



Y^esu'ah in the Old Testament: A Break to the Jinx of Pandemic in Nigeria

Oluwaniyi Samuel Bello
Chaplain at the Chapel of Victory
Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria
bellooluwaniyisamuel@yahoo.com

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.104.47>

Abstract

The paper examined *y^esu'ah* (*Yeshua*) in the Old Testament and the notion of a break to the curse of pandemic in Nigeria. The Hebrew word *y^esu'ah* means; victory, relief, solution, salvation or freedom from physical challenges such as drought, famine, sickness, bondage, illness, epidemics or pandemics etc. The concept of the latest pandemic (Covid-19) has created timidity in the minds of people in Nigeria since December 2019 up to date. The major problem is that no one has ever known the actual cause and the actual medicine required to curb the spread of the deadly virus which plagues society. However, just like how the Israelites overcame their challenges, this paper which adopted a critique method reveals that Nigerian tribal societies (Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa) possess their traditional method of obtaining suitable solutions to their challenges which are very much synonymous with those of the Hebrews in the Old Testament period. But in an attempt to secure relief for their physical challenges, the people jettisoned and supplemented their traditional ways of solving problems for scientific 'proof'. It is noteworthy that the influence of civilization has become significant on the Yoruba culture. In the light of the above, the paper concludes that to obtain proper relief from the syndrome of pandemics, there must be proper discipline and morality, transparency, diligence, honesty and a total positive revolution in the way that people live. Besides this aspect, the paper elucidates that the people should re-examine their traditional methods of seeking God's face for deliverance.

Keywords: *Yesu'ah*, Old Testament, immorality, communal care, Pandemic, Nigeria.

Introduction

The word *y^esu'ah* is coined from the Greek word *soteria* which is derived from the word *soter* meaning saviour (Charles, 2007). The word also communicates the thought of deliverance, safety, reservation, restoration and healing. Its major use is to denote the work of God on behalf of men, and it is a major doctrine of the Bible which includes redemption, reconciliation, propitiation and regeneration (Lewis, 2008). *Y^esu'ah* is described as the work of God which means rescuing man from his lost estate or it describes the estate of a man who has been saved and who is vitally renewed and made a partaker of the inheritance of the saints (Abbott, 2000). The nomenclature, *y^esu'ah* occurs frequently in the English version of the Old Testament. The terms so translated are *y^esha* and *yeshu'ah*, have various meanings, they and the verbal forms connected with them and stand for help, and also deliverance from one's enemies (Psalms 18:2,34:6, Isaiah 33:2 and Jeremiah 14:3) (Walvoord, 2004). "The proper Hebrew name for Jesus is *Yeshua* (יֵשׁוּעַ), which means salvation. This is a shortened form of the Hebrew name *Yehoshua* (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ), which is



Joshua in English and means the Lord saves, the Lord is salvation or the Lord will save” (<https://free.messianicbible.com>, 2023). The concept of salvation runs through all religions and as it relates to individuals, so it relates to a group of community and the other. However, every religion claims to have a message of salvation, it is bound to affirm that if one falls away from it, one will not attain salvation. That is, the very message of salvation that every religion affirms to possess and this implies the recognition and the possibility of damnation in one form or another, otherwise, salvation would be an empty word.

The Old Testament theology in its entire ramification represents the Israelites as God’s community amongst all the people of the earth especially in the Ancient Near East region among – thus they were very significant people and were the Lord’s ‘holy nation’ (Nicolaidis, 2010). The choice of Israel as Yahweh’s own nation was with unparalleled love and grace. According to Abe (2005), the stages of the salvation of Israelites were the birth of the people out of the experience of salvation, the episode of the Exodus covenant at Sinai in thankfulness for salvation and the promise of obedience and good observance of the tenets of Torah in their worship. However, this relationship between Yahweh and Israel was basically forged on the grounds of love, morality and religion as a result of God’s covenant to their progenitors (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) which was extended to them (the Israelites) as the descendants. The text (Exodus 12:25-42) under study opined on several guides and instructions including inter-alia God’s determination (verses1-11), commemoration/ observance (verses12-13), Moses recapitulation and the order to obey the last ordinance (verses14-20), and finally the Exodus (verses21-42) as related to their ultimate desired salvation.

