

A Technical Analysis of Comparative Scriptural Hermeneutics: The Bible and the Qur'an

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The study of comparative religion, specifically the intersection of Abrahamic scriptures, requires a rigorous methodological framework that transcends simple thematic overlap. In the contemporary theological landscape, the work of scholars such as Daniel Wickwire, particularly in his seminal text **100 Questions About the Bible and the Qur'an**, provides a structured inquiry into the foundational differences and parallels between these two globally influential texts. For the technical writer or theological researcher, understanding these nuances is not merely a matter of faith but a matter of structural and linguistic analysis, historical transmission, and hermeneutical execution.

The Theoretical Framework of Comparative Scripture

To engage in a high-level analysis of the Bible and the Qur'an, one must first establish the **theoretical framework** of revelation. In Christian theology, the Bible is often viewed through the lens of **divine inspiration**, where human authors, guided by the Holy Spirit, produced texts that are both fully human and fully divine in origin. Conversely, Islamic theology posits a **dictation model** (Wahy), where the Qur'an is the uncreated, literal word of God (Allah) revealed in Classical Arabic to the Prophet Muhammad via the Angel Gabriel.

This fundamental difference in the nature of revelation dictates the technical approach to text criticism. Biblical studies often utilize **Higher Criticism** to explore historical contexts, source materials (such as the Q-source in Gospel studies), and textual variants (textual criticism). In contrast, Qur'anic studies focus heavily on **Tajwid** (recitation rules), **Asbab al-Nuzul** (occasions of revelation), and the preservation of the **Uthmanic codex**.

The Role of Dialectic Inquiry

Wickwire's approach utilizes a dialectic method—asking 100 specific, targeted questions to highlight divergent theological paths. This method functions as a **diagnostic tool** for researchers to map the internal logic of each scripture. By applying a binary inquiry system (e.g., "Does the text support X?"), researchers can isolate variables of doctrine that are often obscured by generalist descriptions.

Technical Analysis of Textual Transmission

A critical component of this study involves the **transmission history** of both texts. The Bible consists of 66 (Protestant) to 73 (Catholic) books written over approximately 1,500 years by more than 40 authors. The Qur'an is a single volume, containing 114 Surahs (chapters), revealed over a 23-year period.

Table 1: Comparative Matrix of Scriptural Characteristics

Feature	The Holy Bible	The Glorious Qur'an
Original Languages	Hebrew, Aramaic, Koine Greek	Classical Arabic
Composition Period	~1400 BCE – 100 CE	610 CE – 632 CE
Primary Structure	Testaments, Books, Chapters, Verses	Surahs (Chapters), Ayahs (Verses)
Codification Process	Centuries of Canonization (Council of Nicaea, etc.)	Standardized under Caliph Uthman (within 20 years of Muhammad's death)
Central Narrative	Redemption through Christ	Submission to the Oneness of God (Tawhid)

Core Mechanics of the '100 Questions' Methodology

The **100 Questions** framework acts as a technical workflow for evaluating scriptural consistency. This methodology can be broken down into five primary analytical modules:

- Theology Proper: Questions concerning the nature of God (Monotheism vs. Trinitarianism).
- Christology: The nature, role, and crucifixion of Jesus (Isa al-Masih).
- Soteriology: The mechanics of salvation (Grace through faith vs. Faith and works).
- Pneumatology: The identity and function of the Holy Spirit.
- Eschatology: The technical sequence of end-times events and judgment.

Case Study: The Nature of Jesus (Christology)

One of the most technically complex areas of comparative study is the role of Jesus. In the Biblical account, Jesus is the **Logos** (Word) made flesh, the second person of the Trinity, whose death on the cross serves as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin. The Qur'an, specifically in **Surah An-Nisa (4:157)** and **Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:72-75)**, affirms Jesus as a prestigious prophet, a messenger, and the Messiah, born of the Virgin Mary (Maryam), but categorically denies his divinity and his crucifixion.

