropped or the note included in the text. Again, common sense, comparison to other manuscripts, or context makes the matter clear.

Often variants spread throughout many of the manuscripts. That is why a variant spelling of one letter of one word within one verse in 3000 manuscripts is considered to be 3000 variant readings. A.T. Robertson, a great expert in this field, said, that the real concern is only with a 'thousandth part of the entire text.' ("An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament" by A.T. Robertson, Broadman, Nashville, 1925, page 22) Because all manuscripts have been carefully preserved a scholarly study is possible to determine the correct readings. The following criteria are important in this science:

- a) The age of the manuscript. If a variant occurs in younger manuscripts but is not found in older ones, this indicates that it is incorrect.
- b) The frequency of variants. If a variant reading is only found in a few manuscripts but not in the majority of others it can also be identified as incorrect. Most of the variant readings are of very little significance with regard to the meaning of the text. Only a few present some problems, such as:

1 John 5, verses 7,8

This verse, as it appears in some older English translation only, adds some words that speak about the Tri-unity of God. 'But, the addition is not found in any Greek manuscripts or NT translation prior to the 16th century.' (N.I.V. Study Bible, 1985, p. 1913) It was obviously a marginal note that was added by mistake as part of the text.

Mark 16, verses 9-20

These verses summarize the ministry of Jesus. They are not found in the oldest manuscripts. The literal translation of verse 8 reads 'Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the

- a) Variants caused by a copying mistake. These can be detected easily by comparisons with other manuscripts.
- b) Variant readings caused by accidentally adopting marginal notes into the text of the Quran.
- c) Variations caused by Muhammad's permission to recite the revelations in different dialects.
- d) Variations caused by the fact that the Quran was copied without vowel marks and without dots to distinguish between different letters that were written in the same way. (Only 15 different forms of letters represent 28 letters) Most of the variant readings have very little significance with regard to the meaning of the text. Only a few present some problems, such as:

Surah 5, Maida, verse 63

Nineteen alternate readings have been identified, some of which change the actual meaning of the verse. Changing the vowel combinations caused 14 variants. In the remaining 5 cases one or two consonants were added. (Ibid, by A. Jeffery, pages 39, 129, 198, 216, 237)

Surah 33, Alizab, verse 6

'The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers...' '...In some Qiraats, like that of Ubai ibn Kab, occur also the words '... and he is a father to them...' (The Holy Quran' by A. Yusuf Ali, 1975, note 3674) Only reports in the Hadith about these variants have survived. But none of them changes any doctrine of the Quran in the slightest way.

12. VARIANT READINGS IN THE INJIL

There are about 5500 Greek manuscripts still existent which contain the whole or part of the New Testament. ('Answers to tough questions' By Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, 1980, p.4). Critics will say there are thousands of variations in the New Testament manuscripts and we must understand this. Variants in the Injil will fall into similar categories as variants in the Quran:

- a) Variants caused by copying mistakes. Early copies were done by hand. The copyist would move his eyes back and forth between the handwritten manuscript he was copying and the one he was writing. There could be spelling errors, repetition of a word or phrase, or the skipping of a line between similar phrases. Comparison with other manuscript copies

opposition from all these parts of the world.

8. MAINLY ORAL TRANSMISSION OF INJIL FOR 29-44 YEARS

The gospel was mainly passed on by oral means for 29 years from 26 AD until 55 AD when its main teaching was first written down by Paul as part of the Injil. This document, or book, is known as '1 Corinthians'. (1 Cor. 15, verses 1-8, compare with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 26, verse 27 and Mark 14, verses 61-62). Its date is undisputed by all Biblical scholars. '1 Corinthians' is one of 27 parts that together form the New Testament. W.F. Albright, one of the world's leading Biblical archaeologists, wrote: 'We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about 80 Ad.' ('Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands' by Albright, 1955, p.136) Another renowned scholar summarizes that the whole New Testament was written before the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. ('Redating the New Testament' by A.T. Robinson, 1976). Muslim authors and speakers often cite scholars who would disagree with the above conclusions on the basis of theories known as "documentary hypothesis" and "form criticism". They deny vehemently that the Gospel was revealed by God, and that miracles and prophecies can be possible. They would raise the same objections against the Quran as they do to the Injil. This is the reason why true Muslims and Christians alike have to reject their views regarding many of the alleged contradictions found in the Bible.

However, scholars are in agreement that the majority of the New Testament books were written between 55 and 70 AD. In the light of this evidence the dates of 55 to 70 AD are taken as an average time period wherein the whole New Testament was officially written down. This allows for the balanced conclusion that the Gospel was transmitted predominantly by oral means for a period of 29-44 years.