In proto-Isaiah, *y^esu’ah* variously connotes the victory of God and of Israel (Isaiah 45:22ff) and the *y^esu’ah* of Israel is always a vindication of God, the redemption of the divine promise. This term acquires not only a universalistic, but also a spiritual significance. The implication of the idea is that human beings are in some kind of unfortunate condition (Ogunmoroti, 2010). The notion that people need to be saved implies that a defective condition is normally prevalent, and the major religions have differing views as to the root of this problem. In the Old Testament, the term *y^esu’ah* was introduced as a result of the people’s transgression even right from Genesis 3 when God’s people deviated or defiled his commandment up to the last chapter in Malachi; i.e. in the year 721 BCE, Israel, the Northern Kingdom went into oblivion in the Assyrian Captivity, such that she lost her political, economic and religious identity. There was neither political nor economic freedom, nor social cohesion for the Israelites to practice their religion in the foreign lands and it is important to emphasize that the major cause of the fall of the Northern Kingdom was idolatry. Even Judah, the southern kingdom did not learn from the menace of the Northern Kingdom, and idolatry and all sorts of social injustice continued unabated with total disregard for the Torah of Yahweh (יהוה) as echoed vehemently by the ethical prophets until the day of the Lord also came upon them (Southern Kingdom) and they suffered humiliation through the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. He drove them into captivity between 598-587 BCE (Bodenheimer, 2001). However, by 539 BCE Babylon was captured by Cyrus, king of Persia after he had captured Assyria. Israel (both Northern and the Southern kingdom) was also subjected to him until the divine intervention of Yahweh in the year 538 BCE came when Cyrus authorized them to return to their land during the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (Charles, 2007).

In Nigeria, each ethnic group possessed their notion of *y^esu’ah* through sacrifice of different kinds as atonement. However, this is done from a certain perspective and it is better if this is consciously recognized and identified in that nation. Exodus 12:25-42 was constituted mainly on the salvation of the Jews from Egypt with several instructions and commandments by Yahweh. Few would disagree that the subject of salvation is one of the most important themes in the Bible, so important in fact that many theologians have subordinated all other themes under it. Yet, more confusion



existed over the terminology (Salvation) than almost any other terms in the Bible. Cultural influences and contextual evidences especially in the Old Testament, are often ignored when determining salvation in the Old Testament. The purpose of this work is to examine the concept of *y^esu'ah* from the Hebraic origin (not in the light of the New Testament), tracing the concept from the Ancient Near East down to the Exodus of the Israelites, in comparison with the Yoruba ideology of *Igbala* (salvation, deliverance, freedom, relief from predicament) so as to proffer possible solutions as applicable to the problem posed by pandemic in Nigeria.

Exploratory Study of *Y^esu'ah*

The concept of *y^esu'ah* arose from one of the Ancient Near Eastern peoples myths found in Tell-el-Amarna and Tell al Ariri (of the middle Euphrates- Ancient Mari texts - 1700 BCE) which illustrates the creation of man by Enki and the mother goddess from a mixture of clay and the blood of a god who possessed the esoteric sense to plan. Enki, was associated with fertility. Twelve hundred years later due to human fertility, humans had become too numerous and restless and they had even acquired for themselves forbidden wisdom. Therefore, god Enlil (the chief god) felt disturbed in his sleep due to the noise and ruckus caused by the growing population of mankind. He then turned for help to the divine assembly where they decided to decimate humans by sending plagues such as drought, famine and saline soil. All attempts were made to reduce the number of people and these were temporary fixes but Enki (Ea) advised humans to offer prayers and sacrifices to the gods in order to hold the plagues in check and save man named Atrahasis. Enki was in essence the Sumerian god of wisdom, fresh water, intelligence, mischief, healing, creation, fertility, and even art. His magical attributes often comprised deception to benefit the human race. Some 1700 years later, the same problem resurfaced and at the summon of Enlil, the gods decided to exterminate humanity with floods but Enki who had a moral objection disclosed the plan to Atrahasis who then built an ark for his family and all species of animal in accordance with the divine measurements to prevent the harsh calamity. When the flood came, Atrahasis ark was borne up on the water and finally landed on mount Nisir after the water receded (Sagss, 2008). Thereafter, Enki created a new solution in the form of social phenomena such as non- marrying women, barrenness, miscarriage and immortality, to help keep the population from growing out of control. Another aspect was the human sense of healing; those who practiced medicine, magical arts and divination were used to diagnose the cause of the illness, incantations and other kinds of treatments were prescribed to alleviate the suffering by appeasing the offended deity.

