

Yahweh’s Indictment on Corrupt Shepherds in Jeremiah 23:1-4 and its Reflections in Political and Religious Structures in Nigeria

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Abstract. Jeremiah 23:1- 4 is considered as one of the cases where Yahweh expressed his displeasure on the leaders he appointed for his People. One of the responsibilities of the leader is justice for all. Yahweh was surprised to see that the leaders that are expected to protect and defend their subjects are the ones scattering and exploiting them. The study, therefore examined the activities of the Shepherds or Leaders in Jeremiah’s time and their effects in ancient Israel, with a view to establishing its reflections in political and religious structures in Nigeria. The researcher observed that, like in the days of Prophet Jeremiah some Political and Religious Leaders in Nigeria are Corrupt. They abuse the power entrusted to them. They feed themselves instead of feeding the flock. They are more concern about their well-being than that of their subjects. They use their influence or power to pervert justice. This has brought the nation to disrepute. Moral decadence and all kinds of vices are the order of the day. Today, Nigeria is believed to be one of the most corrupt nations of the World. There are allegations of corruption traced to some political and religious leaders in Nigeria. To build a virile nation, political and religious leaders in Nigeria are to be exemplary in conduct and make justice and equity their watch word.

Keywords: Yahweh, Political, Religious, Leaders, Corrupt, and Nigeria

1. Introduction

Leaders are appointed by Yahweh among his people for the good order and governance in the society. The primary responsibility of leaders is to uphold justice, fairness, peace, tranquility and anything that will promote harmony in the society. In most societies in the world, some political and spiritual leaders have

not live to expectation. In ancient Israel, kings depended on the Prophets for guidance and supernatural intervention. In fact Prophets and Priests formed part of the administration of the reigning monarch. However, there are Prophets who distant themselves from the monarch of the day. From the text under consideration, Jeremiah was one of such (Jer.23: 1-4). That was why he delivered oracle against them. The study, therefore examined the activities of the Shepherds or Leaders in Jeremiah’s time and their effects in ancient Israel, with a view to establishing its reflections in political and religious structures in Nigeria.

1.2 The Book of Jeremiah in Modern Scholarship

The Prophet Jeremiah was born in 640 BC during the reign of the Judahite king Josiah. Jeremiah came from a priestly family in Anathoth. His father, Hilkiyah is likely to have been a descendant of Abiathar who was retired from priesthood by King Solomon when he ascended the throne (1 Kgs 2: 26-27). Jeremiah was called to the office of a Prophet when he was a teenager around (627BC), in the thirteenth year of Josiah’s reign (Jer. 1: 2). Like Moses, Jeremiah raised objection to his call but Yahweh assured him of his presence (Exod. 3; Jer. 1: 4-10). Jeremiah was a Prophet in Judah at the turn of sixth century BC, whose ministry and life were politically intertwined with expansion of Babylonian kingdom and the capture of Jerusalem in 587 BC. His oracles of judgment and hope of salvation that span over a period of 30-40 years are recorded in the book (VanGemeren,1997: 752-753).

The book of Jeremiah is a collection of a variety of material attributed to Prophet Jeremiah himself. The book is divided into three parts (Chps. 1-25, 26- 45 &

46-52). Our interest in this study is the collection of prophetic oracle against Kings, Prophets and Priests in chapter 23: 1-4 (cf. Brueggemann, 1998: 208). The issue here is not repentance, which is no longer a possibility but inevitability of judgment on the leaders of the people. They were largely blamed for corruption. These leaders were self-centered and had corrupted God's righteous and just kingdom ideals by their own ideals, by corruption of justice and by oppression (Jer 23: 1-2).

