



BETHEL CHURCH  
INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP CENTRE



# THE DOCTRINE *of the* BIBLE



FEB 2026



# INTRODUCTION

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The word *Bible* comes from the Greek *biblia*, meaning “books” or “a library.” But the Bible is far more than a collection of writings. It is God’s unique self-revelation, designed to connect us to the living God and to shape how we understand reality—*what is true about God, the world, ourselves, and others*. **Scripture provides the framework by which we interpret life and find our place in God’s creation.**

The doctrine of the Bible is foundational to the Christian faith, because everything we believe and practice is shaped by what we understand about Scripture. Studying this doctrine helps us see why the Bible is trustworthy, how it carries authority, and how it can guide and transform our lives.

The Bible itself is a remarkable library of 66 books—39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament—written by around 40 authors over more than a thousand years. These writers came from different walks of life and lived in diverse cultural, historical, and geographical contexts. Yet, despite these differences, their writings form one unified story: God’s partnership with humanity and His plan to rescue and restore the world.

By exploring the doctrine of the Bible, we learn to approach Scripture with trust, submission, and reverence, allowing it to shape our faith, our understanding, and our daily life.



# THE BIBLE AS A DIVINE-HUMAN PARTNERSHIP

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The Bible is the beautiful result of a true partnership between God and human authors. From the very beginning, Scripture shows us that God chooses to work with people through His Spirit—not to bypass or overpower their human role, but to empower them to carry His life and truth into the world.

This unique collaboration is at the heart of how the Bible came to be. *When we look closely at the human side of Scripture, we actually see its divine source more clearly. And as we submit to its divine authority, our own lives are changed.*

The biblical writers didn't write in a trance or lose their senses. Instead, God worked through fully engaged individuals—using their language, culture, and historical settings (Exod. 17:14; Deut. 31:19; Jer. 36). We see this partnership in action as God's words were written down: God Himself wrote first on the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments (Exod. 31:18), and later by Moses and other prophets who recorded His instructions and promises (Deut. 31:9–13; Josh. 24:26; Isa. 30:8).

In the New Testament, Jesus promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them remember His teachings accurately (John 14:26), so that His words would be faithfully preserved. In every case—whether direct speech, written records, or Spirit-guided remembrance—these writings are recognized as the Word of God.

The Apostle Paul summarizes this partnership in **2 Timothy 3:16–17**, calling Scripture “*God-breathed*” (theopneustos):

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.”*

Though human authors used their own words and styles, God was the source behind their message, giving it His authority. That’s why **the Bible is both fully human in its expression and fully divine in its origin**—guiding us into truth, faith, and a life that honours God.



# THE BIBLE AS WISDOM LITERATURE

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Think of the Bible as God's comprehensive wisdom manual for human life. Across its many genres—history, poetry, prophecy, letters—it consistently reveals a God who teaches us how to live. This isn't just about knowing facts; it's about developing a kind of character that sees the world through God's eyes and acts in harmony with His good design. Engaging with Scripture is an invitation to a transformative journey from foolishness to wisdom.

In Scripture, wisdom is intensely practical. It's the "know-how" for navigating relationships, work, suffering, and choices in a way that leads to true flourishing.

The Bible provides this wisdom for every sphere:

- **Work & Skill:** God gifts Bezalel with wisdom for artistic craftsmanship (Exodus 31:1–5).
- **Community & Justice:** Moses teaches God's decrees as the wisdom for a just and thriving society (Deuteronomy 4:5–6).
- **Leadership:** Joshua is filled with a spirit of wisdom for guiding a nation (Deuteronomy 34:9).
- **Daily Choices:** Proverbs offers concrete wisdom for speech, money, friendships, and family, promising that this path is "*a tree of life*" (Proverbs 3:13–18).

