

Pastor Dolapo Lawal



SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY 5

(Part 1)

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Author: Pastor Dolapo Lawal

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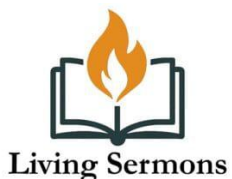
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info.livingsermons@gmail.com

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Foreword

In a time where voices are many and interpretations are multiplied, the Church is called back to a single anchor—**the written Word of God as revealed in Christ Jesus**. The early believers did not build doctrine on imagination, tradition, or sentiment, but on apostolic witness, prophetic continuity, and the revealed counsel of God.

This manuscript carefully lays out why the canon of Scripture stands as it does—not by human preference, but by divine alignment, historical recognition, and doctrinal coherence. It also exposes the danger of writings that, though ancient or intriguing, do not carry the consistent testimony of Christ as revealed in the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, and the Apostolic writings.

More importantly, it calls the believer back to a disciplined way of handling Scripture—where interpretation is not driven by assumption, but by context; not by curiosity, but by truth; not by mystery, but by revelation in Christ.

May this work strengthen your confidence in the Word of God.

May it sharpen your discernment.

And may it deepen your love for Jesus Christ, who is the centre of all Scripture.

For in Him, the Scriptures find their fulfilment, and in His Word, the believer finds life, direction, and truth that endures forever.

— *Wisdom Epsi*

Chief Editor, LivingSermons.com

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Publisher's Note

This book is a faithful transcript of a live sermon delivered by the preacher under the inspiration and unction of the Holy Spirit. Every effort has been made to preserve the preacher's exact words, tone, flow, and spiritual authority, while carefully proofreading and formatting the message into a clear and readable ebook format.

The message you are about to read was originally ministered in a live congregational setting. As such, it carries the weight, urgency, and atmosphere of that sacred gathering. Minor grammatical and structural adjustments have been made solely to enhance readability, without altering the substance, intent, or power of the original delivery.

The live sermon from which this message was transcribed can be accessed here: [Live Video](#)

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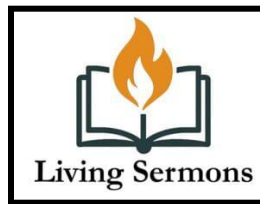
It is our prayer that as you read, the same grace, conviction, clarity, and impartation present in the live service will minister to you afresh.

— *Livingsermons.com*

A Spirit-led Publishing Stewardship

Main Message

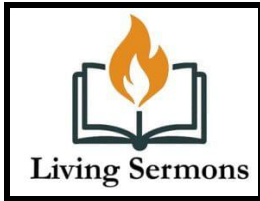
Begins Here:



PREFACE

This teaching continues in the study of **Bibliology**, which is the doctrine of Scripture. The focus is to establish a clear understanding of the nature, authority, clarity, sufficiency, and formation of the Bible as the Word of God.

The aim is not information alone, but formation—so that believers may rightly divide the Word of truth and avoid error.



THE BIBLE IS AUTHORITATIVE

We are still on the key truths about Scripture. We have established that the Bible is inspired, and that it is infallible. Now we move further:

The Bible Speaks with Divine Authority

The Bible is authoritative. What this means is that Scripture speaks with God's own authority. It is not advice—it is the final standard for faith and practice.

Isaiah 40:8 (KJV)

“But the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

Matthew 4:4 (KJV)

“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

The Word of God is not temporary. It is eternal. If God is eternal, then His Word carries eternal authority. His Word does not change with time, culture, or opinion.

The Bible is God's Word—and God's Word stands forever.

The Scripture is also clear.

This means the core teachings of the Bible can be understood by believers through the help of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 119:105 (KJV)

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

The Word of God is not hidden from believers. It is light for direction.

So the question is: what are the core teachings of Scripture? What are the foundational truths of our faith?

They include:

- The Trinity
- The divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ (the hypostatic union)
- The gift of the Holy Spirit
- Salvation by grace through faith
- The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- The miracles of Jesus Christ
- Heaven and hell (as part of eternal realities of Scripture)

These are not optional doctrines. They are foundational truths.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT INTERPRETATION

Bible study must be handled correctly. There is a difference between **exegesis** and **eisegesis**:

- **Exegesis**: Drawing meaning out of the text in its proper context
- **Eisegesis**: Imposing personal ideas into the text

Scripture must interpret Scripture. Context must be respected. Misinterpretation often begins when people read Scripture to confirm what they already believe, rather than to discover what God actually said.

