

## **Leadership Failure in Ezekiel 22:23-31 and Nigerian Democracy**

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### **Abstract**

When leadership is right in any nation, peace and tranquility always attends the people, and such a society easily obtains unprecedented growth and development. This paper investigates a possible nexus in leadership between the context of the Jews in the sixth century B.C. and that of Nigerian people of the 21st century A.D. The inquiry is with a proposition that the prolonged state of anarchy in Nigerian democracy, primarily since the start of the Fourth Republic in 1999, may result in a serious execution of the divine wrath against the nation if the trend remains unchecked. This end was the fate of the Jews in the sixth century B.C. as a result of years of failure in leadership delivery. The writer applies the grammatical approach to interpret Ezekiel 22:23-31 while he considers five critical sectors of the Nigerian nation to explore her leadership dynamics; namely, human rights, electoral system, economy, transparency in governance, and health sector. He, therefore, observed two key elements characterizing leadership within the two contexts. First, three divisions of leaders mark the presidential system of government in Nigerian democracy: the Executive, Judiciary, and Legislator. This situation is in tandem with Yahweh's exercise of leadership in Israel through three classes of leaders (called human agents, regents, and rulers); namely, the Prophets, Priests, and Kings. Second, situations in Nigeria is tense as bloodshed, political assassination, violations of

human rights, underdevelopment, and poor Public Health Care delivery (PHC) are few of the cumulative effects of leadership failure in the land. This situation is similar to the context of the Jews where all classes of leaders in Judah failed to deliver and drove the nation to a state of anarchy. The paper, therefore, recommends that all political leaders in Nigeria should come up with a significant developmental policy that is capable of addressing the nation's underdevelopment, injustice, human rights abuse, economic paradox, and electoral riggings, among others, to avoid similar execution of the divine justice which came upon Judah and Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Theocracy, and Democracy

## INTRODUCTION

The living standard of any nation is a function of the state of leadership in the land. The concept is a pillar upon which any society should build her people, values, cultural norms, and other developmental projects. Socio-economic, health, judicial, and religious systems also revolve around this social construct. Good leadership is capable of coordinating resources and moving people forward towards the achievement of the set-goal for the holistic health and welfare of the land. Thus, when management is right in any nation, peace and tranquility always attends the people, and such a society easily obtains unprecedented growth and development.

The state of leadership among the Jews of the sixth century B.C. and Nigerian people of the 21st century A.D. is the focus of this paper. Although God governed the Jews directly in a system called "Theocracy," Yahweh their covenant-keeping God usually exercised leadership through human agents like Kings, Prophets, and Priests.<sup>117</sup> Also, despite that "Democracy" operates in secular States like Nigeria, where God's role in governance is not well defined, it is still the general understanding of the populace that leadership belongs to

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<sup>117</sup> Ebenezer Ola Olutosin Adeogun, "The Kingdom of God And Old Testament Theocracy," *OJOT* XII (2007): 63-64.

God and that God executes His plan by the elected people. This stance became part of the Jewish belief that the administration of Yahweh is universal; the revelation emerged in the later development of the concept of the Jewish theocracy.<sup>118</sup>

Therefore, the paper proposes that the prolonged state of anarchy in Nigerian democracy, particularly since 1999, as a result of years of bad leadership by various Democratic leaders may result in a serious execution of the divine wrath against the nation if the trend remains unchecked. This end was the fate of Judah in early sixth centuries B.C. when leaders persistently defiled God's warnings from prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Given this, the writer concisely investigates leadership as a concept and examines its state in Ezekiel 22:23-31. The paper also explores the nature of Nigerian democracy and a possible nexus between the two contexts. The writer applies the grammatical approach to interpret the chosen text.

## **CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP**

A brief understanding of the idea of leadership is relevant to this paper. Given this, the writer first examines the concept from biblical perspectives. Besides, the writer also gives general consideration to the subject from a contemporary viewpoint.