Biblical wisdom finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who is the very embodiment of God's wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30). He taught that true wisdom means hearing and obeying His words (Matthew 7:24–27). The apostles continued this theme: James urges us to ask God for wisdom in trials (James 1:5), and Paul explains that Scripture makes us “wise



*for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus”* (2 Timothy 3:15). Thus, **biblical wisdom leads us to trust in Christ and shapes us to live like Him.**

The goal of this wisdom is discernment—the skill to distinguish good from evil, truth from falsehood. This is a lifelong process where God's Word reshapes our desires and moral imagination, forming our character so that our default response aligns with His purposes. **In essence, the Bible is our loving Creator's practical guide for everyday life, showing us how to become fully, truly human.**

# THE BIBLE AS MESSIANIC LITERATURE

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At its heart, the Bible is a unified story of redemption that finds its singular focus and ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah. It is not merely a collection of religious books, but a grand, coherent narrative where every law, story, prophecy, and poem in the Old Testament whispers His name and points toward His coming.

The New Testament is the joyful announcement that the long-awaited promise has arrived in the person of Jesus, and that His life, sacrificial death, victorious resurrection, and the gift of the Holy Spirit have accomplished God's rescue plan for the world.



Jesus Himself opened the eyes of His disciples to this truth.

**Luke 24:44-47**, *“Now he said to them, “These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, **that all things which are written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.**”<sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,<sup>46</sup>and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,<sup>47</sup>and that repentance for*

*forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”*

Therefore, **the Old Testament is a story of promise, and the New Testament is the story of fulfillment.** From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible tells one Christ-centered story. It invites us not just to learn facts, but to recognize God’s faithful character throughout history and to respond to His culmination in Jesus. We are called to see ourselves in this story—to turn from sin, place our faith in the Messiah, and enter into a living relationship with Him through the Spirit. The Bible’s ultimate purpose is to introduce us to, and unite us with, its main character: Jesus, our Savior and King.

## **I Believe because Jesus Believed...**

One of the strongest reasons Christians believe in the authority of the Scriptures is that Jesus Himself believed in them. Our confidence in the Bible is ultimately grounded not in tradition, culture, or personal preference, but in the person of Jesus Christ. If we trust Jesus as Lord and Savior, then it makes sense to take seriously what He trusted and affirmed.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus consistently treated the Scriptures as the true and authoritative Word of God. He quoted from them regularly, not as myths or moral stories, but as real history with real people and real events.

Jesus spoke of Adam and Eve, Noah and the flood, Jonah in the great fish, Moses and the Law, and Abraham as a historical figure—all as part of God’s unfolding plan. For Jesus, these were not symbolic characters but genuine people whose lives carried meaning and truth.

Jesus also affirmed core biblical realities that many struggle with today. He spoke clearly about heaven and hell, acknowledged the existence of the devil and demons. In doing so, Jesus affirmed the Bible’s view of the spiritual world, not as superstition, but as reality.

Most importantly, Jesus viewed the Scriptures as pointing to Himself. He taught that the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings testified about Him and God’s redemptive purpose. If Jesus trusted the Scriptures, lived by them, and staked His mission on this truth, then believers have every reason to do the same.

## THREE IMPORTANT WORDS TO REMEMBER:

**Revelation** is the divine act by which God made known to the biblical authors the truths and realities they could not have discovered on their own.

*2 Peter 1:20-21, "Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, <sup>21</sup>or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God."*

**Inspiration** is the divine work through which God ensured that these revealed truths were faithfully and accurately written down by the biblical authors.

This divine work includes both God's word spoken through human lips as well as God's words in written form.

*Deuteronomy 31:9, "So Moses wrote this entire body of instruction in a book and gave it to the priests, who carried the Ark of the Lord's Covenant, and to the elders of Israel."*

*Luke 1:1-4, "Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us. <sup>2</sup>They used the eyewitness reports circulating among us from the early disciples."*

*<sup>3</sup>Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write an accurate account for you, most honourable Theophilus, <sup>4</sup>so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught."*

**Illumination** is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit by which God gives understanding and insight to those who read His inspired Word, enabling them to grasp its meaning and respond in faith and obedience.

**1 Corinthians 2:14**, *"The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit."*

**Luke 24:45**, *"Then He (Jesus) opened their minds to understand the Scriptures."*

The revelation and inspiration of the Bible are a completed, closed process, encompassing the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments as the final, authoritative Word of God.

