Leadership Pitfalls in Ancient Israel and its Challenges for Nigerian Sovereignty Today

Rev. Dr. Olafimihan S. Oladejo-Babalola

Abstract

The spates of corruption, religious intolerance, violations of the sanctity of human life, political rascality, human right abuse and economic woe, among others of these kinds, have bedevilled Nigeria for too long. The writer views these challenges as marks of leadership woes, many of which the nation has in common with ancient Israel. Thus if the Israelites could be punished with the pitfall of breaking into northern and southern Israel in 722 B.C. for violating the Law without any recourse to their extant covenant relationship with Yahweh, there is every possibility for a similar end for Nigeria unless certain steps are taken. The paper employed the salvation history approach of Gerhard von Rad to analyze the pitfall of ancient Israel. With this method, the paper considered the theocratic government of Yahweh in Israel and identified seven underlying factors which did not only lead to the break of the united nation of Israel (David's Dynasty) but also weakened the future existence of the two kingdoms that emerged. Some of the factors are the following: Israel's culture of rebellion to the rule of Yahweh from inception, demolition of the old clan alliance, religious syncretism and infiltrations, loss of charismatic leadership, secularism and unyielding nature of Solomon's heart to the law. The writer also discovered that there are reflections of some of these factors in the Nigerian leadership. These are the violations of the five elements that characterize sovereign nations like Nigeria. If the nation would, therefore, safeguard the imminent pitfall of secession(s), she has to make her Constitution a

people-oriented type that reflects the yearnings and aspirations of the masses, autonomy of her three tiers of government must be respected, and must strengthen the internal democracy of her political parties.

Keywords: Leadership Pitfalls, Challenges, and Nigerian Sovereignty

I.   INTRODUCTION

The pitfall of leadership is the woe of its society. This reality becomes clearer when one considers the state of affairs in ancient Israel while Saul, David and Solomon were kings. This time was the beginning of the monarchy, the United Kingdom of Israel in the theocratic government of Yahweh. Thus God, the Ultimate Leader, ruled over His covenant people through the agencies of kings, priests, and prophets. According to Niels Peter Lemche, Israel had this opportunity by election.[308] Besides, Aaron Chalmer regards various human leaders appointed as Yahweh's agents, regents or viceroys through whom He ruled.[309]

However, the twelve tribes of Israel could not maintain this relationship for long before a major crisis erupted. This situation was the break of David's Empire and the fall of the Kingdom at the end of Solomon's reign (I Kings 12) in 922 BC.[310] The pitfall marked the end of the nation's sovereignty and devastated the unity of the twelve tribes. Ten of them seceded to form the Northern Kingdom; David's dynasty was, therefore, left with two in the south. From then on, the general life of the people never remained the same. The fall of this Kingdom was thus a watershed that broke all vital fabrics of the people's intimacy with Yahweh, leaving them with weak foundations for future existence that led to the exiles of both kingdoms to the

---

[308] 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), 3.

[309] Aaron Chalmer, *Exploring the Religion of Ancient Israel: Prophet, priest, sage and people* (Great Britain: SPCK, 2012), 2.

[310] Frank McConnell, Ed., *The Bible and the Narrative Tradition* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 21.

lands of Assyria and Babylon in 722 B.C. and 586 B.C. respectively.[311]

Similarly, a critical look at the political life of the Nigerian nation does not only bring to the fore the leaderships problem that the people have in common with ancient Israel. It is equally clear that their oneness may soon collapse if the leaders sustain the current spates of the following challenges: rascality of the political class, nepotism of people in governments, religious bigotry, the economic paradox of the nation, impunity of those in the corridor of power, violations of the sanctity of human life by the jihadists and kidnappers, and willful disobedience to the rule of law, among others of this kind.

The thrust of this paper, therefore, is to identify some of the underlying factors leading to the schism among the people of ancient Israel in 922 BC and frequent frictions between the two kingdoms that later emerged. This effort will go a long way in averting the looming national disaster of a possible break of the sovereignty of Nigeria if governments could stem the current tide of the threats. The paper employs the salvation history approach of Gerhard von Rad[312] in its analysis of the people of Yahweh.

II. CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

Critical analysis of the concept of leadership is germane to the understanding of this paper, hence this section. Modern scholarship has given much attention to the concept in recent time. J. Oswald Sanders defines leadership as the influence exerted.[313] Walter C.

---

[311] Olafimihan S. Oladejo-Babalola, "Leadership Failure in Ezekiel 22:23-31and Nigerian Democracy," *Light in a Once-Dark World: Contemporary Issues in Nigerian Christianity*, ed., John W (Jack) Carter, Volume 2 (Hayesville, NC: The American Journal of Biblical Theology, 2020): 107.

[312] Gerhard F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate,* Fourth Ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972, 1991), 115. Salvation history is the kind that relates Israel to God through His actions and Word.

[313] J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every*

Wright also depicts it as a relationship sustained by a leader to influence others in one area of life or another.[314] Also, George Barna presents it as acts of motivating others to arrive at the set goal.[315] In all this, a leader acts as one with influence for the common good of all. In other words, leadership is about influencing others to achieve a goal for the holistic welfare of all.