Since the twentieth century, studies on the book Jeremiah have been dominated by compositional analysis. The study of the book of Jeremiah centred around two main areas. First, the composition and transmission of the book and second, the prophet himself and his relationship with his contemporaries. On the composition of the book of Jeremiah several works have been produced. Prominent among them was the one by E. W. Nicholson (1971:36), who suggested that both prose sermons and prose narratives in Jeremiah should be attributed to the Deuteronomistic school because of theological similarities and literary considerations. He maintained that the intent of the prose narratives was not to provide a biography of Jeremiah but to present a theological interpretation of the prophetic teaching and ministry of Jeremiah. He argued that a lot of materials must have been added to the actual words of the prophet that makes it difficult to determine the original work of the prophet.

The above view was supported by R. P. Carroll (1981:11) who argued that Jeremiah was not known, except by those who produced the book in his name. According to him, the Jeremiah tradition was constructed out of the poetry of Jeremiah, worked on by many redactional circles especially deuteronomists. He stressed that in the light of the external and internal chaos facing the community, the redactors of Jeremiah held out various visions of hope and restoration of the community. To this end, J. L. Crenshaw (1987: 100-112) asked five questions to give organization to research on Jeremiah: (1) Which texts were written by Jeremiah? (2) Is it possible that the prophet borrowed the speech or diction of another source? (3) Does the book of Jeremiah reflect the prophet's words or those of later group of disciples? (4) Do Jeremiah's confessions reflect the authentic experience of the prophet? (5) How isolated was Jeremiah with respect to other contemporary prophets? After surveying the responses of scholars to these questions, he concluded that, the issues have not been adequately addressed.

In his own contribution, L. Stulman (1986), compared the prose sermons of Jeremiah with Deuteronomistic literature using four criteria: (1) Words/Phrases attested more than once in the Deuteronomistic history; (2) Words/Phrases attested once (3) Words/Phrases present in Deut. 4:44-29:1 but not in the Deuteronomistic history; (4) Words/phrases that are purportedly Deuteronomistic but not present in Deuteronomistic history. He observed that Deuteronomistic language was in MT Jeremiah's prose sermons.

As a corollary to this, A. R. P. Diamond (1987: 189) considered the confessions of Jeremiah in three respects. They are genre, setting and purpose in their relationship to each other in their literary contexts. He analysed each lament with the goal of seeing how these chapters function as a whole. According to him Deuteronomistic redactors positioned the Book of Jeremiah in a way that theodicy of Yahweh's Judgment upon Judah would be clearly seen.

In response to this, J. G. McConville attributed the book of Jeremiah to the prophet himself, not the Deuteronomistic school. He based his reason on the significant differences between Jeremiah and Deuteronomistic words that can be discerned in the write up. He argued that the entire book was the work of one mind. According to him, Deuteronomistic materials are scanty in the book. He attempted to define the way sections of the book relate to each other and to elucidate Jeremiah's contextual meaning. His final chapter explores Jeremiah's fundamental congruity with northern and southern prophecy.

At this juncture, L. Stulman's (1998) work where he presented four theses regarding Jeremiah should be noted. He maintained that the book displayed a discernable literary intention as perceptible from its structure. He argued that Jeremiah contained macro-structural units strategically placed throughout the book. He claimed that Jeremiah's prose sermons are the most important interpretative guides for reading Jeremiah. He concluded that Jeremiah succeeded in sculpting new shapes and fresh possibilities out of the rubble of exile and dislocation.

G. H. Parke – Taylor (2000:51), towed the same line when he probed the extensive occurrence of repeated words, phrases and passages in Jeremiah in both prose and poetry in order to unravel the complicated editorial formation of the book. He stressed that the book contained a large proportion of Deuteronomistic literature.

C. R. Seitz (1989) brought a new dimension into the discussion when he considered the socio-historical analysis of the situation in Judah before and after the exile. He argued that divergent interpretation of the exile accounted for the primary and secondary traditions of Jeremiah as well as the fifty-two chapters (MT) of the book. He pointed out that for a better understanding of the exile, Ezekiel and 2 Kings 24 – 25 must be examined along with the Book of Jeremiah. This was supported by P. J. King (1993) when he provided archaeological background for interpreting Jeremiah. He recognized the difficulties in describing the prophet and diverse aspects of life that informed Jeremiah's prophecy, such as geography, inscriptions, literature, cultic practices, agriculture and customs. This included photos, diagrams, maps, charts and indices.