In the view of the Ancient Near Eastern people, if a personal god was angry with an individual, a sacrifice and the appropriate ritual was necessary to appease the divine anger. However, in the Old Testament, the term *y^esu'ah* was introduced as a result of the people's transgression. In the year 721 BC, Israel, the northern Kingdom went into oblivion in the Assyrian Captivity such that she lost her political, economic and religious identity. There was neither political nor economic freedom nor social cohesion for the Israelites to practice their religion in the foreign lands. It is important to emphasise that the major cause of the pandemic was idolatry before divine intervention took place. No wonder, Akhilomen opined that *y^esu'ah* expounded on the notion as the saving of a person's soul from sin and its consequences. A persons state of being seeking salavation encompasses both spiritual and material aspects and equally entails the means by which man's nature of existence is protected from destruction (Akhilomen, 2008).

A Brief Overview of Hardship Encountered by the Hebrews

The process of taking possession in the Promised Land is now recognized as having extended over a long period. The later point of view, as found in Joshua 11:15-23, represents the entire transaction as having occurred in the lifetime of Joshua and as having involved the total



extermination of the Canaanite (Powis-Smith,1916). One of the immediate challenges after running from Egypt was the crossing of the Red Sea while the armies of Pharaoh followed the Hebrews. But God provided a solution. They crossed over, and they had to deal with lack of food and water in the desert, but God also provided them free food (manna). In Exodus 17, the Israelites reached the Wilderness of Sin. Here, they turned to Moses and quarreled and accused him of bring them out of Egypt to die in desert. They later turned to God for the way out, and God provided a solution by giving some instructions to Moses on how to get water for them from a rock. God was displeased with their lack of faith. Moses called the place Massah (test) and Meribah (quarrel) because here the Israelites quarreled saying 'is God among us'? Moses struck the rock and water came out for their use at Massah and Marbah. The people passed through Rephidim to the Wilderness of Sinai (Boeaheimer, 2001).

God met them in a marvelous way. However, around the holy mountain of Sinai, the people were gathered together and they were fenced off lest they should break through and put their unconsecrated feet on holy ground and perish. Moses went up the mountain and remained there in communion with God; his thoughts were upon God's dealings with himself and with Israel. God had revealed himself in saving power; but what service did he require of men? Moses meditated and made known God's word to the people and called upon them to pledge themselves in faithfulness to him (McKenzie, 2002). The list of religious precepts that, according to Exodus and Deuteronomy, were divinely exposed to Moses by Yahweh and engraved on two stone tablets, were called the Decalogue which is basically the designation for the ten commandments in Exodus 34:12–26. The Decalogue requires absolute faithfulness to the Yahweh.

Thus, it is difficult to reconstruct the details of Israel's wandering in the desert because the actual events were far more complex than the biblical narrative indicates and also none of the places mentioned can be identified with any certainty. The biblical account presents a large crowd leaving Egypt. It is stated that Israel on the march could muster 6000,000 men of military age which could mean two million or more in all, counting women and children. In the physical sense, the wilderness period was a formative one in which Israel grew by the addition of the other groups joining it that had accepted Yahweh. The wilderness era must also have been a formative period in the religious sense for this was the time when Moses communicated to the people the nature of Yahweh and their obligations. Yahweh is seen as the gracious and merciful God who had rescued the Israelite from bondage, and in return for this liberation, the people had obligations which set them up as a religious community (Quaroopome, 2001).