The concept of leadership is not limited whatsoever but applies to all areas of life. It is relevant in education, politics, and religion. It is also relevant in the economy, social life, culture, and marriage, among others of this kind. In the context of business, Simeon F. Kehinde views leadership as entrepreneurship. According to this scholar, leadership is a factor of production lacking in Africa for which growth and development have always become a mirage with little or nothing to show for her abundant deposits of natural resources.[316] Almost all nations on the continent have this situation in common despite having other factors on the ground. Leadership is thus the most important for any nation to thrive among the comity of nations.

Furthermore, leadership cannot thrive without certain qualities in the life of the leader. The leadership watchword of Hodo, "Vision, accountability and with transparency," brings three of these virtues to the fore.[317] Thus a leader needs to be forthright with a clear sense of direction and integrity. Absence of these three in the democratic leadership in Nigeria has brought about diverse kinds of challenges to the national growth and development which Oladejo-Babalola regards as challenges confronting sustainable development in the nation. A

Believer (Geneva: Oasis International Ltd, 1967), 22.

[314] Walter C. Wright, *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Leadership Service,* Fore. Eugene H. Peterson (Lagos: EDYSYL Publications, 2000), 2.

[315] George Barna. *Leaders on Leadership* (California: Regal books, 1997), 21.

[316] Simeon F. Kehinde, "Contextualizing Deuteronomy 17:14-17 in the African Leadership Situation," eds, Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin, *WAATI,* No. 6 (June 2012): 63.

[317] Torgbi Tepre Hodo, "Traditional Leadership in Ghana," eds., Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin, *WAATI,* No. 6 (June 2012), 9.

few of these difficulties are inequality in the distribution of natural resources, weak governmental framework, mismanagement, 'Business as usual' syndrome, insufficient investment, poor governance, energy challenges, and the challenge of multinational interest.[318]

Moreover, there is a context for every leadership to function. This is expressed by John S. Pobee in his writing on the reality and challenges of leadership within the context of Africa.[319] In other words, the context determines the success or failure of the leader. Still, on the necessity of leadership to any organization, Simon A. Kolawole advances that leadership is the most important factor to consider. He quotes the maxim of Maxwell, "Everything rises and falls with leadership" and likens the concept to images like "the cutting edge" and "a defining principle."[320]

Furthermore, leadership is service. Emiola Nihinlola advances that the concept is not about the position occupied.[321] Also, Oluwaponmile Gedion Adetunji argues that there is a need for cooperation between the leader and the led. Without this, the organizational leadership may lack the necessary focus for lack of harmonious relationship that brings various entities together.[322] Finally, the need for a

---

[318] Oladejo-Babalola, "Gold, Bdellium and Onyx Stone of Havilah in Genesis 2:10-12 and the Challenges to Sustainable Development in Nigeria," eds., Emiola Nihinlola et al, *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology (OJOT)*, Volume XXI No 1 (2016): 96-99.

[319] John S. Pobee, "Socio-Economic Leadership: A Theologian's Perspective*,"* *WAATI*, Ed. Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 14.

[320] Simon A. Kolawole, "A Philosophy of Christian Leadership: A Panacea for the African Problem," *WAATI*, Ed. Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 43. In this piece, Kolawole also argues that leadership philosophy is the basis upon which anybody's leadership rests.

[321] Emiola Nihinlola, "Spiritual Leadership in West Africa." *WAATI*., Ed. Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 22.

[322] Oluwaponmile Gedion Adetunji, *Leadership in Action: A Source Book in Church Administration for Students and Minister* (Ibadan: Baptist Press [Nig] Ltd, 2010) 3.

correspondent relationship as part of gender issues in biblical leadership is the focus of John Enyinnaya.[323] When this element is present, it will be easy to stem the tide of male domination over their female counterparts in any given society.

From the foregoing, society does not experience appreciable growth and development without good leaders who possess the necessary qualities. They exert meaningful influence over their followers for the overall welfare of society. The need for a cordial relationship between the lead and the led is equally imperative. Without this, there cannot be peaceful coexistence in any given society and the dream of achieving progress may be impossible. Leaders also need to motivate their subjects towards achieving the set goal. Whenever any of these constructs are missing, chaotic situations, tensions, conflicts and crises are often the cases. This turn of the event reflects the collapse of the United Kingdom of Israel in the eighth century. Nigerian Leadership is also following this dangerous direction today.

III. LEADERSHIP PITFALL IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

Two main tasks are germane to the understanding of the leadership pitfall in ancient Israel. The theocratic government of Yahweh should be analyzed, and the writer does this from the perspective of the Deuteronomists. Also, a few underlying factors that led to the fall of the Kingdom in the late eighth century need to be identified. The writer pinpoints this basically on the Deuteronomistic History examined. More so, the paper brings to the fore some of the frictions that later ensured between the two kingdoms that finally emerged. The final step became imperative for the establishment of the fundamental proposition that runs beneath the paper that the factors did not only led to the break of David's dynasty but also weakened the emerged nations and devastated their future existence. They made the concerned kingdoms grossly incapable of any meaningful

---

[323] John Enyinnaya, "Biblical and Theological Concerns on Gender Issues in Leadership," eds, Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin, *WAATI,* No. 6 (June 2012), 321.

relationship with Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God of Israel. The final exiles of these two nations attest to this fact. The people of the north had the ugly experience almost 200 years after the fall and Judah had the same about 335 years after the break.