C. J. Sharp (2003:169) analyzed the conflict after 597 BC between a group in Judah and a competing group in Babylon over cultic and political legitimacy. He demonstrated that both groups used the traditions of Jeremiah's call as a prophet to the nations, the prophetic succession and other motifs to further their own interests. He pointed out the substantial differences between prophetic roles in the Deuteronomistic corpus and in Jeremiah.

At this juncture, it is however important to state that due to the limited scope of this article, this study only focus on the oracle of Prophet Jeremiah in Chapter 23: 1-4 which deals with Yahweh's displeasure on the political and spiritual leaders of his people who compromised divine mandate.

2. Yahweh's Indictment on Corrupt Shepherds in Jeremiah 23:1-4.

This section is an exposition of Jeremiah 23: 1-4. We shall consider it verse by verse.

The Text in Hebrew

הוֹי רֹעִים מְאַבְדִּים וּמְפַצְצִים אֶת־צֹאן מִרְעֵיתִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
 לְכֹן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הַרְעִים הַרְעִים אֶת־עַמִּי אֲנִי
 הַפְצַצְתֶּם אֶת־צֹאנִי וַתַּדְחִינֶם וְלֹא פָקַדְתֶּם אֹתָם הַגְּנִי פָקַד עֲלֵיכֶם
 אֶת־רֹעַ מֵעַל־לֵבְכֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
 וְאֲנִי אֶקְבֹּץ אֶת־שְׂאֵרֵי צֹאנִי מִכָּל־הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר־הִדְחִיתִי אֹתָם
 עִם וְהִשְׁבֹּתִי אֶתְהֵן עַל־גִּוְהֵן וַיִּכְרוּ וַיִּרְבוּ
 וַהֲקַמְתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם רֹעִים וְרָעוּם וְלֹא־יִירָאוּ עוֹד וְלֹא־יִחַתּוּ וְלֹא־יִפְקְדוּ
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
 (Jer 23:1-4 WTT)

The Text in English

^{RSV} **Jeremiah 23:1** "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" says the LORD.

² Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: "You have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD.

³ Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply.

⁴ I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, says the LORD.

(Jer 23:1-4 RSV)

Verse 1:"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" says the LORD.

Yahweh through the Prophet expressed his displeasure to the shepherds on the manner in which they have handled the task entrusted to them. The Prophet begins his oracle in verse 21 with the Hebrew word הוֹי woe! Ah! Ho! Alas! O! Are participle interjection and an expression of lament. It is used in preparatory to a declaration of judgment. The word also expresses dissatisfaction, pain, and surprise. It occurs fifty times in the prophets and once elsewhere. Six usages refer to mourning for the dead (as 1Kings 13:30), and forty involve negative warnings or threats of God's physical chastisement. The term woe is the opposite of blessing. Gleaning from the Bible, God uses the term woe to express his displeasure or disapproval of an action or activity. For instance, Jesus while speaking with the Pharisees declared woe on them as an expression of disapproval of their ministry (Matt. 23: 13-29; Lk. 10: 13). Therefore, since Yahweh was not happy with the Shepherds he pronounced woe on them.

The "shepherds" רֹעֵה on whom Jeremiah pronounced woe were civil and spiritual leaders of Judah (Kings, Prophets and Priests). The Prophets are the mouthpiece of Yahweh. The Priest is considered as one who is set apart to God's service, a prince and a representative of the living God who is the ruler of the people. In ancient Israel, God is seen as the ultimate ruler of the people and human leaders are only his representatives on earth to effect His divine rule (Berekiah, 2009: 131). Hence the Priests and the Prophets are seen as rulers ordained by God for his people. However, the Priests and the Prophets were branded as ungodly people. It should be noted that during the reign of Zedekiah, the court Prophets and Priests exercised inordinate influence on policy because of the weakness of the King. These leaders were guilty of gross dereliction of duty. Through

oppression and shedding of innocent blood, they destroyed and scattered the flock.