Ye'su'ah vis-à-vis Saving Consciousness of the Hebrews

The essential purpose of a salvation act is to deliver a person or king from captivity. As mentioned, salvation is widely used with reference to Yahweh's deliverance of Israel from Egypt and from their second captivity in Babylon. The word *go'el* (redeemer) is one of the prophet's favourites names for God; not only as a deliverer of his people but as one who had a covenant obligation to do so (Whitcam, 2002). The occurrence of the Old Testament redemption or salvation terms in the New Testament is relatively limited. This was probably due to the difference in cultural background which made other images such as atonement, sacrifice and justification more intelligible and appealing. Christ's death on the Cross was a substitutionary sacrifice to ransom or redemption; his blood was a ransom price. The Apostle Paul uses deliverance to connote the Old Testament redemption (Romans 3:24, 1 Corinthians 1:30); although, in Ephesians 1:17, the idea of the blood of Christ as a redemption price appears. Thus, it has a Christian theological sense of deliverance from sin and its effects. But God's saving act as a process of redemption is a general biblical concept both in the Old Testament and also in the New Testament (Abe, 2008).



One thing to be noted when considering the Old Testament concept of *y^esu'ah* is that at the time, there was nothing to show in the thinking of the people of the time, that they had an idea of a unified system of nature. The word that was prominent to them was 'wonder' and throughout the Old Testament, what could be considered as the most wonderful work of Yahweh which caused wonder is creation (Ryrie, 2005).

However, one may ask if the Hebrew terms for save and salvation in the Old Testament ever mean saved from eternal condemnation. In the Old Testament, the covenant people were heavenly bound by trusting in God's promise of a Messiah (Walvoord, 2003). The verb save (*yasa*) originally means to be roomy or broad which is the opposite of the concepts oppression or narrowness. This is the basic concept behind the usage of save and salvation in Old Testament. Though, save and salvation is used 363 times in the Masoretic text, appearing 319 times in the seven distinct texts excluding 44 times, the noun appears as proper names (Lopez, 2009).

Habakkuk 1:2 reads as follows: "2 O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!" The prophet Habakkuk questions the Lord's delay in saving Judah from the violence that surrounded them. Even the Psalter contains the most vivid and rigorous songs of deliverance which attest to the nation's consciousness of God are continuing salvation (Psalm 18:30-31, 118, 136, and 145). When Israel suffered adversity, the prophets were ever-ready to remind their countrymen that this was not because Yahweh was faithless to his covenant and promise or because he was too weak to save them, but because by their sins they had had rejected the salvation which He was always offering to them and which was theirs upon condition of their repentance and in atonement. Reddy and Nicolaidis (2022) state that Jeremiah's prophecies are unmistakable and cynical and intended to rebuke evil people. God selected Jeremiah to announce the obliteration and building of a nation that would ultimately lead to His Kingdom. He correspondingly offers his people expectation and his prophetic warnings are also promises that returning to God will lead the people to divine blessings and he states that God will honour his pledge for people who are faithful. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11). Jeremiah 3:22-23 in the King James Version reads as follows: "22 Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God. 23 Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel."

The conviction of Israel that God was their special saviour for eternity was based upon the actual experience of deliverance in their history. Doubtless, Israel experienced a national deliverance but the evidence of the Old Testament and it leaves no room for doubt that the determinative experience of Yahweh's salvation was their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, however, the miracle of the Red Sea, and the subsequent experience of God's care in the wilderness further revealed God's kindness to humanity (Fuhrer, 2006). It is not quite impossible for someone today to reconstruct the course of what happened at the Exodus, nor does it matter greatly for our present purpose that one cannot do so. The accounts as one now has them in the Exodus were written down several centuries after the period of the events which they recount. It is adequate to note that, whatever their actual experience may have been, the Israelites arose from the wilderness into Canaan, a jumble of tribes, but they are people mindful of their national identity and are bound together by a sense of their common mission and destiny (Wilkin, 2000). No doubt, much consolidation was required after the settlement in Canaan, as the records make plain but there can be little hesitation that the Israelites had at the coming out of Egypt undergone a weighty and transforming experience which had persuaded them that they had been the beneficiaries of a supernatural liberation through the power of Yahweh to whom forever after they were linked to



by a perpetual covenant. The Lord had worked salvation for Israel at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:13,15:1-2).