A. The Theocratic Government of Yahweh in Ancient Israel

The theocratic governance of Yahweh is basic to the leadership of Ancient Israel. According to Ebenezer O. Adeogun, Yahweh's rule over creations predated the foundation of the world.[324] This reality makes the system the oldest of all in the world. More so, the success of any king was a function of how much of God's rule was permitted. This situation began right from the beginning of the monarchy. Following this position, Adeogun divided all kings who reigned in the whole of the period into two. The scholar observed that those who permitted Yahweh's rule in the kingdom were usually successful. A vivid example of these kings was David whom Adeogun regards as "Israelites' king *per excellence."* However, those who detested the reign of Yahweh had their rule marked with hardships, crises and failures. A typical example of kings in this category was Ahab. Most northern kings followed this way and editors of the Old Testament tagged them evil.[325]

History of the early monarchy is handy at this juncture. Walter Dietrich categorizes this into three with particular reference to the three kings that ruled the kingdom, namely, Saul, David, and Solomon: the Reception History, Chronicles and Deuteronomistic History.[326] This writer prefers the last of these for its theology identifies some of the factors under investigation. According to

---

[324] Ebenezer Ola Olutosin Adeogun, "The Kingdom of God And Old Testament Theocracy," *OJOT* XII (2007): 68.

[325] Ibid, 70.

[326] Walter Dietrich, *Biblical Encyclopedia (Biblische Enzyklopadie): The Early Monarchy in Israel: The Tenth Century B.C.E*., trans., Joachim Vette, Eds., Leo G. Perdue, Walter Dietrich and Wolfgang Stegemann, Vol. 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 16.

William J. Doorly, the Deuteronomists were a small circle of zealous Levitical priests and prophets in Jerusalem who transcribed Yahweh's spoken words to writing decades before the final destruction of Jerusalem. This was during the reign of King Josiah (640-609 BC). The writers project the writing as Yahweh's revelation of His person and will to His people in a new form. It was on scrolls; the production and promotion of which resulted in a massive reformation of the religious practices of Judah and Jerusalem. The scrolls later became the heart of the Hebrew Bible with three divisions. Its history is called Deuteronomistic History consisting of the historical books of Israel (Joshua – Kings).[327]

The history asserts that Israelites began the transition to the monarchy with great expectation. This transition was marked with three stages: the United Monarchy over the whole of Israel (1 Sam. 9 or 13-I Kings 11) dated ca. 1000-926 B.C; the Divided Monarchy in Israel and Judah (I Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17) dated 926-722 B.C; and Monarchy in Judah alone (2 Kings 18-25) dated 722-586/562 B.C. This paper's focus is the first of these three.[328]

Furthermore, the first king to reign during this period was Saul. He was from the tribe of Benjamin (I Sam 9:1-2). Samuel the Deuteronomistic historian describes him both as God's choice (I Sam. 10:24; 9:16) and people's choice (I Sam. 12:13). His level of disobedience to the Law earned him a negative assessment, especially as a result of the war against the Amalekites. He failed to listen to God's Word and Yahweh rejected him as king (I Sam. 15:26). This necessitated the choice of David as a replacement (I Sam. 16:1-13). Given the criteria for the choice of any king in Israel, as analyzed in Deuteronomy 17:16-17; Saul had only one wife, one high ranking officer and "a small group of mercenaries."[329] Although his kingdom

---

[327] William J. Doorly, *Obsession with Justice: The Story of the Deuteronomists.* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 9-10.

[328] Dietrich, 18.

[329] Ibid, 17.

had humble beginnings as attested in scriptures, God finally rejected him.[330]

However, David fulfilled all of the demands listed in the Deuteronomistic law for kings (Deut. 17:14-20). Kehinde presents these as four conditions for the choice of kings by Yahweh. First, such a king must be chosen by God (verse 15). This requirement portrays Israel as a theocratic people of Yahweh. Second, the individual must not be a foreigner (verse 15).[331] A foreigner in this context is not necessarily a stranger but one who is not morally right before Yahweh; the individual is wicked and dangerous to people.[332] Third, such a person should not thirst for wealth (verse 16). This is reflected in the Hebrew word "susim" which means "horses." The word symbolically expresses "luxury and power" in the context of OT. The horse is also a figure of "military might" and a quest for its possession is forbidden, signifying lack of trust in Yahweh's ability to protect the sovereignty of His people. All this always brought about such leaders' fall. It finally led to a sudden collapse of the entire system.[333] Lastly, Yahweh forbade kings to be lovers of many wives, gold and silver (verse 17). This is another code regulating the conduct of an ideal king.[334] The love of all of these items has a great propensity to lure them into sin, enticing and drifting them away from a harmonious relationship with Yahweh. The language of accumulation employed here is quite different from a legitimate earning of wealth.

David did not fail in all of these requirements. According to Dietrich, he overcame all difficulties with God's help; his adultery scandal with

---

[330] Ibid, 18.

[331] Kehinde, 67.

[332] A.H. Konkel, "*nkr.*" *NIDOTTE,* Vol.3, ed., Willem vanGemerren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 975.

[333] Robert B. Chilsom, "*sus,* " NIDOTTE, Vol. 3, ed., Willem vanGemerren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 253.

[334] Kehinde, 67.

Bathsheba only succeeded to reveal his humanness.[335] God granted him His presence in Jerusalem-the promise of a continual dynasty, and victory over all enemies (2 Sam 5-8). The concluding part of 2 Samuel presents him as a sanctified king despite his shortcomings (2 Sam. 21-24). He also had the opportunity of seeing the beginning of the fulfillment of this dynasty in Solomon (1 Kings 1-2). Thereafter, he died peacefully as an old man whose ruling lasted for forty years after establishing an empire.[336] Dietrich describes all this as an exemplary biography of a great leader.