### **A. Biblical Perspectives of Leadership**

One of the principal biblical themes central to the Old Testament is the leadership of Yahweh over covenant people in Israel. According to Walter Brueggemann, the Israelites testified to this that Yahweh readily led them in every circumstance of their individual and national life, including the very life-threatening situations. Yahweh made this move as an expression of His solidarity with them in crisis; Yahweh

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 64.

cared for them in Egypt and in their wilderness journey to the Promised Land.<sup>119</sup>

### **1. Leadership in the Old Testament**

The management of Yahweh is multifaceted. The oneness or universality of His administration is an example. According to Oladejo, it is a profound truth that Yahweh is the God of the universe without any rival for He is the LORD of all. In other words, He is not only the God of Israel but also of the nations. The scholar argues that this idea forms the basis of the concept of monotheism. The scholar, however, indicts the adherents of this religion of reducing the thought to mere principles while still holding to the recognition of other gods. Oladejo, therefore, submits that OT is about Yahweh's efforts to establish the ideology of His universality and oneness in the hearts of His covenant people.<sup>120</sup>

The leadership of Yahweh in missions is relevant to this study. According to Jakada, God is the Originator of missional activities as the first Missionary whose efforts began in the Garden of Eden for man's emancipation from the bondage of sin.<sup>121</sup> The final consummation of this enterprise came to pass in the New Testament through Jesus Christ. Nonetheless, the general process of mission enterprise took some stages; namely, Yahweh set the pace in the Garden and made Israel His servants to reach out to the nations with the message of His love, righteousness, and justice. Besides, Israelites instilled God's supremacy over the gods of the foreign lands by conquering the Canaanites in the power of Yahweh. The last stage was about Yahweh ruling over the nations and proving Himself as the

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<sup>119</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 201.

<sup>120</sup> O.B. Oladejo, *Presentation at the Hermeneutics Class* (M.Div. Class Ogbomoso the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary (NBTS), 2014), n.p.

<sup>121</sup> Yakubu T. Jakada, "Leadership in Missions," *BTSK Insight* 8 (Oct. 2011): 77-78.

God of justice. Yahweh did all this through godly leadership of kings like David and right living of prophets like Jonah.<sup>122</sup>

## 2. Management in the New Testament

It is worthy of note that the NT understanding of this concept has its basis in the OT. The writer, therefore, considers it imperative to explore the exemplary leadership of Christ Jesus. According to Mike Murdock, some secrets of Jesus are handy as principles to follow by any leader who cares for success in any generation. Two of these all-time leadership codes are significant to this paper.

First, Jesus Christ is a problem-solver. Thus, the Leader was successful in life and ministry because He had solutions to the problems of the people. The following are some of His identified keys; namely, eternal life, joy, inner peace, forgiveness, healing and health, and financial freedom. Murdock regards all this as Jesus' product that meets the needs of people of all generations.<sup>123</sup> Second, Jesus had trust in His product for His mechanism is the life that is capable of transforming people's lives.<sup>124</sup>

One other element in Jesus' leadership is servanthood (Mark 10:35-45). John Chukwuneme Nnoje regards this as needed discipleship that is contingent upon self-sacrifice and suffering and culminated into spiritual insight.<sup>125</sup> Also, the model is about service which every leader should carry out in God's strength; it is not about selfishness, self-centeredness, ego, and undue ambition.<sup>126</sup> Again, Emmanuel

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>123</sup> Mike Murdock, *The Leadership Secrets of Jesus* (Benin City: Word of Faith Christian Bookshop, 1996), 11-12.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 15-18.

<sup>125</sup> John Chukwuneme Nnoje, "Jesus' Servant-Leadership Model in Mark 10:35-45 and Its Challenges for Leadership in Africa," *WAATI*, eds., Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 89, 91.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 90.

Oyemomi also argues that the servant-leadership of Jesus is incarnational.<sup>127</sup>

## B. Contemporary Understanding of Leadership

Many scholars have investigated the idea of leadership from different perspectives at this modern time. J. Oswald Sanders argues that “Leadership is influence.”<sup>128</sup> Sanders' position is by some acclaimed varying measures of an innate capability given everyone at birth for leadership should emerge at different levels. The idea of John Maxwell compliments that of Sanders with the argument that an average introvert is potent enough to exert an influence on 10,000 people in a lifetime.<sup>129</sup> Thus, everyone is a potential leader, although at different degrees and levels.

Moreover, the transformational role of a leader is the focus of Samuel Peni Ango. Citing Barna,<sup>130</sup> Ango argues that leadership is motivating and mobilizing another person to achieve a set goal.<sup>131</sup> The power of influence of any leader over the followers in producing the set-goal by stakeholders remains a focus.