The verb פָּרַץ dispersed, scatter appears sixty-four times in the Old Testament, twelve times in the Qal, fifteen times in the Niphal, thirty-seven times in the Hiphil. פָּרַץ is used most often in the prophets, thirty-seven times, (eighteen times in Ezek and ten times in Jer). The word is first used in Scripture to describe the "scattering" of the families of the Canaanites in Gen 10:18. Yahweh went further to say that the wicked Shepherds after scattering the Sheep went ahead to destroy it. The verb נָכַח meaning perish or destroyed is a common word for to die, or, in the case of things, reputation, etc., to pass away. In Piel and Hiphil it is used transitively in the sense of kill or break down (houses, idols, kingdoms).

Yahweh was disappointed in the Shepherds who failed in their duty to provide correct leadership for the people. They also led the nation into idolatry which resulted in Babylonian captivity. The Kings failed to exercise justice and righteousness which resulted in society lacking moral and ethical fibre. The failure of the religious, political and civil leaders of Judah implied that the covenant with Yahweh has been neglected (Diamond, 2003: 575). All of this contributed to the downfall of monarchy, the destruction of the Temple and the Babylonian captivity (Stulman, 2005: 206).

The word Shepherd was used in Ancient Near East and Egypt for Kings and Deities. In Old Testament Abel was a Shepherd (Gen 4:2), the Patriarchs of Israel were shepherds (13: 7-8; 26: 20; 46: 32, 34; 47:3), and David before he became King (1 Sam 17: 34, 40; cf. Exod. 2:17, 19; 1 Sam 21:7; 25:7). The common Ancient near East royal title used for foreign rulers such as the leader of Assyria (Nah. 3:18) in a threatening way (cf. Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 43:12), and Cyrus of Persia (Isa 44:28), who is called by "my shepherd" because he permitted the return of Israel to the Holy Land.

From very ancient antiquity, rulers were described as demonstrating their legitimacy to rule by their ability to "pasture" their people. Hammurabi and many other rulers of ancient western Asia are called "shepherd" or described as "pasturing" their subjects. In the Old Testament, however, it is the Lord who feeds his people and is praised for his mercy in providing for them (Gen 48:15; Psa 23:1; Psa 28:9; Isa 40:11; Hos 4:16 et al). This attribute of God is one of the marks of the offices of prophets, priest, and king. David's claim to the throne is based upon God's command that he feed the people (2Sam 5:2). Failure of the

officers of Israel to feed the people either physical or spiritual nourishment was deemed a severe transgression (Ezek 24:2ff). The Old Testament theological idea of the good shepherd who feeds his flock with God's truth (Jer 3:15 etc.) becomes prominent in the New Testament (Jn 10:11).

Sometimes symbols are used to describe the relationship between God and Man. For instance, in ancient Israel God is called Shepherd. In a society where the main means of subsistence was sheep-farming, a symbol such as that of a shepherd could easily be associated with God. And if God is conceived as a shepherd, then the people are a flock (Ps 23; Isa 40:11; Jer 23:1-4; Ezek 34) (VanGemeren, 1997:1225).

Verse 2: Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: "You have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD.

In this verse we see the judgment of Yahweh on the Shepherds for the negligence of their duties. Yahweh is determined to bring the Shepherd to book. According to Yahweh, the Shepherds נָדְדוּ drove away or banished people from their place of abode or one's resting place. The root נָדַד refers to the action of forcibly driving or pushing something away. In other words, the flock or Judah is now in exile. They left their homes due to the negligence of the Shepherds. Yahweh through the Prophet declared that הַנְּגִי פִקֹּד עַלְיֵכֶם אֶת־רָעָה they will be punished for the evil they have done.