Lastly, the Deuteronomistic portrait of Solomon is described as a "mixture of light and dark colors." This picture was just like that of Saul.[337] Solomon maintained serious contacts with foreign powers, following the law for kings in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. The historians never described Solomon as God's choice, although he was a son of David; this gave him the right to Davidic dynasty (2 Sam. 7:11-16). He maintained his contacts with the Phoenicians for their natural resources, trade relations, and artisans for the construction of the temple (I Kings 5, 7). Solomon also had a highly promising trans-regional trade (I Kings 9:26-27; 10:28-29) and "internal exchange of wisdom" (I Kings 5:14-10:1-9, 24). His supposed marriage to hundreds of women from the surrounding nations remains in history.[338] This was against the backdrop of the law according to this history.

More so, Solomon's wealth obtained directly from his connections with foreigners is another point of departure from the Law (I Kings 9:27-28; 10:10-12, 22). His foreign trade was worrisome; he traded in horses from Egypt to Syria as well as Asia Minor (I Kings 10:28-29). According to Dietrich, many of these are for the "establishment of a

---

[335] Dietrich, 19.

[336] Ibid., 20.

[337] Ibid., 22.

[338] Ibid.

personal brigade of chariots" (I Kings 10:26; 9:19; 5:6).[339] He did all this to the neglect of Yahweh's command (Deut. 17:16), creating "Pharaoh-like structures within the people of God." This was a kind of weapon that God drowned in the Red Sea to save Israelites from Egypt (Exo. 14:28; 15:21). Solomon's forced labor in the hand of the state was used to achieve the king's large-scale construction projects (I Kings 5:27-32; 9:15-22; 11:28; 12:4). His leadership, therefore, was greatly characterized by "Pharaoh-like elements in contravention to the law for kings (Deut. 17: 14-20).

The accumulation of these leadership flaws, especially those attributed to Solomon, resulted in the break of the dynasty and the fall of the empire (I Kings 12). The effects of the failures were so great that Solomon's few successes like the completion of the temple with careful, single-minded, and generous plans (I Kings 5-8) could not undo them. This establishes the theology of the Deuteronomists that David's dynasty broke into two for Solomon's resistance to Yahweh's leadership in his heart.

B. The Underlying Factors for the Break of David's Dynasty

From the foregoing, it is a fact that David's dynasty fell as a result of the accumulation of factors. This section focuses on identifying some of these factors.

1. **Israel's Resistance to God's Rule**: The first factor identified based on history, leading to the break of United Kingdom, is the resistance of the people of ancient Israel to Yahweh's rule. According to Adeogun, this situation did not just begin but started almost immediately after the settlement in Canaan. The situation only became well pronounced at the time they demanded a king from Samuel.[340] The people's reference to the surrounding nations in their demand only added weight to the detestation they had for

---

[339] Ibid, 23.

[340] Adeogun, 67.

Yahweh's rule. Adeogun regards this period a time of the theocratic monarchy, acceding to God identifying with kings by making Samuel administering the ceremony of crowning. Thus kings ruled as Yahweh's consecrated servants.[341]

2. **Demolition of the Old Clan Alliance:** Transformation of the old clan alliance into a state in Israel was an event that concluded within a short time. This was unlike the conquest. The change took place in the generations of Saul, David and Solomon. According to Gerhard von Rad, the transformation did not essentially alter the religious and cultic life of the people at the inception. At the time of Saul, the state was not exerting any influence on the faith despite that it was an autonomous body with the necessary power. A change in the internal life of the people became noticeable at the time of David through the superior political and military initiative of the king.[342] Rad asserts that the change was incisive for people had to pay taxes and imposts towards the cost of governance in general and administrative apparatus in particular. The situation all the more became pronounced at the time of Solomon for the cost of administration became higher.[343]

One can notice a major difference in the spiritual climate of the era before the commencement of the state and that of the monarchy. Rad advances that the previous era stood on a purely patriarchal level of civilization while that of the Monarchy was with a sense of solidarity. The personal life of the people was, therefore, subsumed into the community life of the state, which von called supra-personal ordinances of the cult and community

---

[341] Ibid, 69.

[342] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions,* trans., D.G. Stalker, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), 36

[343] Ibid.

life. This greatly impacted the spirituality of the people on the negative; a reflection of this was the event at Shiloh.[344]

3. **The New Orders against the Rule of Yahweh:** At the time of Judges, it was apparent that Israel was under the complete leadership and rule of God. According to Rad, the reverse seems the case at the time the nation became a state.[345] The scholar also advances that it was apparent that the state was determining things herself; thereby renouncing Yahweh's sovereignty. This was the case during the reign of Saul; it was also glaring at the time of David whose appointment was based on his political acumen (2 Sam. 5:1-3). More so, David relocated the center of worship from Shiloh to Jerusalem. Rad argues that this was the state exercising her power, instead of God. Nonetheless, the state acted this way by the leading of Yahweh. There are two implications for this action taken, namely, foundation laying for a sanctuary (I Sam. 4-6; II Sam. 6; Psa. 132) and establishment of a dynasty.[346]

4. **Religious Syncretism and Infiltrations:** The nations within the geographical context of Canaan greatly influenced the people and negatively impaired their national life, most importantly their religious affinity with God. The Jewish doctrine of creation was one infiltration in their religious life. Rad argues that Israel lacked a distinctive doctrine of creation. The Canaanite creation narratives influenced the need to have theirs and guided them in forming their ideas as obtained in Genesis 1 and 2. Infiltrations of this kind also resulted in contextualizing Yahweh's worship with the employment of some of the Canaanite terminologies by the prophets. An example of this situation is the use of divinization and polarity of sex between Yahweh and His people: Prophets Ezekiel in chapters 16 and 23 and Hosea in chapters 1-3 depict Yahweh in His covenant relationship with His people as the

---

[344] Ibid.

