Is the Bible inspired?

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

→ What does “God-breathed” mean?
→ Where the words inspired or the thoughts?
  → Inspiration = mechanical dictation?

God provided the precise thought to the human author, and he then wrote it down in terms of his own vocabulary, culture, education, and writing style.

→ Inspiration should be described as thought-for-thought rather than word-for-word.
→ The human writers provided God's message in terms of their own personalities and historical circumstances, and yet they transmitted the message fully and exactly as God desired.
→ Are other books or pieces of music "inspired" as the Bible is?
→ NO! The Bible stands alone; it is wholly unique.

→ Because it came from God, it is infallible.
→ It is does NOT change from age to age or culture to culture.
→ Its truths are for all people, for all time.
→ Its truths are not relative; they are absolute.
→ The Bible is a very human book, for we see in it both elegance and lack of polish, both finesse and struggle.
→ It is a divine book as well, for it is the only book in all the world that is truly "God-breathed."

Is the Bible true?

Can we trust what the Bible says?

→ Some teach that the Bible cannot be trusted because it contains statements that re not “true.”

→ the sun revolves around the earth

→ polygamy, slavery, and anti-Semitism are condoned

→ historical data and many statistics are inaccurate

→ pillaging the environment is of minimal concern

→ The issue is factual accuracy:

→ The Bible's intention is not to instruct about scientific data, but rather about God's plan and the salvation of people.

→ The issue is moral intent:

→ Slavery, for example, is never condemned in the Bible. Why not?

→ The moral tone of the Bible is such that slavery would fade away as the standards of love and justice proclaimed by Christ are upheld.

→ The place of women, aliens, prisoners, and the disabled, is elevated in Scripture.
→ God's plan for his people and the universe is clearly spelled out. His love and purpose are unmistakable.
→ Trusting what the Bible says to be true boils down to TWO main points:

The reliability of the underlying documents

→ No other work in the world has even a small percentage of ancient manuscripts, parchments, papyri, and other documents which antedate the printing press.

→ There are over 5,000 manuscripts (original copies) of the Bible in existence!

→ The thousands of underlying documents agree to a surprising extent.

→ It's the miracle of preservation.

It's a matter of faith.

→ No other book changes a person's life like the Bible does.
→ No other book offers comfort like the Bible does.
→ Anyone can believe in the Bible; young or old; educated or simple.
→ “For those who do not believe the Bible, it is not because they are unable to believe, rather they are unwilling to believe.” Bill Bright

How were the books of the Bible chosen?

→ The equation: 39 books in the OT + 27 books in the NT = the CANON of Scripture

→ Canon = inspired and authoritative in matters of faith

→ No church created the canon, but the churches and councils gradually accepted the list of books recognized by believers everywhere as inspired.

→ 367 AD: the church father Athanasius first provided the complete listing of the 66 books belonging to the canon.

→ He distinguished those from other books that were widely circulated and he noted that those 66 books were the ones, and the only ones, universally accepted.

→ The point is that the formation of the canon did not come all at once like a thunderbolt, but was the product of centuries of reflection.

The Old Testament

→ The first five books (sometimes called the Torah or the Pentateuch) were the first to be accepted as canonical some 500 years before Christ.

→ It was probably the work of the prophets Ezra and Nehemiah that restored the Law to general use and fixed it once for all as authoritative for all Hebrews.

→ The prophets' writings were also not brought together in a single form until about 200 BC.

→ The remaining Old Testament books were adopted as canonical even later.

→ The Old Testament list was probably not finally fixed much before the birth of Christ.

→ The Jewish people were widely scattered by this time and they needed to know which books were the authoritative Word of God because so many other writings claiming divine authority were floating around.

The New Testament

→ There is no single date when the NT came together in its present form.

→ In the first and second centuries after Christ, many, many writings and epistles were circulating among the Christians.

→ The need to have a definite list of the inspired Scriptures became apparent as heresies among the churches increased.

→ By the end of the fourth century, it became clear which books were genuine and which were spurious (mixtures of fact and myth).

→ Still...how do we know these 66 are really the inspired book? Why not 65 or 68?

→ These books are the ones that God himself has chosen to preserve for us, and he has not told us exactly why.

→ Here is where faith comes into play.

→ The Bible is essentially a book of faith that will change your life like no other, if you let it.