This experience of deliverance left its mark upon the whole of Israel's succeeding existence and on every part of the Old Testament, it was sung in Psalmody, recounted in story and re-enacted in Passover rituals. "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what deeds, in the days of old" (Psalms 44:1). Thus, every deliverance which is experienced by Israel or by one of those representative individuals with whom the fortunes of Israel are bound upon is in reality instances of the fatherly care of God over Israel (Psalms 103:4). It is reckless to say that any use of words like 'save,' 'deliver,' 'preserve,' and 'escape,' at least in connection with Israel is entirely non-technical or secular (Sawyer, 2000). A good illustration of the possible double connotation of deliverance stories is found in II Kings 7, where the four starving lepers arrive at the camp of the besieging Syrian army and find it deserted after the Syrians have fled in fear. When they have eaten and had something to drink, the lepers reminded themselves of their responsibility to the starving inhabitants of the overwhelmed city, and they say to one another "we are not doing right" (Whitecam, 2002). This is the day of good news (LXX: Ἡμερα εὐαγγελίας, Hebrew: הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יוֹם בְּשָׂרָה), and we are silent" (II Kings 7:9). Therefore, every deliverance comes from God, and the biblical point of view would be that there is no salvation of any kind, secular as well as religious, individual as well as national except it comes from the Lord. He (God) is the rock of our salvation according to Jonah 2:9. This becomes self-evident with the biblical writers that Israel's security is the God of Israel, not coalitions with powerful states like Egypt, and that He alone and no material belongings or any other natural assets are the contributor to a person's prosperity (Rane, 2002).

In addition, the prophet Amos, in chapter 2:9-10, claimed that it was Yahweh who gave victory to Israel over her enemies, and led the people throughout their wanderings. Amos 2:11 and Judges 7:18, went further to claim that God, in divine interpretation gave Israel victory all along. On the security of the nation, Israel was taught to exercise strong faith in the promises of Yahweh to defend her and lead her to victory. She was not to rely on the horses and fenced cities like the other nations but rather only upon Yahweh. This notion also underwrote the particularistic outlook of the Israelites' faith. The moral and religious import of their relationship with Yahweh was that Yahweh belonged to them, and they should be answerable to Him in all aspects of their being, be it military, political, social economic or religious.

Brief Overview of Hardship in Nigeria

Nigeria has a large population of 221 million (Worldometer, 2023), and her economy and political influence as a country is great and she has a large impact not only in her immediate neighbourhood, but also more widely, especially in West African and Sub-Saharan African region. Nigeria, as a nation is experiencing a lot of unstable situations, hardships and instabilities of all sorts in the economic, political cultural and religious settings and these are seen as waging wars against peace, progress and development of the nation. Several commentaries have passed by various individuals relating to the possible causes of the rising crime rates and violence in the nation. However, these crimes and violence are not as serious as the problem of social injustice. Though, social injustice might exist in other societies at various levels, the situation in Nigeria is apparently different from what might be obtainable in other part of the world. The problem of social injustice pervades all areas of the country. It seems as if justice and equity are long dead in Nigeria (Ogungbola, 2013).

The scarcity of justice has essentially increased the threat and danger of crime and violence. Accessing quality education is very expensive, and to get admission into universities is a 'horror film' (tough) and the hardship that follows passing through the school years is very disturbing.



Graduates are passing out in thousands annually without jobs to go to, millions are living in poverty, small scale business close down daily because of the high cost spent on generating electricity, and the leaders practically deny the masses basic needs to survive and systematically inflict pain on the populace. If many social issues and controversies in the nation are subjected to moral debates, it would not be difficult to say that the government is immoral (Olukayode, 2013). The number of masses living in poverty increases every day despite the nation's resources and the number of millionaires in the nation keeps on increasing. Crime is soaring as kidnappings are a huge security concern throughout the country and criminals carry out kidnappings for ransom money. Criminals or militants abduct foreign nationals from off-shore and land-based oil facilities, residential compounds, airports, and even from public roadways. There are also attacks by pirates off the coast of Nigeria in the Gulf of Guinea on an ongoing basis. Armed gangs have even boarded commercial and private ships to attack travelers. Armed assaults, thefts, and extortion are common (International Trade Administration, 2023).