Fundamentally, this message of impending doom and dispersion is grounded in the covenant warnings of Deuteronomy 4: 27; 28: 64). Jeremiah and Ezekiel interpreted the end of the sovereign state of Judah and the scattering of the people as the manifestation of the holy wrath of God, who fulfills these covenant curses because of the nation's disobedience (Jer. 9: 16; 13:24; 18: 17; 30:11; Ezek 11:16; 12:15). The forced deportation of a portion of the population to Babylon after the destruction of Jerusalem and the subsequent fleeing of another group with the Prophet Jeremiah to Egypt (Jer. 43-44) is understood as the consequences of the judgment of Yahweh

Verse 3: Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply.

This verse raised the hope of restoration for Judah. As the scattering of the people was literal so will the re-gathering be. God pledges to assemble his people from the places where he had scattered them. During the great exile this promise is repeatedly recalled by the prophets (e.g. Isa 11:12). This hope they offer the captives is rooted in the sovereignty of God (Isa 40:11). It is Yahweh himself that will re-gather his people from all the nations of the earth. The people would be returned to their own pastures. Yahweh will replace the wicked and faithless shepherds with faithful ones. They would rule in godliness under the ideal King. (Baker & Kohlenberger III, 1994: 1204) The covenant relationship, however, also is the basis for the hope of the re-gathering of the dispersed after the time of Judgment (Deut 30:3). This promise of restoration is expressed in formulaic fashion indicates that Yahweh's scattering of his people is not his final word (Jer 23: 1-2; Ezek 11:17; 20:34, 41; 28:25; 29:13; 34:12-13). Zechariah takes up the shepherd imagery of earlier Prophets. On the one hand, this prophetic book reproves the worthless shepherds who represent the sinful national leadership (Zech 11:8, 15-17). Zechariah also presents another shepherd who is ultimately related to Yahweh. This shepherd will be smitten and the nation, who are the sheep will be scattered (cf. 1 Kgs 22:17= 2 Chron 18: 16) and will suffer greatly. The reference to the shepherd and the sheep in Zech 13:7 were interpreted messianic ally both at Qumran and in the NT (VanGemeren, 1997: 587)

Verse 4: I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, says the LORD.

The theme of scattering as chastisement is directed at Yahweh's own people. Jeremiah and Ezekiel employ pastoral imagery as a stylistic weapon to denounce the wicked leaders of Jerusalem as unprincipled shepherds. They have exploited the flock(nation) and led the people into sin and away from their God; now those who govern are held responsible for bringing Judah to the disastrous point of being scattered among the nations in Judgment (Jer 10: 21;23: 1-2; Ezek 34:5; 21). Because the leadership has so utterly failed as shepherds, Yahweh will remove them and he himself will take up the shepherding tasks (Jer. 23:3-4; Ezek 34: 7-16). Yahweh is the good shepherd, who tends and protects his flock (VanGemeren, 1997:586)

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word (Jer 23: 1-2; Ezek 11:17; 20:34, 41; 28:25; 29:13; 34:12-13). Because the leaders of Israel failed as shepherds, Yahweh will give them trust worthy shepherds (i.e leaders: Jer 3:15; 23:4) after his heart. He himself will look after them as shepherd and appoint one (Ezek 34: 23) messianic shepherd, his future servant David (VanGemeren, 1997:1144).