Scholars also define leadership within the context of entrepreneurship. According to Simeon F. Kehinde, the concept is the essential factor of production along with three others. Relating this to the administrative state in Africa, Kehinde argues that the continent is right in all the other three areas. However, there is incompetency in leadership which

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<sup>127</sup> Emmanuel Oyemomi, “Biblical Model for the Recruitment of Leaders and Its Challenges for Theological Education in Africa,” *WAATI*, eds., Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 251.

<sup>128</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for every Believer* (Geneva: Oasis International Ltd, 1967), 22.

<sup>129</sup> John C. Maxwell, ed., “Born to Lead,” *The Maxwell Leadership Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002) x.

<sup>130</sup> George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership* (California: Regal books, 1997), 21.

<sup>131</sup> Samuel Peni Ango, “Political Leadership in West Africa,” *WAATI*, eds., Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 30.

should coordinate other factors to achieve the goal.<sup>132</sup> Simon A. Kolawole also has a similar idea and quoted the maxim of Maxwell, “Everything rises and falls with leadership.” Symbolically, Kolawole presents leadership as a “cutting edge” and “defining principle.”<sup>133</sup>

### **LEADERSHIP FAILURE IN EZEKIEL 22:23-31**

This section seeks to investigate leadership state in Judah under the agencies of kings, prophets, and priests during Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry. It also identifies the results of its failure. Given this, the writer first examines Ezekiel’s life and ministry.

#### **A. Ezekiel and His Prophetic Ministry**

Ezekiel’s name in Hebrew word *y<sup>e</sup>chezqe’l* implies “God strengthens” or “God is strong.” Scholars have divergent views on the reality of this name. William Smith asserts that it is an “official title” that the prophet gave himself at the commencement of his ministry.<sup>134</sup> Also, Daniel I. Block posits that the name is an expression of the faith of Ezekiel’s parents in Yahweh, especially at the time of his birth.<sup>135</sup> The name might also be the prophet’s way of expressing his hope in Yahweh possibly at the face of hostility and rejection.<sup>136</sup>

According to George Folarin, Ezekiel was both priest and prophet by calling (1:3); he had this peculiarity in common with both Jeremiah and Zechariah. Also, the prophet was among the Jews taken captive to

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<sup>132</sup> Simeon F. Kehinde, “Contextualizing Deuteronomy 17:14-17 in the African Leadership Situation,” *WAATI*, eds., Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 63.

<sup>133</sup> Simon A. Kolawole, “A Philosophy of Christian Leadership: A Panacea for the African Problem,” *WAATI*, eds., Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 43.

<sup>134</sup> William Smith, “Ezekiel,” *Smith’s Bible Dictionary, Biblical Research Library DVD -2011 Revised Edition Database*, 5

<sup>135</sup> Daniel I. Block, “Ezekiel 11:1-21,” *The New International Commentary on Old Testament*. Ed. R.K. Harrison, Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 9.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

Babylon in 597/596 B.C. His call to prophetic service took place in a God-given vision beside river Chebar (1:4-3:15).<sup>137</sup> Many biblical scholars agree that Ezekiel's commission to this service happened when he was 30 years old. At this age, Ezekiel ought to become a priest (1:1-2).<sup>138</sup> More so, Peter R. Ackroyd advances that the psychology of Prophet Ezekiel determined the harshness and violence of his language as an insensitive person.<sup>139</sup> Regarding the years of his ministry, Peter Niel Lemche argues that Ezekiel prophesied between 593 and 573 B.C.E.<sup>140</sup>

The organization of the Book of Ezekiel is of vital importance to this paper. George Buttrick advances, quoting W.A. Irwin, that an "introductory formula" is one feature that characterises the materials."<sup>141</sup> A vivid example of this principle is in verse 23, "Then the Word of the LORD came to me," which also appears in verses 1 and 17. Again, the appellation *Ben-'adam* ("Son of man") appears in many places of the corpus of which verse 24 is an instance. According to James E. Smith, the designation is a title that reveals the failing nature and general insufficiency of man.<sup>142</sup> The book is a mixture of poetry and prose, prophecy and history, symbolism and literalism, and idealism and realism.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> George O. Folarin, *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy: With appendix on Prophecy in Africa* (Bukuru: African Christian Textbooks (ACTS), 2004), 98.