Mathematical and Algorithmic Parallels in Textual Analysis

Modern technical writers often apply **quantitative linguistic** to these texts. For instance, the frequency of specific keywords across both scriptures reveals thematic priorities. In the Qur'an, the word 'knowledge' ('ilm) and its derivatives appear 854 times, emphasizing an epistemological framework. In the Bible, the concept of 'covenant' (berit/diatheke) appears approximately 300 times, emphasizing a legal/relational framework.

Comparative Distribution of Biblical Figures

It is a technical misconception that the Qur'an is entirely independent of Biblical narratives. Analysis shows a significant **narrative overlap**, though the theological interpretation of these narratives differs.

Figure	Biblical Role	Qur'anic Role
Abraham (Ibrahim)	Father of many nations; Covenant holder.	Hanif (Pure Monotheist); Builder of the Kaaba.
Moses (Musa)	Lawgiver; Leader of the Exodus.	The most mentioned prophet; a model for Muhammad.
Joseph (Yusuf)	Provider in Egypt; Dream interpreter.	The "Best of Stories" (Surah 12); Example of chastity.
Mary (Maryam)	Theotokos (God-bearer).	The only woman named in the Qur'an; a sign for humanity.

Technical Workflow for Comparative Research

For researchers intending to utilize the 100 Questions framework or similar analytical models, the following **step-by-step procedural guide** is recommended:

1. Source Identification: Identify the specific translation or codex being used (e.g., KJV/NIV for the Bible; Sahih International/Pickthall for the Qur'an). Technical accuracy requires referencing the original languages (Hebrew/Greek/Arabic) to avoid translation bias.
2. Thematic Tagging: Categorize the 100 questions into thematic clusters: Legal, Moral, Historical, and Prophetic.
3. Cross-Referencing: Locate the specific verse (Ayah/Verse) in both texts that addresses the question.
4. Linguistic Exegesis: Analyze the root words. For example, the Greek charis (grace) vs. the Arabic rahma (mercy). While seemingly similar, their technical theological applications differ significantly.
5. Contextual Mapping: Apply Hermeneutics to the Bible and Tafsir to the Qur'an to understand the surrounding context of each passage.

Textual Integrity and the Concept of Tahrif

A central technical challenge in comparative studies is the Islamic concept of **Tahrif** (corruption). Many Islamic scholars, following certain interpretations of the Qur'an, suggest that the previous scriptures (Torah and Gospel) were altered over time. Conversely, Biblical scholars point to the thousands of **extant manuscripts** (such as the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Codex Sinaiticus) as evidence of the Bible's textual stability.

This creates a "clash of methodologies." The Biblical scholar uses **Archaeological and Manuscript Evidence**, while the Qur'anic scholar often uses **Internal Scriptural Witness**. To bridge this gap, a technical writer must remain objective, documenting the arguments of each side without declaring a winner in the realm of faith.

Advanced Comparative Metrics: Legalism vs. Antinomianism

In the technical study of religious law (Nomology), the Qur'an and the Bible present different procedural structures. The Qur'an provides a comprehensive **Sharia** (pathway), which includes civil, criminal, and ritual law. The New Testament, however, often focuses on the **fulfillment of the Law** through Christ, moving toward a framework of internal morality rather than external legalism.

Comparison of Dietary and Ritual Laws

Category	Old Testament (Levitical Law)	Qur'anic Law (Halal)	New Testament (Christianity)
Dietary Restrictions	Strict (No pork, shellfish, etc.)	Prohibits pork, alcohol, carrion.	Generally abolished (Acts 10).
Ritual Purity	Complex washing rituals.	Wudu/Ghusl (Ablution).	Spiritual purity of the heart.
Prayer Direction	Toward Jerusalem.	Toward the Kaaba (Makkah).	No specific direction (John 4:21).