Today, God continues to work not by giving new revelation, but through illumination—opening our hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit to understand, trust, and live out what He has already revealed in Scripture.

Jude speaks of *"the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints"* (Jude 3), indicating a completed body of revealed truth. Nothing essential for salvation or faithful living is missing.

# THREE IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is revealed and inspired by God and therefore has distinct characteristics. Understanding these three characteristics helps us trust the Bible and relate to it in the right way.

## 1. Its Authority: The Bible Has the Final Say

**What it means:** Because the Bible is God's Word, it carries God's authority. What it says, God says. It is the supreme rule for our faith, our choices, and our understanding of life. It stands above human opinion, cultural trends, and personal feelings.

**Why it matters:** This moves us from seeing the Bible as a helpful guide to recognizing it as our ultimate authority. It's the anchor that keeps us steady when opinions shift and the compass that points us to the true north.

**In everyday life:**

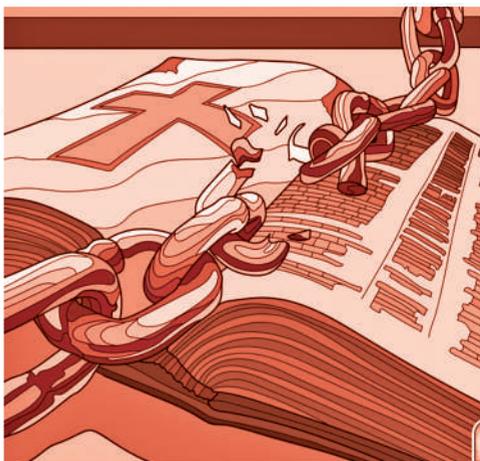
- When making a difficult decision, we ask, *"What does God's Word say?"*
- When a popular idea contradicts Scripture, we trust the Bible.
- We submit our thoughts and habits to its teaching, allowing it to correct us.

So, if God said it, that settles it. Our job is to listen and obey.

## 2. Its Sufficiency: The Bible Is Enough

**What it means:** The Scriptures contain everything God wants us to know for salvation and for living a life that pleases Him. It is complete and fully adequate for our spiritual needs. While God speaks through circumstances, counsel, and creation, the Bible is the perfect standard by which we test everything else.

**Why it matters:** This truth brings incredible peace and protects us. We don't need to search for hidden secrets, new revelations, or special messages to be complete in Christ. God has given us all we need in His Word.



**In everyday life:**

- We find comfort knowing the answers to life's biggest questions are in the Scripture.
- We don't feel pressured by claims of "new prophecies" that seek to add to or alter the gospel already revealed.
- We turn to the Bible first for guidance, not last after other sources have failed.

So, God's Word is our complete spiritual nourishment. You don't have to look for any missing pieces of revelation elsewhere.

### 3. Its Clarity: The Bible Can Be Understood

**What it means:** The central message of the Bible—who God is, how we can be saved, and how to live for Him—is clear and can be understood by any believer who reads it with a humble heart, dependent on the Holy Spirit. While some passages require careful study, the path to salvation and core wisdom is plain.

**Why it matters:** This empowers every believer! You don't need a special degree to understand God's love letter. It encourages us to read the Bible for ourselves with confidence, knowing the Holy Spirit is our Teacher.



## God's Word that Changes Lives

### 1. A Seed in the Heart

The Bible is like a tiny seed planted in the soil of your heart. *"Being born again... by the word of God"* (1 Peter 1:23). At first, it may seem small and quiet, but over time it sprouts life—faith, hope, and love take root, growing in ways you never expected.

### 2. Spiritual Milk

God's Word nourishes. *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"* (1 Peter 2:2). It strengthens us gently, like milk to a baby, helping our souls grow steady and strong, one small sip of truth at a time.

### 3. Fire and Hammer

Sometimes, the Word comes like fire, sometimes like a hammer (Jeremiah 23:29). It doesn't punish—it purifies. It breaks through hardness, refines our motives, and softens hearts that have grown calloused.