<sup>138</sup> Tremper Longman III & Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 2006), 354.

<sup>139</sup> Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration: A Study of Hebrew Thought of the Sixth Century B.C.* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), 104.

<sup>140</sup> Niels Peter Lemche, *Historical Dictionary of Ancient Israel: Historical Dictionaries of Ancient Civilizations and Historical Eras*, No. 13 (Lanham, Maryland, and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2004), 125.

<sup>141</sup> George Buttrick, Walter Russell Bowie, Paul Scherer, John Knox, Samuel Terrien, and Nolan B. Harmon, eds, "Ezekiel 11:1-21," *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. vi, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Twelve Prophets (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), 44.

<sup>142</sup> James E. Smith, *An Exegetical Commentary on Ezekiel*, Revised edition (Florida: College Press, 2004), 9

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid*, 17.



## B. Yahweh's Indictments against His Human Agents

In verse 23, the presence of 'el preposition "to, into, towards" prefixed to pronominal suffix 1cs "me" in 'eli ("to me") shows that the subject of the introductory formula, "Then the Word of the LORD came to me," is the Word of the LORD and that Yahweh directed this action to Prophet Ezekiel. By implication, Yahweh has made the prophet the agency of His message (messenger) for being the bearer of the oracle through whom its contents would get to both the leaders and masses. In this regard, Warren W. Wiersbe posits that the employment of the "Introductory Formula" is not less than 50 times in the whole message of the prophet as a symbol of the authority behind the Oracle.<sup>144</sup>

The action of the Word was to reveal the level of corruption in the land of Jerusalem as championed by the leaders. C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch describe dishonesty of this kind as the immediate cause of the fall of Jerusalem.<sup>145</sup> Yahweh also sent the Word to justify His eventual punitive measures levied against the people. The indictments that Yahweh brought against the leaders are indicative of their utter failure in the discharge of their duties. These charges are in three categories; namely, accusations against the prophets, the priest, and the rulers. Aaron Chalmer presents the three classes of leaders as Yahweh's human agents, regents or viceroys.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, "Beholding the Glory of God (Ezek 1)," *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament* © 2001-2004, par. 3.

<sup>145</sup> C.F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, "Ezek 22:23-31," *Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition*, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., par. 1.

<sup>146</sup> Aaron Chalmer, *Exploring the Religion of Ancient Israel: Prophet, priest, sage and people*. (Great Britain: SPCK, 2012), 2

## 1. Charges against the Prophets

The idea of Gerhard Von Rad on the ministry of the prophets in ancient Israel is vital to the paper. Prophecy became well pronounced in ancient Israel during the ministries of Elijah and Elisha and came to its peak at the time of Amos, Hosea and Isaiah.<sup>147</sup> The general crime of the prophets in Jerusalem at the time of Ezekiel was *qeser* (“conspiracy”) in verse 25. Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset, and David Brown posit that the crimes of the prophets are mentioned first in this oracle because the bad influence of all classes of leaders in the land began with them. They conspired together among their rank to prophesy error and resist messages of the genuine servants of God.<sup>148</sup> The use of verb *qal* participle masculine singular absolute *so’eg* (“roaring”) in *so’eg ka’ari* (“roaring lion”) depicts a nature of brutality that marked them. The following habits in verse 25 are expressions of this character: “tearing their prey,” “devouring human life,” and “taking wealth and precious things” that belonged to the people. Also, “they caused many to become widows.”

Furthermore, two other practices express the conspiracy of the prophets in verse 28. The simple sentence *tachu lahem taphel* (“they have painted tasteless emptiness for them”) brings the first one to the fore while the second is in the subordinate clause *chozim sav’e’ v’e’qosmim lahem kazabho* (“seeing nothing and divining falsehood”). Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown regard both crimes as the false assurances the prophets were flattering about telling the people not to submit to Babylon<sup>149</sup> when Yahweh did not send them. The prophets, therefore, failed in their leadership role.

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<sup>147</sup> Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel’s Prophetic Traditions*, Vol. II, Trans., D.M.G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), 6.

<sup>148</sup> Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset & David Brown, “Ezek 22:25,” Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database, Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc., par. 2.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, “Ezek 22:28.”