[345] Ibid, 45-46.

[346] Ibid.

Husband and Israel His wife. Rad claims that this idea evolved from Canaanite cult worship, especially in mythical sexual conceptions.[347]

Similarly, Oladejo-Babalola advances that the influence of Ba'al, the Canaanite god of fertility and rain, predated the settlement of God's people in the Promised Land. The over-towering effects of this god over the Canaanites also influenced the Israelites to act against the provision of the Law continually. These effects included but not limited to the following: naming of geographical locations after Ba'al; worshipping the god alongside Yahweh; and allowing the influence of this kind in the whole of their existence in Canaan, cutting across the periods of the Judges, United Monarchy, Divided Monarchy, and Monarchy of Judah.[348] The scholar advances that when the people found themselves in Canaan where several cults were being venerated, they adjusted their faith and worshipped at different times and rates to meet their political, economic and social needs. These practices were acts of unfaithfulness to Yahweh and a crime punishable by law, leading to the deportations of Israel in 722 B.C. and Judah in 586 B.C. [349]

5. **Loss of Charismatic Leadership:** The offices of the priests, elders, and kings in ancient Israel were separate and did not clash with one another in any way. They occupied different spheres of people's national life. The most radical expression of the conception of the law as God's direct and personal will was found

---

[347] Ibid, 27-28. The sexual function of the deity was part of the Canaanite idea of the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth.

[348] Oladejo-Babalola, "Supremacy of *Baal* over *Mot* in Ugaritic Cycle of Cosmogonic Myths and its Influence on the Old Testament," ed., John W (Jack) Carter, *The Journal of Biblical Theology (JBT)*, Volume 3, No. 2 (April – June, 2020):148-152.

[349] Ibid, 153.

in the preaching of the prophets for their proclamation became something charismatic (Mic. 3:8).[350]

However, another problem began with the extinction of these charismatic leaders owing to the rise of the state which, undoubtedly, was a tremendous loss for Israel. The result of this was the rise of the era of a mechanized army. It was characterized by machinery soldiers and the techniques of the chariot; thereby transformed everything about Israel into the realm of secular. In other words, the main field of Yahweh's activity, His action in history, and protection of Israel were lost to Yahwism.[351]

6. **Secularism:** Old Yahwism derived its vitality from the historic acts of Yahweh. However, with the creation of the state, everything in the realm of history and politics became secularized. The prophetic narratives in I Kings 20 reflect the conditions in the ninth century – comparatively harmonious cooperation between prophecy and military leadership. It was also at this time that the phrase designating the prophets as the "chariots of Israel and its horsemen" came into existence (2 Kings 2:12; 2 Kings 13:14). At this time also, prophecy took a different view of itself as it unmistakably served as opposition to the technical secularization of warfare but advanced Israel's real protection through her prophets' charisma. This was the miracles worked by the prophets.[352] Yahweh raised prophets to warn the people to return to the old cultic tradition as provided by the Law. Rad advances that the basis of warnings of this kind was of twofold; Hosea and Isaiah spoke on old Israel-Covenant tradition while the rest prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel acted on that of Zion-David.[353]

---

[350] Rad, 95.

[351] Ibid, 97-98.

[352] Ibid, 98.

[353] Ibid, 66.

7. Unyielding Nature of Solomon's Heart to the Law: The theology, historical narratives and story or folklore were three materials produced relating to the political separation of ten tribes from David's dynasty upon the death of Solomon, leading to the fall of the United Kingdom. The theology of these documents brings to the fore that there were four main reasons why Yahweh caused the secession.[354]

The first of these factors is the role played by the heart of kings in bringing about the rule of God over Israel.[355] Assessing Solomon in this regard, his many wives turned his heart away from Yahweh. This, therefore, inhibited the rule of Yahweh over the king and his domain of ancient Israel and grossly affected the nation. This situation confirms the idea of Adeogun that the heart is the centre of the theocratic governance of Yahweh: "By virtue of God's kingdom being not limited spatially, we can say that the hearts of all leaders, rulers and kings are part of the non-geographical territories of God where his sovereignty must be given due cognizance."[356]

Moreover, the need for cultic purity is another factor. This forbids foreign worship and practices. Solomon also violated this requirement of the law. The necessity to keep the law was of utmost importance to Yahweh. Doorly tagged this as conditions of the covenant. Solomon also failed to adhere strictly to these requirements as specified in the 12th to 26th chapters of the Book of Deuteronomy which introduces the theology and history of the Deuteronomists. The last of these factors is Yahweh's choice of Jerusalem. Doorly advances that Yahweh retained the territory of Judah for the house of David despite Solomon's many sins.[357]

---

[354] Doorly, 15.

[355] Ibid, 18.

[356] Adeogun, 71.

[357] Doorly, 9

This expresses Yahweh's faithfulness to His unconditional covenant to David.