3. Reflections of Jeremiah 23:1-4 in Political and Religious Structures in Nigeria

Nigeria is renowned today for high levels of corruption. According to Transparency International which ranks countries and territories based on corruption, Nigeria is ranked 148 out of 180. At the same time along other African countries we are also reputed to be notoriously religious (Mbiti, 1969: 1). All over the world, religion in all its various hues and shades is expected to prepare its adherents for this life and the life to come through holy living. It is therefore assumed that church leaders and Christians are people focused on achieving the life after and must be people of impeccable character and integrity but this is not so. Corruption is not only found in the nation but also in the church as well. What is Corruption? Corruption is an ancient Phenomenon and has become a worldwide scourge, ravaging both the developing and the developed world. Etymologically speaking the word Corruption is derived from the Latin word "corruptus" meaning "to break", or an "aberration". In its simplest form, corruption is a term that covers all manners of moral wrong. Corruption is defined as "the abuse or misuse of public office for private gains". Lipset towed this line of thought when he defined corruption as "efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means – private gains at public expense; or a misuse of public power for private benefits" (Lipset, 2000). To *Wikipedia*, Corruption is a form of dishonesty undertaken by a person entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire personal benefits. These definitions suit the activities of the Shepherds of Judah in the days of Prophet Jeremiah and some Religious and Political leaders in Nigeria today. They used their divine mandate and office for personal benefits. They are in office not to serve God and humanity but themselves. Leadership in Nigeria revolved round the socio-political and religious powers. The main duty of leadership is to help the common populace and act as intermediary between man and God.

Religious Structure

There exist parallel between the situation in Judah in the time of Jeremiah and Nigeria today. Like in

Judah, some religious leaders in Nigeria corrupt. There are religious leaders in Nigeria today that extort money from their members for special blessings. In some cases, pieces of clothes, referred to as the mantle, are sold to the people with the hope that the wearing of them will ensure prosperity (Anim, 200: 124). There are false Prophets in Nigeria today. These Prophets declare false prophecies in the name of God which never came to pass but those in dire need of their prophecies rush to them for security not minding the veracity of such prophecy which does not go without monetary or property value (Adetunmbi, 2017). For instance, a Prophetess along Ibadan/Ife Express Road called “Sako Igbala ministries” predicted that Jesus was coming back on October 28, 2008 and directed that members of her church should dispose their properties and any valuable things to them and then come to the church to wait for rapture. They were all there throughout the night waiting for the rapture that never came till date (Adetunmi, 2018: 330).

Ejinkeneonye (2007) wondered why there was “the gaping lack of sameness between religion and godliness” in Nigeria. This is because proliferation of Prophets or Pastors does not translate into godly living. This assertion was corroborated by Oluwawunsi, Bongotons and Ajiboye (2014) when they claimed that Nigerian Prophets cum church leaders are very corrupt. According to them the corrupt practices among these categories of church officers include miracle for sale, prophecy for sale, collection of unscriptural or man-made offerings, prayer contractors, diversion of church funds into personal accounts, sales of religious titles and offices, sexual immorality, deception of people in the name of God, use of satanic power to perform miracles, etc.

The above assertion have been corroborated many times by media reportage on Prophets, Pastors and church leaders who were involved in raping, abortion, stealing, engaged in fraudulent activities, patronize prostitutes, engage in ritual killing/diabolical activities for the purpose of securing more power and money. Prophecy and Christian service in Nigeria today have been privatized, commercialized, highly merchandized as well as politicized. Like their counterparts in Judah, these leaders milk their church members in order to acquire private jets, helicopters, mansions, and wealth. They live in opulence while their members live in abject poverty.

Some Nigerian church leaders are prosperity conscious. Sopuru (2008) observed that the life style of these leaders encourage criminality and

gangsterism. This view was corroborated by Ukpong (2013) who said fraud, embezzlement and misappropriation of funds characterized some of these leaders. As far as Uzukwu (1996) is concerned, the Prophets in Nigeria exercise tyrannical authority over their followers. They manipulate their members and use spiritual gifts for selfish gains. In support of this Taiye (2010) opined that Magicians have now become ‘faith healers’ and ‘General Overseers of churches’.