## 2. Accusations against the Priests

The crimes of the priests come next to the prophets.’ The call of biblical priests into the priesthood in OT was by a divine call. According to Amagh G. Mgbemere-Emukah, they had an office that represented the Israelites before Yahweh through the ordinance of animal sacrifice on behalf of the people for the purification of the land from sin.<sup>150</sup> The priests also burned incense and performed as mediators between Yahweh and His people. Also, they had a duty to serve as generals in battle.<sup>151</sup> The priests had these duties in the Law as their exclusive responsibilities.

By the time of Ezekiel, the occupants of this office had bastardised their calling and failed to perform their duties following the provisions of the law. This situation is evident in the crimes levelled against them in verse 26. First, they violated and mocked God’s law as expressed in the compound sentence: *chomsu thorathi vaychall<sup>lu</sup> qadashay* (“they violated my law and have completely profaned my most holy thing”). Second, they rubbished their oath of office to consecrate themselves to God alone. This situation is evident in: *ben-godesh l<sup>chol</sup> lo’ hibhdilu ubhen<sup>hatame</sup>* (“they have neither distinguished between the sacred and the common nor made themselves abstain from what is unclean”). Third, they waived their hands at many practices that violated provisions made for the Sabbath: *l<sup>tahor</sup> lo’ hodi<sup>u</sup> umishabthothay heylimu <sup>enehem</sup>* (“They have hidden their eyes from acknowledging my Sabbath”). The resultant effect of all this crime is that the name of Yahweh became irrelevant among the people: *va<sup>echal</sup> b<sup>thokam</sup>* (“and I am profaned in their midst”).

Adam Clarke’s comment addresses Yahweh’s expectation from the priest and His apparent disappointment in them. Their lips were to

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<sup>150</sup> Amagh G. Mgbemere-Emukah, “A Theological Appraisal of Leadership Roles of Priests in African Society,” *WAATI*, eds., Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 154.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, 155.

preserve the knowledge of the law and should instruct the people of the same. Instead, they violated the law in both their private life and public manner in the temple.<sup>152</sup> Wiersbe likened the sins of the priests to the contempt of law that characterised the priesthood of Eli.<sup>153</sup>

### 3. Allegations against the Ruling Class

Scholars like Wiersbe translate the plural form of the noun *sareyha* as “princes”<sup>154</sup> while this writer prefers “rulers” going by the renditions of scholars like William L. Holladay as “official, chief, ruler, and leader.”<sup>155</sup> This basis is beside the evidence that leaders of this class were the ruling type as evident in the crimes levied against them. This decision is again evident in the translations of F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs as “chieftain, leader, vassal, noble, official, and underking,”<sup>156</sup> the renditions that suggest that leaders in this category had direct access to the throne.

Just like the prophets, Yahweh charged the rulers with the wildness of character like wolves as expressed in: *sareyha bh<sup>e</sup>qirbah kiz'ebhim torpher tariph* (“The rulers in her midst are like wolves tearing their prey”). They behaved like brute animals tearing the people as prey to satisfy their insatiable appetite to make wealth at all cost. Yahweh projected two of their actions to establish His claim. First, they committed to the practice of *lishphak'dam l<sup>e</sup>'abed n<sup>e</sup>phashoth* (“spilling blood to destroy lives utterly”). Second, they were fond of *l<sup>e</sup>ma'an b<sup>e</sup>tsoa' batsa'* (“cutting them [the people] off to obtain unjust gain”).

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<sup>152</sup> Adam Clarke, “Ezekiel 22:26,” *Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database*. Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc.

<sup>153</sup> Wiersbe, “The End of the City (Ezek 22), par. 14.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Based upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 354.

<sup>156</sup> F. Brown, S. Driver, & C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1906), 979.

The position of Clark regarding members of the ruling class is handy. They “are as bad as her priests; they are rapacious, and grievously oppress the people by unjust impositions to increase their revenues.”<sup>157</sup> Keil and Delitzsch liken these leaders unto “unjust judges” owing to their habit of destroying human lives for unjust gain.<sup>158</sup> This analysis equally shows utter disregard to the Law and complete failure of leadership in Jerusalem by the rulers.