Most of the factors identified did not lead to the fall of the United Monarchy alone; they also paved the way for the incessant frictions that ensued between Yahweh and the two emerging nations of Israel and Judah. Jeroboam I established two national sanctuaries in the north; one at Bethel and the other at Dan (I Kings 12:26ff). In these places, the king set up two calves attributed to Yahweh's images. Jeroboam did not commit only this crime against Yahweh; he also installed priests arbitrarily against the requirements of the law. According to Doorly, Jeroboam turned far away from Yahweh and became a reference for bad leadership for all northern kings. To say the least, there was a gross inclination to idolatry in the north.[358]

Jerusalem and temple were two starting points for the assessment of the Deuteronomists in Judah and situations were not any different, especially at the time of Manasseh. The people sacrificed to foreign gods, especially the gods of the Ninevites: the moon-god and sun-god, among others. Manasseh set up altars for these gods right in the temple. More so, the king persecuted prophet Isaiah and possibly killed him while he had Isaiah's disciples captured and killed for speaking against his evil practices.[359]

IV. CHALLENGES FOR NIGERIAN SOVEREIGNTY TODAY

Nigerian history began with the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates by the British Government in 1914. She obtained independence on 1st October 1960 and became a Republic three years later in 1963.[360] Before she finally returned to civil government in 1999 with 36 states of the federation and Federal

---

[358] Ibid, 27.

[359] Harold B. Hunting, *Hebrew Life and Times* (New York: Nashville, MCMXXI), 45.

[360] Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), xvi.

Capital Territory (FCT) in Abuja, the nation had experienced years of military rule. Her population is about 180 million people with nothing less than 250 ethnic tribes.[361] Most of this population is from three tribes: the Hausa of the northern Savannas, Yorùbá of the southwest and Igbo of the southeast. Besides, the pastoral Fulani of the Savannas, the Ijaw of the Niger Delta region, the Kanuri of the Lake Chad region, and the Ibibio in Calabar and its environs in the southeast are also of large populations. The Nupe and Tiv of the middle belt also belong to the latter category.[362]

According to Oladejo-Babalola, Nigeria is naturally endowed as the energy giant of Africa; she is first in oil production, second to Algeria in the generation of natural gas, greatest in term of bitumen and lignite deposits, and the best nation with energy export. The discovery of these natural resources, and several others identified, has brought about the nation's economic woes. The economists present this phenomenon as an economic paradox.[363]

Moreover, the leadership of the various empires and regions in the northern and southern parts of Nigeria was indigenous, autonomous and independent before 1903. However, Toyin and Heaton advance that the British forces established their dominance in these regions "at the barrel of a gun" to create three protectorates, namely, the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos, Northern Protectorate, and Southern Protectorate.[364] The amalgamation of both the south and the north in 1914 by Frederick Lugard, the first governor-general, subsequently

---

[361] Saleh Baba and Emile Ouedraogo, "Working Paper of the National Security Strategy Development: Nigeria Case Study," *Africa Center for Strategic Studies* (July 2018), *2019-04-NSSD-Case-Study-Nigeria-EN.pdf*<Accessed on July 9, 2020> 2.

[362] Falola and Heaton, 4.

[363] Oladejo-Babalola, "Gold, Bdellium and Onyx Stone of Havilah," 94-96.

[364] Falola and Heavon, 86.

brought about the British goal of one united nation for economic reason.[365]

After the independence of 1960, Nigeria became sovereign with the necessary power for self-rule. This situation became more vivid in 1963. However, the federated republic maintained the three regions created by the Colonial Master at the beginning. The FCT later moved from Lagos to Abuja in 1991. The Nigerian constitution guarantees three tiers of government with unique responsibilities for each of the constituencies: federal, state and local. The incessant clamor of people for more states led to the emergence of 36 states. The three regions metamorphosed to 12 states in 1967 and later to 19 states in 1979. Within the space of eight years thereafter, the number increased to 21 in 1987. The continual urge for better governance with necessary welfare package for the masses led to the emergence of the total sum of 30 states in 1991 finally to 36 in 1996 beside the FCT in Abuja.[366]

However, an increase in the number of states did not bring about the needed results; things began to fall apart by the day right from inception. In the minds of the citizen who witnessed the events of 1960s, Nigeria was far better during the colonial era compared to what obtained thereafter. This downward trend of events in governance continues to bring about infrastructural decay to date. It becomes more worrisome when one considers the necessary qualities that characterize the unity and diversity of any federation like Nigeria. Sergiusz Bober presents five of these elements; a critical analysis of these brings to the fore that accumulation of the leadership flaws of past years has led to the present cultures of political impunity, human rights abuses, violation of court orders, political thuggery, election violence, murders, and economic woes of the nation, among others of these kinds. By implications, Nigeria is at the threshold of an imminent break, possibly across the three major ethnic divides. This is similar to the situation of the eighth century in ancient Israel.

---

[365] Ibid, 116-117.

[366] Ibid, 8.

222

1. **Autonomous Tiers of Government:** The first of these elements emphasizes the existence of at least two autonomous tiers of government in a federation. Each of these must be responsible for their competences and provisions and this state must be enshrined in the constitution.[367] Almost all 36 states in Nigeria often lose their autonomy to the federal government and the ruling party. The so-called "federal might"[368] always polarize the nation; any state that breaks the ties with Abuja often pays with the welfare of their citizens. More so, the autonomy of the local tier of government is non-existent in Nigeria.