During the first three years of this time Jesus was still with his followers. In case of doubt they could have consulted him. Afterwards, many of his disciples who memorized what they saw and heard concerning Jesus could remind each other in cases of dispute. Biblical sources (Acts 2, verses 5-11; 11, verses 19-20; 18 verses 1-2) and secular history make it clear that about 25 years after Jesus started his public ministry, many Christians were found all over the Eastern Mediterranean. They also spread to the West as far as Rome. Any changes to the Gospel would

have been met with very fierce opposition from all these different parts of the world.

9. THE MAN WHO WROTE DOWN THE FIRST QURAN

The revelations given to Muhammad were not written down by himself: "Narrated al Bara: There was revealed 'Not equal are those believers who sit and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah' (Surah 4, Nisaa, verse 95). The prophet said: 'Call Zaid for me and let him bring the board, the ink pot and the scapula bone.' Then he said: 'Write: Not equal are those believers...'" (Bukhari, VI, No.512)

The Quran was written down during the prophet's lifetime but only on loose pieces of different material. When at the battle of Yamama in 633 AD a number of Muslims were killed it was feared that part of the revelations might be lost. Therefore, Abu Bakr, the first Muslim leader after Muhammad's death, asked Zaid ibn Thabit to collect all the different writing materials on which the Quran was written down. This was his reaction "...By Allah, if he (Abu Bakr) had ordered me to shift one of the mountains it would not have been harder for me than what he had ordered me concerning the collection of the Quran. I said to both of them, 'How dare you do what the prophet has not done?' Abu Bakr said, 'By Allah, it's a good thing'... So I started locating the Quranic material and collecting it from parchments, scapula, leafstalks of date palms and from the memories of men. I found with Khuzaima two verses of Surah Tauba which I had not found with anybody else..." (Bukhari, VI, No.201) Even though those verses had only been found with one person and only one man had the sole responsibility to collect the first official Quran, Muslims believe it contained all the revelations given to their prophet.

10. THE MEN WHO WROTE DOWN THE FIRST INJIL

Jesus did not write down the message he brought. Others such as Matthew, one of his disciples, wrote down what he said and did in the Greek language. The followers of Jesus also memorized these things. The first four books of the New Testament contain the words and deeds of Jesus. They were written down by four different authors, Matthew, Mark, Luke (he also wrote 'Acts') and John (he also wrote '1,2,3 John' and 'Revelation'). These men wrote under God's inspiration for different communities with different needs (2 Peter 1, verses 20-21). The book of

Matthew, for example, was originally directed at Jewish readers. The book of Mark on the other hand was written for Gentiles. (See N.I.V. Study Bible, 1985, pages 1439, 1490.)

God inspired the authors to write down the known words and deeds of Jesus in their particular fashion, according to the needs of the original recipients of their books. They, like the other writers of New Testament books, Paul, Peter, James and Jude, were either eyewitnesses or had first hand knowledge of Jesus' ministry. The remaining 23 books of the New Testament again addressed different needs. God inspired the authors to comment and elaborate on the words and facts of Jesus' ministry. Muslims and Christians alike believe that inspiration from God comes in different ways but nevertheless in as great a degree, which means, in the same perfect quality. (See also "Dictionary of Islam" by T.P. Hughes, 1988, p.213)

11. VARIANT READINGS IN THE QURAN

A number of Hadith mention that several of Muhammad's companions wrote down their own collections of the revelations. ('Itqan I' by Suyuti, p.62) The best known among them are:

Ibn Masud

He claimed to have learned some seventy Surahs directly from the prophet. Muhammad told other people to learn the Quran from him and three others. (Bukhari, 6, No.521) However, Surah 1, 113 and 114 were missing in his collection. (Fihrist, I, pages 53-57)

Ubay bin Kab

He was the prophet's secretary in Medina. He is one of the other three mentioned above whom the prophet recommended as a teacher of the Quran. His collection contained two additional Surahs and an otherwise unknown verse. ('Itqan I' by Suyuti, p.65; 'Masahif' by Ibn Abi Dawud, p.180-181) It was widely used in Syria before the appearance of Uthman's text.

Abu Musa

The people of Basra used his collection. It was identical with the material of Ubai bin Kab. These different collections of the Quran also contained many variant readings. More than 1700 are attributed to Ibn Masud alone. ('Materials for the history of the text of the Quran' by A. Jeffry, 1937) Muhammad Hamidullah divides them into four classes in the introduction to his French translation of the Quran (p. XXXIII) :