A passage must not be removed from its context and turned into personal interpretation. For example, when Paul speaks of the “thorn in the flesh” in **2 Corinthians 12**, the context reveals it was not a physical weakness or personal addiction, but opposition—messengers of Satan resisting his assignment.

Context is essential. Without it, doctrine becomes distortion. The meaning of Scripture is not outside the Bible—it is within the Bible itself.

THE BIBLE IS SUFFICIENT

This means Scripture contains everything needed for salvation, spiritual growth, and godly living.

2 Timothy 3:15 (KJV)

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Scripture points to salvation—it does not replace the Saviour.

Jesus said:

“Search the scriptures... and they are they which testify of me...” (John 5:39, KJV)

If Scripture alone saved, then those who studied it without Christ would already be saved. But salvation is found in Christ, whom Scripture reveals.

The Word leads us to the Saviour.

WHY SOME BOOKS WERE NOT INCLUDED IN THE BIBLE CANON

Now, we examine why certain writings were not accepted into the biblical canon.

1. Not Written by Apostles or Eyewitnesses

Books were required to have apostolic authority or close eyewitness connection.

If authorship was uncertain, the church did not accept it.

Examples of rejected writings include:

- The Book of Enoch
- The Gospel of Thomas
- The Book of Tobit

2. They Were Written Too Late

Many writings appeared long after the apostolic era.

The apostolic era is generally understood as **30 AD to 100 AD**, ending with the death of the last apostle, John.

Writings outside this period lacked apostolic authority.

Historical Context of Church Eras

- **Apostolic Era (30–100 AD):** Peter, Paul, John and others
- **Apostolic Fathers (100–150 AD):** Disciples of the apostles
- **Ante-Nicene Period (150–325 AD):** Early church development leading to the Council of Nicaea

3. They Did Not Agree with the Rule of Faith

The early church measured writings against the apostolic gospel already received. If a teaching contradicted the established truth of Christ, it was rejected. Scripture is consistent in revealing Christ from Genesis to Revelation.

4. They Were Not Widely Used in the Church

Canonical writings were widely read across churches in different regions. If a book was only known locally or rarely used, it was not accepted as Scripture.

5. Lack of Spiritual Coherence and Witness

The accepted Scriptures consistently pointed to Christ and aligned with the Old Testament revelation.

A key mark of Scripture is this: **Christ is clearly revealed throughout it.** The 66 books of the Bible carry a unified testimony—Jesus Christ is the centre. If Christ cannot be found in Scripture, then the reading is incomplete or misdirected.

The formation of the canon was not random. It was guided by consistency, apostolic authority, doctrinal truth, and spiritual witness. The Bible stands as one unified revelation—centred on Jesus Christ and sufficient for salvation and godly living.

The Word of God is sufficient for salvation, spiritual growth, and godly living. It contains everything needed for a believer's walk with God.

SCRIPTURE POINTS TO SALVATION IN CHRIST

2 Timothy 3:15 (KJV)

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

The Scriptures make one wise unto salvation, but they do not replace the Saviour. They point us to Christ.

Jesus Himself said the Scriptures testify of Him (John 5:39). If Scripture alone saved, then those who studied it without receiving Christ would already be saved. But salvation is found in Christ alone.

6. SOME WERE WRITTEN UNDER FALSE NAMES

Some writings were falsely attributed to apostles or early figures to gain authority. Once the early church discovered this, such writings were rejected.

7. THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON AND JEWISH RECOGNITION

For the Old Testament, the early church received the Hebrew Scriptures recognised by the Jewish community.

Books outside this recognised collection were treated as useful for reading but not as doctrinal authority in many traditions.

DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS

Some Christian traditions include the **deuterocanonical books** as Scripture, while others do not.

These books are recognised in Catholic and most Orthodox traditions, but not included in Protestant Bibles.

Examples include:

- Tobit
- Judith
- Wisdom of Solomon
- 1 and 2 Maccabees

These are sometimes referred to as “second canon” writings.

CASE STUDY: THE BOOK OF THOMAS

Now we examine why the Gospel of Thomas was not accepted into the Bible.

1. WRITTEN TOO LATE

Thomas the Apostle is believed to have died around 72 AD.

However, the Gospel of Thomas is dated between **140–180 AD**.

This places it well outside the apostolic era (30–100 AD), when the accepted New Testament books were written by eyewitnesses or close companions of the apostles.

Because of this, it could not authentically be attributed to Thomas.

2. GNOSTIC INFLUENCE

The text reflects strong **Gnostic influence**—a belief system that taught salvation through secret knowledge rather than faith in Christ.

In this system, Jesus is portrayed mainly as a teacher of hidden wisdom rather than the Saviour who died and rose again.