The country politicians often use dubious business deals to siphon money from state coffers and many business moguls have grown rich on the back of close relationships with the top state officials. The nation is grappling with one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world heightened by cattle herders and Boko Haram's violent incursions; Regional security is weaker and the "Nigerian government is struggling with a deadly insurgency in the North-East, as well as oil theft and violent criminality in the South-East and South-South, all while trying to improve infrastructure for Nigerians" (International Trade Administration, 2023). In addition, thousands of people are facing food insecurity in the region. About 40-50% of young graduates is either unemployed or under employed in insufficient or part-time work. Although, the current government introduced the N-power programme as a means to alleviate the problem of unemployment, this has not provided any solution to the level of unemployment in the nation.

Assassination, ritual child trafficking, killing and many others have become part of the nation's daily activities. In one case some devotees went to worship their God and while praying, they were all murdered and slaughtered like a ram going to the slaughter in some part of the country (Human Rights Watch, 2023) But how many of the perpetrators of the evil acts have been prosecuted in court and jailed? How many ritualists and their cohorts like the buyers have been exposed and jailed? Because they have our leaders as their back bone (godfather) they are untouched. The nation's name is synonymous with corruption which has sadly destroyed every fabric of the nation.

President Buhari's stated priorities included rooting out corruption. A poll conducted by NOIPolls and LEAP Africa in 2015 revealed that 85% of adult Nigerians believe that the prevalence of corruption in the country is responsible for the difficulty of doing business in Nigeria. Reasons given for the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria includes weak government institutions and poverty. Well-connected businesspeople gain from anti-competitive practices that reduce market forces. The Nigerian government has sought to address corruption through the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). However, cases progressing to conviction are rare. (International Trade Administration, 2023)

The epidemic of Covid-19 in Nigeria as stated by the NCDC (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control) as at 31st December, 2020; samples tested-938,602 confirmed cases-86,576, Active cases-11,976, Discharged cases-73,322 and Death cases-1, 278 across all the states continues to beat the imagination of any reasonable person at the lamentable proportions. The nation is full of abuse of moral and cultural heritage with shameless arrogance portrayed by many. Immorality has



become fashionable, sexual promiscuity, nudity dressing habits which promote corruption and sexual harassment abound and they also enhance seduction and raping habits are found in some churches (Abe, 2010).

There is still hunger in the midst of plenty and worse still, there are people who do not see anything wrong with the present Nigerian situation. These are the ones who are 'feeding' on this national crisis. Based on the results of our research and in response to the lessons drawn above, our major recommendation is that since every Nigerian, in one way or the other is a religious being, we must appeal to our religious conviction and in our fight against corruption, allow objective religion to be at the service of politics...corruption, apart from bringing untold suffering to people individually and collectively, thwarts national development and if not checked can lead to national crisis as it also happened in Israel. This outcome for Old Testament Israel is projected as a lesson for Nigeria. It is time to act. (Umoren, 2018:30-31).

Lack of moral rectitude and social-political flippancy, as well as the unwholesome proliferation and waves of indecency are ravaging the nation. Abuse of religious freedom has contaminated and metamorphosed the church in Nigeria into a commercialization of religion for economic flamboyance because everybody wants to become general overseer without considering the lesser class and the less privileged around them. "These forms of violence have been attributed largely to bad governance characterised by corruption, electoral manipulation, human rights abuses and lack of transparency, accountability and justice in the distribution of political-economic resources" (Anthony, 2018).

***Y^esu'ah*: A Break to the Jinx of Pandemic in Nigeria.**

There is little doubt that *y^esu'ah* runs through all religions, thus, the Old Testament concept of *y^esu'ah* on the other hand, is generally understood as deliverance from physical calamities such as oppression, sickness, epidemics, fear, death and this is applicable to individuals and the nation (Gunkule, 2009). However, *y^esu'ah* is described as the work of God which means rescuing man from his 'lost estate' or it describes the estate of a man who has been saved and who is vitally renewed and made a partaker of the inheritance of the saints (Abbott-Smith, 2000).