### 4. The Sharp Sword

Scripture is sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). It cuts through confusion, illuminates our thoughts, and points us back to God's truth when we've wandered off course.

### 5. The Honest Mirror

Finally, the Bible is a mirror (James 1:23–24). It shows us who we are, not to shame us, but to show us who we can become in Christ—patient, loving, faithful, transformed.

**Read it. Listen to it. Allow it to work.  
Prayerfully.**

## In everyday life:

- We read the Bible expecting to understand, not assuming it's a confusing code.
- We encourage everyone to start reading, assuring them God will speak.
- We study difficult parts patiently, trusting the clear passages to help explain the less clear ones.

So, God wants you to understand His heart. Open His Book with prayerful expectation, and He will give you the light.

A Bible that is **Authoritative** demands our submission.

A Bible that is **Sufficient** earns our complete trust.

A Bible that is **Clear** invites our confident engagement.

## Bible Translation – A Sacred Calling

When you hold a Bible in your hands or open one on your screen, it feels wonderfully simple. Words appear. Meaning flows. God speaks. Yet behind those familiar English sentences lies a long, quiet journey of prayer, patience, and countless careful decisions.

The Bible did not begin in English. Its first words were written in Hebrew and Aramaic, shaped by ancient poets, prophets, shepherds, and kings. The New Testament came in Greek, the language of marketplaces and letters, chosen so the good news could travel far and fast. Before those words reached us, they had to cross centuries, cultures, and continents.

Bible translation is both a science and a sacred calling. Scholars study ancient manuscripts, comparing thousands of copies to ensure accuracy. They weigh every word, asking, What did this mean then? And How can it be clearly understood now?

Some translations follow the original words closely; others focus on making the meaning easy to understand. Every decision—whether to keep the language poetic or plain, ancient or familiar—is made with care and reverence.

Languages don't line up perfectly. A single word may hold layers of meaning. Idioms must be explained, metaphors preserved, theology handled faithfully. Through it all, the goal remains: to let God's voice be heard in a language we can understand. Each English Bible is the fruit of devoted translators and God's desire to speak to His people.

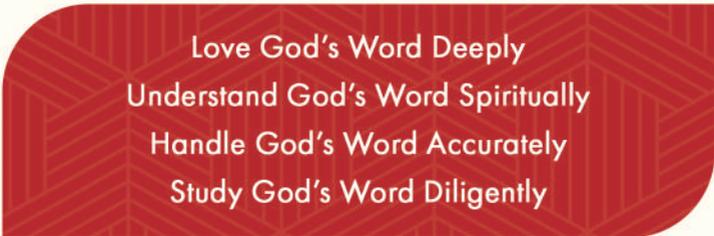
# FOUR ESSENTIAL ATTITUDES FOR APPROACHING SCRIPTURE

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With the revelation and inspiration of Scripture now complete, God is no longer giving new truth to be added to His Word. What remains essential is the **illumination of Scripture**—the work of the Holy Spirit enabling believers to understand, embrace, and apply the truth already given.

Illumination does not produce new revelation; it opens our eyes to grasp the meaning and significance of God’s written Word.

For this illumination to take place effectively, four attitudes are necessary:



Love God’s Word Deeply  
Understand God’s Word Spiritually  
Handle God’s Word Accurately  
Study God’s Word Diligently

## 1. Love God’s Word Deeply

Illumination begins with the posture of the heart. Those who truly desire to understand Scripture must first love it. We do not approach the Bible merely to gain information or to win arguments, but to know God and be formed by Him. A heart that delights in God’s Word is open, humble, and ready to listen.

*Psalms 119:97, “How I love your teachings! I think about them all day long.”*

*Jeremiah 15:16, “When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, Lord God Almighty.”*

**Psalm 1:1–2** describes the blessed person as one who delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on it day and night.

Lord Jesus Himself taught that those who love Him will keep His words (John 14:23), showing that love for Scripture is inseparable from love for God.

## **2. Understand God’s Word Spiritually**

Because Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, it cannot be fully understood through human wisdom alone; it must be interpreted and received through the help of the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 2:12-14**).