#### **D. Yahweh’s Indictments against the People**

The basic sin of the people in verse 29 as charged by Yahweh is of two folds; namely, *’osheq* (“oppression”) and *gazel* (“robbery”). Thus, the influence of bad leadership in Jerusalem had a multiplying effect on the lives of the people. This expression is a show of complete state of anarchy. They extorted *’ash<sup>e</sup>qu’ä* and exploited *v<sup>e</sup>ghazlu*; they even made the poor and needy oppressed *v<sup>e</sup>’ani v<sup>e</sup>’ebhyon honu*; and extorted the sojourner without justice *v<sup>e</sup>’eth hager ’ashqu b<sup>e</sup>lo’ mishpat*. All this expresses a state of lawlessness as a result of leadership failure in Jerusalem.

According to Keil and Delitzsch, the people referred to in verse 29 are the ordinary people of Jerusalem and Judah. They are different from spiritual and secular rulers.<sup>159</sup> The level of corruption in the land was so overwhelming that there was not a single person to breach the gap in prayers before the LORD on behalf of the people to stop Yahweh from destroying it (v.30). This situation was devastating and consequential.

#### **E. Results of Leadership Failure**

Since Yahweh could not find any person qualified to stand in the gap despite an earnest search, He had no option than to allow His justice

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<sup>157</sup> Clark, “Ezek 22:27.”

<sup>158</sup> Keil & Delitzsch, par. 8.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

count.<sup>160</sup> Three expressions bring this situation to the fore. These judgment terms are contained in verse 31; *va'eshpok* "*alehem*" ("I have poured out my indignation upon them"); *za'mi b'esh 'ebhrathi* ("I have consumed them with the fire of my fury"); and *killithim darkam b'ero'sham* ("I have brought their way upon their head").

These expressions are some of the ways by which Yahweh described His judgment that later came to pass in 586 B.C. According to Olafimihan Solomon Oladejo-Babalola, Yahweh punished both the leaders and followers by handing them over to their enemies in Babylon who took them to exile at the time of Zedekiah.<sup>161</sup>

## **LEADERSHIP TRAGEDY IN NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY**

This section seeks to reveal leadership state in Nigerian democracy most especially since the beginning of the Fourth Republic. Before this time, the nation had experienced a military rule. While the military juntas were still in power, the people also intermittently experienced interrupted democracy. Thus, the writer considers leadership in Nigeria with specific references to some of the nation's sectors.

### **Human Rights**

Nigeria migrated from what Emmanuel O. Ojo called "military autocracy and absolutism" to a democratic system on May 29, 1999. During the former era, the country was under the strong grip of various military juntas for many years since independence in 1960 in a culture called "executive lawlessness and human rights abuses." One element of note that marks this background is a denial of the political, economic, and social rights of the people through gross

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<sup>160</sup> Leon Epszstein, In *Social Justice in the Ancient Near East and the People of the Bible* (London: SCM, 1986), 47.

<sup>161</sup> Olafimihan Solomon Oladejo-Babalola, "Judah's Deportation to Exile and God's Redemptive Love in Ezekiel 11:1-13," *OJOT* Vol. XXII No 2 (2017):44.

mismanagement and looting of the nation's treasury. An example in mind was the "annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election" by General Ibrahim Babangida. Also, Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth for gross violations of human rights in 1995.<sup>162</sup>

Furthermore, despite that democracy stands in opposition to almost all tenets of military rule, specific mechanisms of a rule of this kind remain in the system in Nigeria which encourages manipulations of human rights in the land. Nigerian constitution is the first. Although it contains a list of various provisions of the people's rights: such as a right to life; the dignity of human person; and freedom of thought, conscience and religion; the process of making constitution remains too elitist and imposing on the civil society till date. Because of this, the rights of individuals and groups are elusive most of the time.<sup>163</sup> Another loophole is a violation of the provision of separation of powers that marks the presidential system of government amidst the executive, judiciary, and legislative arms of government.<sup>164</sup> One benefit that this provision makes available is a fair hearing in the court of law as it is a common saying that judiciary is the hope of the common man.

## **2. Electoral System**

When democracy is liberal, people give adequate credence to elections as the best option by which they change government periodically. Also, liberal democracy enhances accountability, makes participation available, and provides power to the people. According to Nwokeke P. Osinakachukwu and Jayum A. Jawan, "Elections are the best means to make the sovereign power of the masses known." Elections are, therefore, regarded as the foundation of democracy.

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<sup>162</sup> Emmanuel O. Ojo, "Human Rights and Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria (1999 - 2003)." *J. Soc. Sci.* Vol. 13, No. 1 (2006):15.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 20-21.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. 22.