Troubleshooting Common Errors in Comparative Analysis

When performing this analysis, researchers often encounter **logic traps** or data inconsistencies. Here are the most common failure modes and their solutions:

- Error: Equivocation. Using the same word to mean two different things (e.g., "Son of God"). Solution: Define terms using the source text's own internal lexicon.
- Error: Anachronism. Applying modern theological definitions to ancient texts. Solution: Use historical-grammatical exegesis to locate the text in its original 1st-century or 7th-century context.
- Error: Selection Bias. Only choosing the 100 questions that favor one text over the other. Solution: Utilize a randomized or comprehensive set of questions that cover the entire breadth of human experience (Life, Death, Suffering, Justice).

Practical Implementation: Using Comparative Data in Dialogue

The practical application of this data is often found in **Interfaith Apologetics** or **Diplomatic Religious Relations**. By understanding the technical "specs" of each faith's primary document, negotiators and leaders can find common ground—such as the shared emphasis on social justice, the sanctity of life, and the importance of prayer—while respecting the immutable differences in their core dogmas.

For instance, when discussing the concept of "The Word of God," a technical analysis reveals that for Christians, the Word is a **Person** (Jesus), whereas for Muslims, the Word is a **Book**(The Qur'an). This distinction is vital for avoiding misunderstandings in high-level theological discourse.

The Evolution of Scriptural Technology

As we move into the digital age, the study of the Bible and the Qur'an has transitioned into the realm of **Natural Language Processing (NLP)**. AI models are now being used to cross-reference thousands of commentaries (Tafsir and Biblical Commentaries) to find semantic links. This technical evolution allows for a more granular look at the 100 questions posed by Wickwire, enabling a computer-aided verification of scriptural parallels.

The integration of digital concordances allows researchers to perform **Sentiment Analysis** on specific chapters. For example, comparing the sentiment of the "Sermon on the Mount" with the "Farewell Sermon" of the Prophet Muhammad reveals a shared high-affinity for ethical conduct, yet distinct approaches to the implementation of authority.

Ultimately, the rigorous comparison of the Bible and the Qur'an serves as an essential exercise in intellectual history. Whether through the lens of Wickwire's 100 questions or through the application of modern linguistic

software, the goal remains the same: a clearer, more precise understanding of the texts that shape the world's civilizations. By treating these scriptures with the technical depth they deserve, we move beyond superficialities and into the core of human belief systems, ensuring that the dialogue between these two great traditions is based on factual accuracy and structural integrity.

This technical journey through the pages of the Bible and the Qur'an highlights that while they share a lineage of prophets and a focus on monotheism, their internal architectures are distinct, reflecting unique divine purposes and historical realities. For the technical writer, the task is to document these architectures with precision, providing a roadmap for all who seek to navigate the complex terrain of the Abrahamic faiths.

Baca Juga (Artikel Terkait)

- [The Architecture of the New Covenant: A Technical Analysis of the Spiritual House and Royal Priesthood in 1 Peter 2:4-6](http://www.alghafgolden.com/architecture-new-covenant-spiritual-house-1-peter-2-4-6.pdf)

URL: <http://www.alghafgolden.com/architecture-new-covenant-spiritual-house-1-peter-2-4-6.pdf>

- [Deep Calleth Unto Deep: A Comprehensive Theological and Hermeneutical Analysis of Psalm 42:7 and Spurgeon's Sermon 865](http://www.alghafgolden.com/deep-calleth-unto-deep-theological-analysis-spurgeon-865.pdf)

URL: <http://www.alghafgolden.com/deep-calleth-unto-deep-theological-analysis-spurgeon-865.pdf>

- [Comprehensive Theological Analysis and Exegetical Framework of the Book of Romans: A Technical Review of Commentaries and Core Doctrines](http://www.alghafgolden.com/comprehensive-theological-analysis-book-of-romans-commentaries.pdf)

URL: <http://www.alghafgolden.com/comprehensive-theological-analysis-book-of-romans-commentaries.pdf>

- [The Comprehensive Framework of Christian Spirituality: A Technical Analysis of the Three Dimensions of Life with God](http://www.alghafgolden.com/three-dimensions-christian-spirituality-scorgie-framework.pdf)

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