This directly conflicts with the Gospel message of salvation through the cross.

The New Testament already addresses these distortions.

1 John 4:1–2 (KJV)

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God...”

The early church was already confronting teachings that denied the true humanity of Christ. Some were saying Jesus did not come in the flesh. This is identified as the spirit of error.

1 John 1:1 (KJV)

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes...”

The apostles are affirming that Jesus was physically present—He lived, walked, died, and rose again.

This is the foundation of the Gospel.

3. IT DENIES CORE TRUTHS ABOUT JESUS

The Gospel of Thomas omits the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus entirely.

But the Gospel is clearly defined in Scripture:

1 Corinthians 15:3–4 (KJV)

“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures... He was buried, and... he rose again the third day...”

Any writing that removes the cross removes the Gospel itself.

4. NOT ACCEPTED BY THE EARLY CHURCH

Early church fathers such as Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Origen rejected the Gospel of Thomas as unauthentic.

It was never included in early church readings or recognised canonical lists.

The church identified it as a forgery that used apostolic names falsely.

5. CONTRADICTS THE RULE OF FAITH

The Gospel of Thomas promotes self-knowledge as the path to divine life.

This contradicts the biblical message, which centres on:

- God’s grace
- Christ’s finished work
- Salvation through faith

The Bible calls believers to die to self, not discover salvation within self.

6. LACK OF SCRIPTURAL AND APOSTOLIC ROOTEDNESS

The Gospel of Thomas shows minimal or no contextual use of the Old Testament.

It contains sayings attributed to Jesus but without historical grounding or scriptural continuity.

The New Testament writings consistently reference Scripture with authority and clarity. Phrases like “it is written” are foundational to apostolic teaching—but are absent in such texts.

There is a danger in receiving teachings that are not grounded in Scripture. Not every message carries truth simply because it sounds deep or mystical. The apostolic writings were carefully guarded to preserve the purity of the Gospel. The Gospel is not hidden knowledge—it is the revealed Christ, crucified and risen. The early church did not reject writings to hide truth, but to preserve truth.

The canon of Scripture reflects a unified testimony of Jesus Christ. Any teaching outside this witness must be tested carefully against the Word of God. The Bible remains sufficient, authoritative, and centred on Christ alone.

6. LACK OF OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXTUAL REFERENCES

Another reason some writings were not accepted is that they lack consistent reference to Old Testament Scriptures in context. In the New Testament, writers repeatedly anchor their teachings in:

- The Law
- The Prophets
- The Psalms

This shows continuity—Jesus fulfilling what was written before.

However, writings like the Gospel of Thomas ignore this prophetic thread and replace revelation with mysticism.

Instead of drawing from Moses, Isaiah, or David, it focuses on self-knowledge as the path to life.

It presents statements such as: “He who knows himself will find life.”

But this reflects Greek Gnostic thought, not the Hebrew worldview of sin, covenant, and redemption.

7. LACK OF COVENANT AWARENESS

Another issue is the absence of covenant language.

There is no meaningful reference to:

- Abraham
- Israel
- The temple
- The Law
- The Prophets

These are foundational pillars of Scripture.

The absence of covenant continuity makes such writings disconnected from biblical revelation.

SCRIPTURE IS BUILT ON CONTINUITY

A key principle in understanding Scripture is that it is interconnected.

New Testament writings consistently point back to the Old Testament.

For example:

- Ephesians repeatedly connects to Psalms, Isaiah, Exodus, and Genesis
- 1 John connects to Genesis, Deuteronomy, Psalms, and prophetic writings
- Colossians also reflects deep Old Testament grounding

This demonstrates that the apostles were not writing personal ideas—they were unfolding Scripture.

THE SCRIPTURES INTERPRET SCRIPTURE

The apostles consistently interpreted Scripture with Scripture.

This shows that:

- The Bible is self-interpreting
- Doctrine is not built on opinion
- Revelation is anchored in continuity

The writers were not introducing new religions but revealing Christ in what had already been written.

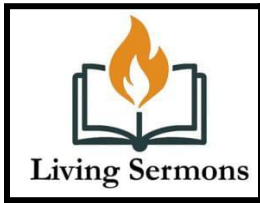
CHRIST IN THE CENTRE OF SCRIPTURE

The Old Testament and New Testament are deeply connected.

Jesus did not come to create a separate religion but to fulfil what was written.

The apostles quoted the Old Testament extensively because they understood that Christ is the fulfilment of Scripture.

This is why interpretation must always remain scripturally grounded.