2. **No Unilateral Modification of Constitution:** In any sovereign nation, the competences of a given tier of government cannot be solely modified by another tier and the constitution must guarantee the sanctity of the scope of the autonomy mentioned above. The sanctity of the constitution in Nigeria has often been violated. Till date, the 1979 Constitution formed by the military government remains in use after 20 years of uninterrupted civil rule. Although it has been amended many times, it still does not represent the yearnings of the masses.

3. **Federal Parliament:** There should be the establishment of a federal house of parliament where the representatives of the various units of the federation decide in matters involving the given federation.[369] The legislative process takes place at Senate and House of Representatives in Nigeria in line with this requirement. However, the patriotism of most of the elected officers is towards their political affiliations at the expense of the

---

[367] Sergiusz Bober, "Sovereignty and Multiculturalism/Plurinationalsim in the Indian and Nigerian Federal Systems of Government," *Horyzonty Polityki*, Vol. 7, No. 18 (2016):128.

[368] Charles Ekpo, Agorye Cletus, and Bright Tobi, "Conceptualizing "Federal Might in the Context of Political Security in Nigeria," *Global Scientific Journal*, Vol. 7, Issue 1 (January 2019):

[369] Bober, 129.

nation. Again, the double parliament being practiced in Nigeria is too expensive for the nation.

4. **Functioning Umpire:** There is always a provision for a constitutional court with the necessary capability of demarcating the spheres of competences of the tiers of government. This feature is also available in the Nigerian federal system. However, several factors have made justice to be far from the common man. Examples of these are disobedience to the rule of law, bribery and corruption,[370] and political impunity of people in power.

5. **Cooperation between Tiers of Government**: Bober advances that there is a need for cooperation at least between two tiers of government. This should be facilitated by bodies and procedures.[371] Agencies of this kind are available in Nigeria. Nonetheless, the power of incumbency of the political party and party agenda often inhibit the functionality of this council.

With all this, it is quite obvious that if the current downward trend of governance continues unabated in Nigeria, the emergence of a state of anarchy is possible due to leadership failure in all sectors. Certain forms of military mechanisms that encouraged human rights abuses are still available. According to Emmanuel O. Ojo, the elitist and imposing nature of the Nigerian constitution and various violations of the policy of separation of powers amidst the executive, judiciary, and legislature are two examples.[372] Lack of accountability, the culture of discouraging the participants and mass rigging which mark the electoral system in Nigeria has always been affecting leadership right from 1999.[373] Tension has started building for the next general

---

[370]Uchechuwu Wilson Nwosu, "The Impact of Corruption on the Administration of Justice in Nigeria," *Journal of Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Africa (JGGSDA),* Vol. 4, No 1, (April, 2018):3.

[371] Ibid.

[372] Emmanuel O. Ojo, "Human Rights and Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria (1999 – 2003)." *J. Soc. Sci.* Vol. 13, No. 1 (2006):20-22.

[373] Nwokeke P Osinakachukwu and Jayum A. Jawan, "The Electoral Process and

elections in 2023. This is with particular reference to the governorship elections in both Ondo and Edo States coming up later this year 2020. The "internal wrangling" tearing the All Progressives Congress (APC) party apart in Ondo State ahead of the coming governorship election on 10ᵗʰ October 2020 is a reflection of this situation.[374]

Nigeria has to learn from what happened to the Israelites in 722 B.C. Although her system of governance is a democracy, the nation has a constitution to safeguard lawlessness just as ancient Israel had the law as their term of the covenant with Yahweh. However, if the nation fails to amend her Constitution to be people-oriented, reflecting the yearnings and aspirations of the masses, the sovereignty of Nigeria will continue to remain only on paper and the possibility of national disasters like a break across the three major ethnic divides is high. Also, the autonomy of each of the three tiers of government, namely, federal, state and local governments must be respected by the executive arm of government as demanded by the Constitution. So also, internal democracy within each of the party is equally highly essential and must be strengthened.

CONCLUSION

Everything rises and falls with leadership. Nigeria has almost everything else that could have taken her to enviable heights among the comity of nations. The enormity of her wealth and riches could have been more than what her internal and external challenges could exhaust, not to talk of borrowing, but for her leadership failure. Other black nations would have taken solace in her as the giant of Africa in solving African matters. This situation could have helped Nigeria to maintain her "Big Brother" status not only on the continent of Africa but among the black people within and outside Africa.

Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria," *Journal of Politics and Law* Vol. 4, No. 2 (September 2011): 128.

[374] Oluwaseun Akingboye, "Guber Primary: Consensus Candidacy Tears Ondo APC Factions Apart," TheGuardian, May 17, 2020, 28.

Leadership problems, however, have not allowed growth and development in Nigeria. They have caused the nation many setbacks right from inception. Her culture of bribery and corruption, among others, has brought about infrastructural decay, poverty, high standard of living, rise in the spate of killing, insecurity, election violence, human rights abuse, violation of court orders, political impunity, nepotism, kidnapping, insurgency, Fulani-herders' attack, banditry and economic woe. Agitations for secession are rising by the day, especially from the Biafra of the southeastern region which started on January 12, 1970.[375] Corruption has also dented the national image and affected the integrity of her citizens in the global community. Nigeria has lessons to learn from the Jews at this time, failure of which can lead to the pitfall of splitting like the Jews in 722 B.C.

Bibliography

Adeogun, Ebenezer Ola Olutosin. "The Kingdom of God And Old Testament Theocracy." *OJOT* XII (2007): 59-86.