As Jesus promised in **John 16:13**, *“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth.”*

Spiritual understanding often comes gradually—step by step—as we read, pray, and reflect, and the Spirit reveals deeper truths over time. God has also provided gifted teachers, preachers, and writers to help us learn and apply His Word, yet we cannot rely on human guidance alone, for the Spirit Himself is our ultimate teacher and source of insight (1 John 2:20).

### 3. Handle God's Word Accurately

Illumination is not only about understanding Scripture spiritually; it also requires careful, accurate handling of God's Word. To rightly interpret and apply the Bible, we must pay attention to its context, literary style, historical background, and the meaning the original authors intended.

Paul instructs Timothy to “*correctly handle the word of truth*” (2 Timothy 2:15), emphasizing both diligence and precision in study. Mishandling Scripture can lead to misunderstanding, misapplication, or even distortion of God's message, which can harm both individuals and the church.

Jesus repeatedly challenged the religious leaders of His day for misusing Scripture to serve their own purposes rather than God's.

### Lectio Divina – The Divine Reading

*Lectio Divina* (pronounced as *Lex-ee-oh Div-ee-nah*) is an ancient Christian practice of praying with the Scripture. It is a slow and thoughtful way of reading the Bible.

It moves beyond study to help you listen for God's personal voice, allowing His Word to reshape your heart and daily life. The essential first step of *Lectio Divina* is inviting the Holy Spirit to help you move from a “*study*” mindset to a listening, prayerful posture.

The practice follows five simple R's:

**Read:** Slowly read a Bible passage once or twice. Quietly notice any word or phrase that stands out to you.

**Reflect:** Gently ponder that word or phrase. Ask why it caught your attention and how it relates to your life right now.

**Respond:** Speak honestly to God about what arose—thanking or questioning, or asking for His help.

**Rest:** Sit quietly in God's presence in prayer. Abide in Him, held in His love and ponder.

**Resolve:** Ask, “*How can I carry this into my day?*” Choose one small, practical way to live out what you've received.

No special expertise is needed—only a willing heart and a few quiet minutes.

In **Matthew 22:29**, He said, “*You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God,*” pointing out that their misunderstanding arose not from ignorance alone, but from allowing human agendas, traditions, and personal biases to distort God’s Word. This serves as a warning for us: accuracy in handling Scripture is inseparable from faithfulness to God.

### Five simple rules to remember

**Rule 1:** *Faith and Holy Spirit are necessary for proper interpretation*

Bible study is not merely an intellectual pursuit—it is a spiritual journey. Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16–17), and understanding it requires God’s illumination. So, approaching the Word with prayer, humility, and trust in God is the first step toward genuine understanding.

**Rule 2:** *The Bible interprets itself*

Scripture is internally consistent and unified. Trust the Word to explain itself, and avoid imposing outside ideas that contradict its message. For example: Isaiah 7:14 speaks of a “*young woman*” bearing a child. Understanding this prophecy is clarified in Matthew 1:22–23, where the fulfillment is revealed in Jesus’ birth.

Learn to do cross-reference studies. *For example*, a verse about forgiveness will point you to several other verses about forgiveness.

**Rule 3:** *Understand Old Testament passages in the light of the New Testament*

The Old Testament is a story that ultimately points to Christ. Laws, prophecies, and narratives foreshadow the coming Messiah. Jesus Himself affirmed this in Luke 24:44–45, showing that the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms testify to Him.

For example, Psalm 22 vividly describes suffering and pierced hands and feet, a passage that gains full meaning in the light of Christ's crucifixion (Matthew 27:35)

**Rule 4:** *Understand unclear passages in the light of clear passages*

Some passages may be difficult, ambiguous, or even mysterious. In these cases, clear Scripture can shed light on what is hard to understand. Isaiah 28:10 emphasizes that God's Word builds understanding progressively—*"line upon line, precept upon precept."*

For example, Revelation 13:18 introduces the number "666," which is cryptic on its own and easily leads to speculation when isolated. However, Daniel 7:25 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4 clearly describe a power that opposes God, providing context for the symbol. Read in light of these clearer passages, 666 points to counterfeit authority and rebellion against God, rather than a mere mysterious number.