It voiced the presentation of the Maccabean triumph. It also variously connotes the victory of God (Isaiah 45:22,51:6-8) and of Israel. In second Isaiah, *y^esu'ah* of Israel is always a vindication of God, the redemption of the divine promise, thus, *y^esu'ah* acquires not only a universalistic but also a spiritual significance. The implication of the idea is that human beings are in some kind of unfortunate conditions and may achieve an ultimate good state through divine power and intervention (Ogunmoroti,2010).

The notion that Nigerian people need to be saved implies that a defective condition is normally prevalent. The Old Testament theology in its entire ramification presents the Israelites as God's community of all the peoples, his nation or *laos* (Nicolaidis, 2010) of especially of the Ancient Near East. The choice of Israel as Yahweh's own nation was done with unparalleled love and grace, morality and religion as a result of God's covenant to them and their progenitors. Nigeria is also in a critical condition and most especially the current trend of the Covid-19 pandemic which has saturated the nation. This it is argued, might be as a result of God's wrath on the nation as a menace for their many transgressions. Although, the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely the failure of leadership (Clinton, 2009), the Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of the nation's leaders to rise up to their responsibility, and to the challenge unrighteous things



through role modelling a positive personal example which is after all, the hallmarks of true leadership. We should also bear in mind that:

For this reason also, God highly exalted Him (Yeshua), and bestowed on Him the name (*onoma*) which is above every name, so that at the name (*onoma*) of Yeshua every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that *Yeshua HaMashiach* is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9–11; see also Isaiah 45:23)... The name of *Yeshua* means salvation, and that is the exact essence of who *Yeshua* is. To call on the name/person of Yeshua—the Messiah is to call on salvation. (<https://free.messianicbible.com/feature/the-controversy-over-the-name-of-yeshua/>)

Conclusion

Hope for Nigeria depends entirely on God who was also the hope of Israel (Jeremiah 14:8). If we believe that man can save us we are damned (Jeremiah 17:5) and only God can heal a troubled nation. Obielosi (2016:209) argues that “...leadership in Nigeria is not service and people directed. There is rather a constant clash of ego. We are practicing democracy and yet no one can challenge the presidency and get free with it. It is either you swim with him in his direction or your political ambition will be threatened. A true leader is always part of the led. He identifies with them and in this way knows their problems and the ones to address”. It could be concluded from the biblical context of this article that the source of the people’s calamities was as a result of their transgressions and immoralities, The paper therefore submits that the fact that God chastised a recalcitrant nation is not an act of bullying, but it is rather a heuristic way to explain the nation’s calamities. Thus, hardship and suffering doesn’t have to make Nigerians desperate and hopeless, it will only make them people of good character, with endurance and hopeful. The paper therefore recommends that Nigerian leaders as well as the citizens should emulate what the people of Nineveh did in the book of Jonah 3:3-10. All ungodly habits should be abated and they should seek God’s intervention rather than seeking help from the diaspora over the massacre of Covid-19 and other criminal acts.

References

- Abbott-Smith, G. (2000). *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, T& T Clark: Edinburgh Press.
- Abe, G. O. (2008). *Redemption, Reconciliation, Propitiation: Salvation Terms in an African Milieu in Perspectives in Religious Studies*, Ibadan: Amazon Publications.
- Abe, G. O. (2010). *Christian Doctrine Tropical Issues*, Ikare: Amure Super Printers.
- Abe, G. O. (2005). *The Religion of the Exile*, Lagos: New Dawn International.
- Akhilomen, D. O. (2008). The Concept of Salvation in the Old Testament, *Journal of Religious Studies*, 2, 83.
- Anthony, I. (2018). 'New Nigeria': A socioreligious dimension of prophetic envisioning. *HTS Theological Studies*, 74(2), 1-7. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i2.4861>
- Bodenheimer, F. M. (2001). *The Manna of Sinai in the Biblical Archaeology*, London: SCM Press.