Adetunji, Oluwaponmile Gedion. *Leadership in Action: A Source Book in Church Administration for Students and Minister*. Ibadan: Baptist Press [Nig] Ltd, 2010.

Akingboye, Oluwaseun. "Guber Primary: Consensus Candidacy Tears Ondo APC Factions Apart." TheGuardian. May 17, 2020.

Baba, Saleh and Emile Ouedraogo. "Working Paper of the National Security Strategy Development: Nigeria Case Study." *Africa Center for Strategic Studies* (July 2018), *2019-04-NSSD-Case-Study-Nigeria-EN.pdf*<Accessed on July 9, 2020>.

Barna, George. *Leaders on Leadership.* California: Regal books, 1997.

Bober, Sergiusz. "Sovereignty and Multiculturalism/Plurinationalsim in the Indian and Nigerian Federal Systems of Government." *Horyzonty Polityki*. Vol. 7. No. 18 (2016):125-144.

Chalmer, Aaron. *Exploring the Religion of Ancient Israel: Prophet, priest, sage and people.* Great Britain: SPCK, 2012.

---

[375] Falola and Heaton, xvi.

Chilsom, Robert B. "*sus.* " NIDOTTE, Vol. 3. Ed., Willem vanGemerren. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

Dietrich, Walter. *Biblical Encyclopedia (Biblische Enzyklopadie): The Early Monarchy in Israel: The Tenth Century B.C.E*. Trans., Joachim Vette. Eds., Leo G. Perdue, Walter Dietrich and Wolfgang Stegemann, Volume 3. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

Doorly, William J. *Obsession with Justice: The Story of the Deuteronomists.* New York: Paulist Press, 1994.

Ekpo, Charles, Agorye Cletus, and Bright Tobi, "Conceptualizing "Federal Might in the Context of Political Security in Nigeria," *Global Scientific Journal*. Vol. 7, Issue 1 (January 2019):981-992.

Enyinnaya, John. "Biblical and Theological Concerns on Gender Issues in Leadership." *WAATI*. Eds, Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012), 320-327.

Falola, Toyin and Matthew M. Heaton. *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Hasel, Gerhard F. *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate.* Fourth Ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972, 1991. Salvation history is the kind that relates Israel to God through His actions and Word.

Hodo, Torgbi Tepre. "Traditional Leadership in Ghana." *West Africa Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI)* Ed. Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 5-9.

Hunting, Harold B. *Hebrew Life and Times.* New York: Nashville, MCMXXI.

Kehinde, Simeon F. "Contextualizing Deuteronomy 17:14-17 in the African Leadership Situation." *West Africa Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI)*. Eds, Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin. No. 6 (June 2012): 63-70.

Kolawole, Simon A. "A Philosophy of Christian Leadership: A Panacea for the African Problem." *WAATI*. Eds. Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 42-51. In this piece, Kolawole also argues that leadership philosophy is the basis upon which anybody's leadership rests.

Konkel, A.H. "*nkr."* NIDOTTE. Vol.3. Ed., Willem vanGemerren. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

Lemche, Niels Peter. *Historical Dictionary of Ancient Israel: Historical Dictionaries of Ancient Civilizations and Historical Eras*, No. 13. Lanham, Maryland, and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2004.

McConnell, Frank, ed. *The Bible and the Narrative Tradition*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Nihinlola, Emiola "Spiritual Leadership in West Africa." *WAATI*. Eds. Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 11-29.

Nwosu, Uchechuwu Wilson. "The Impact of Corruption on the Administration of Justice in Nigeria," *Journal of Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Africa (JGGSDA).* Vol. 4, No 1, (April, 2018):1-.

Ojo, Emmanuel O. "Human Rights and Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria (1999 – 2003)." *J. Soc. Sci.* Vol. 13, No. 1 (2006):15-29.

Oladejo-Babalola, Olafimihan S. "Gold, Bdellium and Onyx Stone of Havilah in Genesis 2:10-12 and the Challenges to Sustainable Development in Nigeria." Eds., Emiola Nihinlola et al. *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology (OJOT)*. Volume XXI No 1 (2016): 86-106.

_____. "Leadership Failure in Ezekiel 22:23-31and Nigerian Democracy." *Light in a Once-Dark World: Contemporary Issues in Nigerian Christianity*. Ed., John W (Jack) Carter. Volume 2. Hayesville, NC: The American Journal of Biblical Theology, 2020: 88-110.

_____. "Supremacy of *Baal* over *Mot* in Ugaritic Cycle of Cosmogonic Myths and its Influence on the Old Testament." Ed., John W (Jack) Carter. *The Journal of Biblical Theology (JBT)*. Volume 3, No. 2 (April – June, 2020):138-154.

Osinakachukwu, Nwokeke P and Jayum A. Jawan. "The Electoral Process and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria." *Journal of Politics and Law* Vol. 4, No. 2 (September 2011): 128-138.

Pobee, John S. "Socio-Economic Leadership: A Theologian's Perspective*." WAATI*. Eds. Emiola Nihinlola, Thomas Oduro, and Deji Ayegboyin No. 6 (June 2012): 10-20.

Rad, Gerhard von. *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions.* Trans., D.G. Stalker. Volume 1. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962.

Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer.* Geneva: Oasis International Ltd, 1967.

Wright, Walter C. *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Leadership Service.* Fore., Eugene H. Peterson. Lagos: EDYSYL Publications, 2000.