However, these benefits have been missing in Nigeria significantly as a result of election rigging.<sup>165</sup>

Osinakachukwu and Jawan assert that election riggings were evident in the 1964/1965, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003, and 2007 general elections. Bloodshed which usually claims countless lives characterise this culture most of the time. A situation of this kind is exceedingly evident in this Fourth Republic. On the one hand, the perpetrators of political killings are assassins hired by gullible politicians of “do or die politics.” On the other hand, the victims usually include favourite contestants and electorates.<sup>166</sup>

According to these scholars, citing Nwabueze, election rigging involves various manipulations committed with the motive of fraudulently influencing the process in favour of a candidate(s) through any of the following: illegal voting, intimidation, bribery, and any other forms of the use of force on voters. Election rigging also comes in the form of illicit printing of voters’ cards, unlawful possession of ballot boxes, falsification of results, and under-age voting. Illegal thumb-printing of ballot papers; refusal to supply election materials to certain places deliberately; victimization of candidates, party agents, and electorates; a sudden change of list of electoral officials; and ballot box-switching and inflation of figures are others.<sup>167</sup>

Another element of note is electoral violence that comes in various forms such as political assassination. As a result of an unhealthy political atmosphere as the nation was preparing for 2007 elections, the Inspector General of Police of the time, Sunday Ehindero, sensitized the National Assembly of “alarming security situation” in the nation. The I.G. alleged that there was a “big threat of

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<sup>165</sup> Nwokeke P Osinakachukwu and Jayum A. Jawan, “The Electoral Process and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria,” *Journal of Politics and Law* Vol. 4, No. 2 (September 2011): 128.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 129-131.



proliferation of arms and ammunitions.” In this case, politicians were carrying arms to campaign grounds; students were using weapons, and armed robbers had more powerful weaponry than before. The Police Chief also alerted the Assembly of rampant cultism in higher institutions, leading to an increase in militant robbery attacks and political assassins.<sup>168</sup>

The reality of the I.G’s alert struck the nation later that year. The spray of death hit two of the gubernatorial candidates of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) in two of the Southwestern States within three weeks (July–August). One of these victims was Funsho Williams of Lagos State. What always calls for worry in all these situations is the weak system of the rule of law to bring the assailants to book. Many others suffered the same fate including Chief Bola Ige, Harry Marshall of Rivers State, Alfred Dikibo, and Andrew Agom, among others. Bola Ige was a former Nigeria’s Justice Minister and Attorney General of the Federation.

Asides, there was a repeat of political killings of this magnitude in many of the other national elections. This writer gives a particular reference to the Presidential election of Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2019 that brought President Muhammadu Buhari to the office for the second term. Akasike Chukwudi, Eric Dumo and Sampson Itode of the Punch Newspaper reported that no fewer than nine people, including a soldier, were killed in a shootout between soldiers and political thugs in Abonnema, Akoku-Toru Local Government Area of Rivers State.<sup>169</sup> Also, not less than two people died while three others sustained severe injuries on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019, the eve of the elections’ day. According to Edward Nnachi, the incident took place at the Amagu Ward 1, Ikwo LGA of Ebonyi State. The root cause of

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<sup>168</sup> Adeolu Durotoye, “Political Assassination and Nigeria’s 4<sup>th</sup> Republic: 1999-2007,” *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* Vol. 3, No. 11 (July 2014):235.

<sup>169</sup> Chukwudi Akasike, Eric Dumo and Sampson Itode, “Nine Killed in Rivers as army, police confirm soldier’s death,” *Punch Newspaper*, February 24, 2019.

this heinous act was “partisan politics and interest relating to the general elections held on the said date.”<sup>170</sup>

### 3. Economy

Since the inception of democracy in Nigeria, politics has been the driving force behind the nation’s economy. In other words, the political principles of the ruling party have been the leading player of the economy in the hand of the government of the day. The sorry state of the nation’s democracy, therefore, reflects in her economic standing. The truth of the matter is that Nigeria remains underdeveloped despite her unquantifiable quantum of natural deposits.