THE DANGER OF MISINTERPRETATION

When Scripture is removed from context, interpretation becomes personal opinion rather than divine truth. This leads to doctrinal error and distortion. True interpretation requires:

- Context
- Cross-reference
- Consistency with the whole counsel of God

THE ROLE OF REPETITION IN TEACHING

Sound doctrine is built through repetition.

The apostles repeated the same truths consistently across all letters:

- Salvation by grace
- The cross of Christ
- The resurrection
- Holiness and obedience

Truth does not change; it is reinforced.

CASE STUDY: THE BOOK OF ENOCH

Now we examine the Book of Enoch as a case study.

1. WRITTEN TOO LATE AND NOT BY ENOCH

Enoch lived before the flood. However, the Book of Enoch was written much later, likely between **200 BC and 100 BC**.

This makes it impossible to attribute it directly to Enoch. It is classified by scholars as **pseudepigrapha**—writings falsely attributed to ancient figures.

2. IMAGINATION OVER REVELATION

The book contains elaborate descriptions of angels, demons, and heavenly realms. While Genesis briefly references spiritual beings, the Book of Enoch expands these into detailed mythical narratives. This shifts the focus from revelation to imagination.

3. NOT RECOGNISED IN THE JEWISH CANON

The Jewish community never accepted it as Scripture. Neither did Jesus nor the apostles quote it as authoritative Scripture. Its absence from the Hebrew canon is significant.

4. LIMITED AND NON-DOCTRINAL REFERENCE

Although Jude references a statement also found in Enoch, this does not make the entire book Scripture. Paul also quoted Greek poets in Acts 17, but that does not canonise those writings. A reference does not equal endorsement.

5. CONTRADICTION WITH SCRIPTURAL BALANCE

The Book of Enoch contains exaggerated mystical material not grounded in biblical theology. For this reason, it is not suitable for doctrinal instruction. It may exist in historical curiosity, but not as a foundation for faith.

FINAL NOTE ON EXTRA-BIBLICAL TEXTS

Some traditions include additional writings such as:

- Tobit
- Judith
- Wisdom of Solomon
- Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
- Baruch
- 1 and 2 Maccabees

These are recognised in certain Christian traditions but are not included in the Protestant canon.

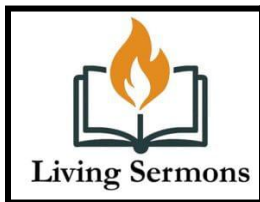
CLOSING STATEMENT

The canon of Scripture is not the result of suppression but of discernment.

It reflects writings that:

- Are apostolic
- Are consistent with truth
- Reveal Christ clearly
- Are widely received by the early church

The Bible stands as a unified revelation of Jesus Christ—complete, sufficient, and authoritative for faith and life.



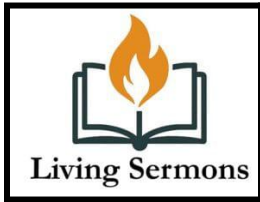
About the Speaker

Pastor Dolapo Lawal is a teacher of God's Word with a clear, practical, and uncompromising voice. His ministry is marked by biblical accuracy, spiritual depth, and direct application to everyday life.

He is committed to raising believers who are grounded in Scripture, mature in character, and intentional about growth. His teaching addresses real issues—faith, relationships, purpose, leadership, and personal responsibility—without exaggeration or sentimentality.

Pastor Dolapo Lawal is known for clarity, accountability, and balance. He challenges listeners to look inward before looking outward, to embrace process over shortcuts, and to pursue transformation rather than appearance.

His desire is simple: that believers grow into stability, wisdom, and Christlike maturity through the uncompromised teaching of God's Word.



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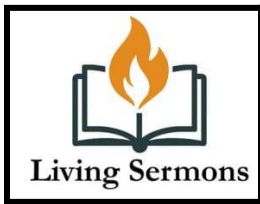
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Our mission is simple: to preserve the wisdom, revelation, and anointing carried in the preached Word and make it accessible in formats that can be studied, shared, and revisited for generations. By turning sermons into high-quality Christian books and eBooks, we extend the life and influence of each message far beyond the pulpit.

At Living Sermons, we believe that the preached Word is living and powerful (Hebrews 4:12). Every sermon carries truth that can instruct, comfort, rebuke, inspire, and transform. Our role is to faithfully capture these words, polish them for clarity and readability, and present them in a way that maintains the preacher’s unique voice and anointing.

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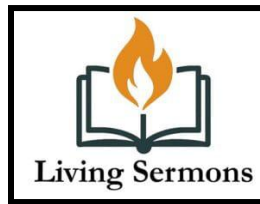
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