- Charles, O. R. (2007). *Basic Theology*, Wheaton: Victor Books, IL.
- Clinton, H. (2009). Nigeria: Lack of Good Governance, *The Nation Newspaper*, 12 August.
- Fuhrer, G. (2006). 'Sozo' in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing.
- Gunkule, C. O. (2009). An African Perspectives of the Concept of Salvation in Psalter, *African Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 28(1), 57.
- International Trade Administration (2023). Market Challenges-Nigeria. [Available online at <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/nigeria-market-challenges>].
- Lewis, S. (2008). *Systematic Theology*, Wheatone: Victor Books,IL.
- Lopez, R. A. (2002). Old Testament Salvation from what, *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, 15, 44-66. [Available online at <https://faithalone.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/lopez.pdf>]
- Lopez, R. A. (2009). Do Believer Experience the Wrath of God? *Journal of the Greek Evangelical Society*, 2(3).
- McKenzie, J. L. (2002). *Dictionary of the Bible*. London: Adam & Black.
- Messianic Bible (2023). The Controversy Over the Name of Yeshua. [Available online at <https://free.messianicbible.com/feature/the-controversy-over-the-name-of-yeshua/>].
- Nicolaidis, A. (2010). The Laos tou Theou – an orthodox view of the “people of God”, *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 66(1), DOI: 10.4102/hts.v66i1.372
- Obielosi, D. (2016). HOPEFULNESS IN HOPELESSNESS: A HERMENEUTICAL APPLICATION OF ROM 4:18 TO NIGERIAN SITUATION [Available online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/og.v12i1.10>].
- Olanipekun, W. (2017). Breaking the Jinx the Cyclical Nature of Nigeria's Problem, Convocation Lecture, delivered March 30th, Ekiti State University (EKSU), Ado-Ekiti.
- Ogunmoroti, B. S. (2010). Yesu'ah a Theological Evaluation of Salvation in the Old Testament, Master's Thesis, *Adekunle Ajasin University*, Akungba Akoko, Nigeria.
- Ogungbola, R. (2013/06/13), Crime, Violence and Social Injustice in Nigeria. Retrieved from www.saharareporters.com/2013/04/05crime-violence-asnd-social-injustice-nigeria-interplay-%c2%AD
- Olukayode, F.A. (2013). Religious corruption: A dilemma of the Nigeria State, *Sustainable Development in Africa*, 15(1), 170-185.
- Powis-Smith, J. M. (1916). *Some Problems in the Early History of Hebrew Religion*, *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, 32, 1-10.
- Reddy, M.M. & Nicolaidis, A. (2022). Jeremiah the Suffering Prophet - his Communication of Judgment and Promise of Blessings, *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 103(2).
- Quaropome, T. N. O. (2001). *History and Religion of Israel*, London: University Press.



Saggs, H. W. F. (2008). *The Encounter with the Divine in Mesopotamia and Israel*, Bloomsbury Academic Collections, Bloomsbury Publishing [Available online at <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/encounter-with-the-divine-in-mesopotamia-and-israel-9781474280839/>].

Sawyer, J. F. (2000). Yasa in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 442-446.

Umoren, G.E. (2018). Confronting the Challenges to Development in Nigeria with Lessons from Old Testament Prophecy, *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion*, 36. [Available online at <https://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JPCR/article/viewFile/41433/42661>].

Walvoord, J. (2004). *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book*. London: University Press.

Walvoord, J. F. (2003). *The Millennial Kingdom*. Findlay: Dunham Publishing Company.

Wilkin R. N. (2000). *Salvation in the Psalms: Deliverance from today's Troubles*, part 2 in a series on salvation in the Old Testament, *Journal of Grace Evangelical Society*. 1 pp. 4-6.

Whitecam,, K. W. (2002). *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Worldometer, (2023). Nigerian population per day. [Available online at <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/nigeria-population/>].

Psalms 18:2, 34:6

Isaiah 33:2

Exodus 12:25-42

Joshua 11:15-22

Romans 3:24

1Corinthians 1:30

Habakkuk 1:2

Psalms 18:30-31, 118, 138 and 145

Jeremiah 3:22-23

Exodus 14:13, 15:1-2

Psalms 44:1

Amos 2:9-10



Conflict of Interest Statement: *The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.*



This article is open-access and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence
The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.