Nigeria’s 159th position in the Harvard Kennedy School ranking of 182 nations on the scale of underdevelopment, despite the rise in the prices of her mineral resources (like crude oil) in the international market, is relevant in this case.<sup>171</sup> This situation is a severe global embarrassment to Nigeria. The saying, “The goal is to achieve the prosperous record of a Norway rather than the disappointment of Nigeria” is also handy.<sup>172</sup>

### 4. Transparency in Governance

Transparency of any nation’s governance is a function of her level of accountability and the rule of law. In the 2017 edition of the annual global corruption rating conducted by the Transparency International (TI) released on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018, Nigeria obtained 148th out of 180 nations. According to the editor, the performance is

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<sup>170</sup> Edward Nnachi, “2019 election: Two killed, three severely injured in Ebonyi,” Punch Newspaper, February 25, 2019.

<sup>171</sup> Jeffrey Frankel, “The Natural Resource Curse: A Survey,” A Revised Version of NBER Working Paper No. 15836 in Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard University (Harvard: Harvard Environmental Economics Program). <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/m-rcbg/heap/papers/FrankelHEEPDP21.pdf> (accessed on February 8, 2016), 12.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, 13.

an indication that no meaningful progress is made in the country in her fight against corruption despite the claim by President Buhari.<sup>173</sup>

## 5. Health Sector

The World Health Organization (WHO) assessed Nigeria's Primary Health Care (PHC) performance in 2016. The nation remained underperforming on almost all indicators. This expression was the summary statement of the study. Possible reasons for this include lack of financial access to PHC; lack of infrastructure equipment, drugs and vaccines; and poor performance of health workers.

The scholars argue that two key factors remained the root causes of the challenges; namely, inadequate financing and low government participation.<sup>174</sup> The irony of the scenario is that the nation scored this low two years after her emergence as the "Africa's largest economy."<sup>175</sup> The scholars identified six causes for this menace, two of which are "limited federal government, strong state governments, and constrained LGAs in public financing" and a fragmented governance structure.<sup>176</sup>

## NEXUS BETWEEN THE JEWISH AND NIGERIAN CONTEXTS

In line with the focus of this paper to consider leadership failure in Judah of the sixth century B.C. and democracy in Nigeria, most importantly in the Fourth Republic, the writer observed two key

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<sup>173</sup> Sahara Reporters, ed., "Transparency International Ranks Nigeria 148<sup>th</sup> World's Least Corrupt Country" (New York: Sahara Reporters) *saharareporters.com/2018/02/21/transparency-international-ranks-nigeria-148<sup>th</sup>-worlds-least-corrupt-country* (accessed on February 21, 2018).

<sup>174</sup> Daniel H Kress, Yanfang Su, & Hong Wang, "Assessment of Primary Health Care System Performance in Nigeria: Using the Primary Health Care Performance Indicator Conceptual," *Health Systems & Reform* Vol. 2 Issue 4: Special Issue on the Nigerian Health System (2016):302.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 316.

elements characterising leadership within the two contexts. First, Yahweh exercised leadership in Israel through three classes of leaders; namely, the Prophets, Priests, and Kings. The nation considered these people as Yahweh's agents. Equally, three divisions of leaders mark the presidential system of government in Nigerian democracy: the Executive, Judiciary, and Legislator. Each of these has a unique role to perform as enshrined in the Constitution. More so, they are all expected to work together for the common good of the people just as it was in Jerusalem.

Second, all classes of leaders in Judah failed to deliver and drove the land to a state of anarchy. Instead of allowing the rule of Yahweh to prevail by properly communicating His mind to the people, teaching them the contents of the Law and permitting the rule of law to reign in the land; they conspired against Yahweh by obstructing the Law and resisting His prophets. They lived on the people instead of shepherding them by providing necessary care and guidance. Again, the influence of the leaders significantly took a toll on the masses as they robbed one another and extorted the foreigners amidst them. Situations in Nigeria is tense as bloodshed, political assassination, violations of human rights, underdevelopment, and poor PHC delivery are few of the cumulative effects of leadership failure in the land.

## **CONCLUSION**

By the findings, there is every tendency for the exercise of the divine judgment against Nigeria just as it was in Judah around 586 B.C if this trend persists any further. The imminence of this looming danger in the land is on the premise that Nigeria belongs to God just like the Southern Kingdom of Judah. It is, therefore, expected of all leaders to come up with a significant developmental policy that is capable of addressing the nation's underdevelopment, injustice, human rights abuse, economic paradox, and electoral riggings, among others.

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