**Rule 5:** *Understand words and verses in the light of their context*

Understanding the "Context" is essential in Bible study. Every verse must be read within its literary, historical, and theological surroundings. Taking Scripture out of context leads to misinterpretation, distortion, or misuse (2 Timothy 2:15).

For example: Philippians 4:13, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,"* is often misapplied. Context shows that Paul is speaking about enduring hardships with contentment, not achieving personal ambitions. Understanding the author's intent preserves the integrity of God's message.

#### 4. Study God's Word Diligently

Studying God's Word diligently requires a firm commitment to regularly read and carefully study the Scriptures, not sporadically, but as a devoted habit of life (**Psalm 1:2-3, 119:2**).

The Bereans provide a perfect example of diligent study. **Acts 17:10–11** says: *"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."*

Illumination comes to those who give God's Word priority, approaching it with discipline, perseverance, and a desire to understand its meaning as God has revealed it. This commitment reflects a heart that values Scripture as essential for spiritual growth and guidance.

Yet true diligence does not end with understanding alone. God's Word calls for a response of obedience. As **James 1:22** teaches, *'believers must be doers of the Word and not hearers only,'* allowing Scripture to shape their attitudes, choices, and actions. When God's Word is faithfully studied and actively obeyed, it moves from the page into daily life, and the Spirit brings clarity, transformation, and deeper understanding.

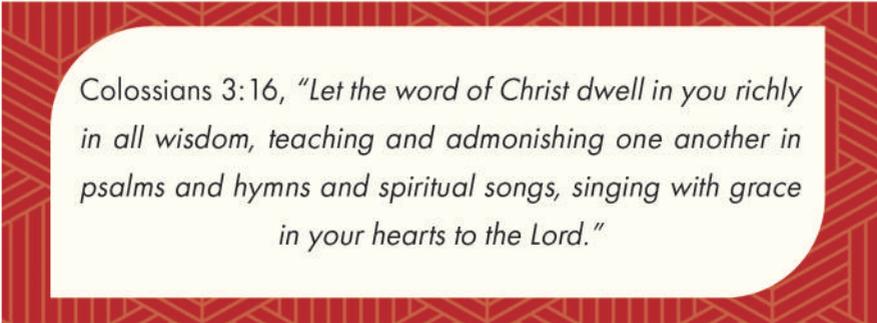
## CONCLUSION

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The doctrine of the Bible reminds us that God has spoken, preserved His Word, and continues to make it known to His people, calling us not only to understand the Scriptures, but to trust, obey, and live by them. This foundation enables us to hear God more clearly, as the written Word of God (Scripture) shapes how we discern His active, living work in our personal lives.

Through Scripture, God provides light to direct us, nourishment to sustain us, and comfort to strengthen us. It is the traveller's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the measure of Christian character. Within its pages, paradise is restored, heaven is opened, and the reality of eternal destinies is revealed. Christ is its central focus, our flourishing is its purpose, and the glory of God is its ultimate aim.

Therefore, God's Word should fill our minds, govern our hearts, and guide our steps. It is to be read slowly, consistently, and prayerfully, with a heart ready to respond in faith and obedience.



*Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."*

## Chapel Service

Every Wednesday | 7pm  
@ Temple of God



## Teens Church

Every 2nd Saturday | 5.30pm  
@ Temple of God



## Meet our Pastors

for Prayer & Spiritual Assistance  
Contact: 080-6753777



*Special events*

## Women's Conference 2026

28th March | 9am @ Bethe AG Church  
Contact: 080-6753777



## Fasting Prayer

31st March - 2nd April | 6pm  
@ Bethe AG Church  
Contact: 080-6753777



# MARCH 2026

## CHURCH EVENTS



**BETHEL AG CHURCH**

**INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP CENTRE**

#67 RING ROAD HEBBAL, BANGALORE 560024

PRAYER LINE: 080-67537777