Political Structure

Political leaders and Government are to ensure that the needs of the citizens are attended to and make life comfortable for them. Our political leaders should embrace the poor in the society by providing them with basic needs of life which would inspire the citizens to be more loyal to their nation. Political leaders must bear it in their minds that the citizenry will always want their leaders to be concern about their welfare. On the contrary and like the leaders in Judah in the days of Jeremiah those who are supposed to protect, keep and provide for their subjects are now devouring and scattering them.

Political leadership in Nigeria is bedeviled with lack of focus, lack of integrity, unrighteousness, and truth. It is lack of truth that has led Africa especially Nigeria to where we are today. The problem of truth led the nation to endemic corruption, lack of rule of law, wanton disobedience to the Constitution, and lack of patriotism among many vices. It is truth that will create a good social and political order which African have been trying to achieve since independence (Oduwole, 2011b).

It should be note that most of the social problems such as poverty, unemployment, and political unrest found in Nigeria today are products of insensitivity and negligence of our political leaders to the plight of the citizenry. Like their counterparts in Judah, political leaders in Nigeria have scattered and destroyed the “Sheep”. Many Nigerian that are supposed to be asserts to our country are in Diaspora because of bad leadership. Due to high level of unemployment in the country violence of all sorts have become the order of the day among our teeming youth population.

Besides, the level of insecurity in our country is very high. Our political leaders have not been able to secure the nation because of corruption. Recently, Nigerians have being calling on the President, Mohammodu Buhari to change the security Chiefs because they believed that these leaders have

compromised the nation's security architecture. Banditry, Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani Herdsmen and etc have become a serious threat to our security. It is becoming increasingly difficult to sleep in some parts of this country with two eyes closed. Insecurity has led to the displacement of people from some communities in Southern Kaduna, Adamawa, Zamfara, Yobe, Taraba, Benue, Borno, Bauchi, Nasarawa and Plateau States of Nigeria.

Furthermore, Nigerians believe that many of our political office holders are corrupt. They bribe judges to have their ways. For Instance, a former Governor of Delta State Nigeria by name James Onanefe Ibori in 2007 was discharged and acquitted of charges of corruption levied against him by a court in Nigeria but on 16th April, the London's Southwark Crown court sentenced Ibori to 13 years imprisonment for money laundering and some other culpable offences. Nigerians have lost confidence in the judicial system because they pervert justice in favour of the politicians who have 'settled' them. A former Nigerian Chief Judge, Justice Musdapher declared: "As it stands today, it appears that the society we serve is not entirely satisfied with our performance. Hard as it may be to accept, we feel it is less important to focus on whether this assessment is fair or not. The important thing is for us to transparently come to terms with the prevailing realities, accept the gap in expectations and do our utmost to bridge it" This is an indication that the Judicial system in Nigeria has a problem

Nigerians are of the hope that Yahweh who intervened in the case of Judah will do the same in Nigeria. The yearning and aspiration of Nigerians is that there will soon be leadership that will change the cause of the nation the better. Although there are Nigerians who feel that nothing good can come out of this nation any more.

4. Conclusion

It is clear from our study that the Shepherds addressed by Jeremiah were spiritual and political leaders in Judah who abused their power and failed in their leadership responsibilities. The study revealed that they were part of the power structure in Jerusalem where the King and the temple were situated. The negative influences and ungodliness of these leaders contaminated the whole land. These Shepherds are regarded as evil and wicked people who have failed to comply with Yahweh's covenanted stipulations. However, there is hope for Judah because Yahweh will soon change the corrupt leaders. Yahweh has determined to gather his people

together again from all the nations of the earth for peace and prosperity in their own land. In the same fashion, Leaders in Nigeria are like the "Shepherds" in Judah. They are corrupt, greedy, selfish and full of all forms of vices. They have used their office to amass wealth and scatter the nation. Nigerians are optimistic that the nation will enjoy peace and prosperity when the right leaders are in the helms of affairs in the country.

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