

A CONTEXTUAL STUDY OF PREVENTIVE TECHNIQUE IN JUDGES 6-7 VIS-A-VIS NIGERIAN INSECURITIES

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ABSTRACT

The world of perfection is revealed in the first two chapters (Genesis) of biblical account. But as a result of human error against divine order, human life became distorted and perverted. In effect, humanity seemed to have lost tranquillity and sanctity, and all forms of abnormalities set in. Subsequently, the globe is no longer a safe place to live. Consequently, Nigeria in particular, results of insecurities are becoming alarmingly unbearable. In spite of all the efforts of Nigerian government at curbing insecurities there is no significant desirable outcome. Presently, Boko-Haram, kidnapping, banditry, armed-robbery, militancy and many others have made Nigeria to become unsafe place to live. In this wise, conforming to the divine preventive technique in Judges 6-7, the mayhems of insecurities in Nigeria would be curbed. This paper adopted the sociological principle of reading with the author and theological hermeneutical method to examine the preventive technique in the biblical times vis-à-vis Nigerian insecurities. The study discovered that the preventive technique in Nigeria is ineffective, inefficient, unproductive, and unsustainable. Therefore, in order to have an effective, efficient, productive, and sustainable security in Nigeria, this paper submitted that the preventive technique in Judges 6, 7 could be adopted in all levels of the Nigerian government. More so, it was observed that during biblical era, preventive measures were put in place to strengthen security and its sustainability.

Keywords: Sustainability, Security, Insecurity, Preventive, Technique.

Introduction

The world of perfection is revealed in the first two chapters (Genesis) of the biblical account. Thereafter, as a result of human error perfection became perversion and distortion, and all forms of insecurities and fears set in. Hence, insecurity replaced security, and warfare took place of human welfare. It implies that the emergence of insecurity could be biblically opined

to be one of the results of disobedience of humanity to the divine order in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3). Consequently, the globe was no longer a safe place to live. In this wise, then as in modern times, the fears of surviving because of insecurity are no different from the perverse and distorted world of the biblical era. In spite of all the security agencies being put in place by the Nigerian government, still, today in Nigeria, lives and properties remain unsafe and unprotected. It is so disheartening that after six decades of Nigerian independence, insecurity continues to pose a challenge to Nigeria.

Admittedly, corruption is asserted to be the root cause. In this regard, corruption is believed to be one of the greatest challenges to security in Nigeria. In fact the nexus of corruption and insecurity is opined not be far-fetched. Corruption feeds and fans the embers of poverty, crimes and by extension insecurity. Vividly, this is seen in kidnapping, armed-robbery, Boko-Haram, militancy and many others (2014). Meanwhile, to strengthen and sustain security in Nigeria, Gideon's preventive skill in Judges 6-7 could be considered as a panacea to the challenges of insecurities in Nigeria.

This paper adopts the sociological principle of reading with the author and theological hermeneutical method to examine the concept of sustainable security in the biblical times. Therefore, in order to have an effective, efficient, productive, and sustainable security in Nigeria, this paper submitted that the defensive measures against insecurities in Judges 6, 7 could be adopted in all levels of the Nigerian government. Considering the popular saying of elders that prevention is better than cure, to prevent any ugly occurrence could be considered so easier and cheaper than cure. More so, it was observed that during biblical era, preventive measures were put place not to only strengthen security but more importantly to consolidate the preventive technique against every form of insecurities.

Background to Judges 6-7

It is important to note that in Genesis 12:1 following, God promised the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham (Israelites). Although, the land of Canaan was a divine gift (Deut 3:18), it could be established that it was never possessed by the Israelites without a bloody warfare (Ex 34:10-17; Deut 20:16-18). This possibly accounts for why the people of Israel had to slaughter all that breathed among the Canaanites (Josh 6:21). In the case of documentation of how God commanded the Israelites to take possession of Canaan's land and the conquest that followed, the book of Judges seems to be seen as a resourceful document. According the tradition of the Jews, the authorship of the book of Judges could be attributed to Samuel. However, it could be observed in the book that attribution suggests the ancient tendency to identify anonymous works of well-known personalities. In this wise, scholars of the modern era have considered the book to be historically Deuteronomistic in nature (2006).

In this pattern, it could be argued from the common opinion that the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings are considered to be a unified corpus whose assignment was to give a record of the Israelites after they crossed Jordan to the land of Canaan. This seems to account for why the corpus is called Deuteronomistic History. The assumption is that none of the unified corpus is excepted or excluded from being deeply influenced by the book Deuteronomy. The connection in this regard is suggested to have been that all of this material in one way or the other primarily pays attention to the Pentateuch and affirms that obedience

is the first qualification for the both entry and possession of the land of promise. It could be asserted that the exploration of the Pentateuch and Deuteronomistic History reveals a literature of anticipation (Gen-Deut) and a literature of possession of the land (Joshua-Kings). The opinion would now be that the duo singularly present the Israelites as the people of the divine promise(2005).

The book of Judges purports to describe what occurred between the time the Israelites entered Canaan and the establishment of the monarchy. The account presents these events in an orderly, sequential manner that addresses how authority was exercised in Israel after the deaths of Moses and Joshua, the two leaders who dominate the previous complex of stories that recall the exodus, wandering in the wilderness, and entry into the Promised Land (2007).

In corroboration, Okwueze (2008) opines the book of judges to be colourfully detailed when it comes to the difficulties early experienced by the Israelites during their Palestinian citizenship. The era is postulated to be when the people of Israel seemed to be greatly influenced by the civilisation of Canaan's culture and inhabitants. Possibly this does not only account for the Israelites' idolatry, adultery, and syncretism but could also explain why they earned severe punishment from God.

Similarly, we may submit here that critically considering the content of Judges, the suggestion would be that the book is more theological than historical. It could be observed that the book is limited in scope. This possibly accounts for the selection in what the book actually portrays. The argument would now be that Judges does not comprehensively portray the Israelites' story. In the case of the content, the book is opined not to have reported everything that happened or occurred within the timeline of the events earlier mentioned. It is rather selective in what it chooses to describe as argued above(2007).

Meanwhile, due to the lack of the detail of the happenings on the way the land of promise being portrayed by the book, it would be safe to conclude that its attention is primarily focused on the theological issues that have to do with how the people of Israel related to the will of God. In this case of evaluating people's faith and commitment to do God's will, while obedience brings successes, disobedience does otherwise (2007). In this pattern, the book of Judges is seen to have begun with the emphasis on how Israel as a nation was unable to conquer the whole land. This seems to answer why people struggled to claim and maintain their foothold in Canaan long after the demise of Joshua (2003).

In contrast to the smooth transition of authority from Moses to Joshua, no clear successor will emerge in Judges. Instead this book depicts the chaos that results from the absence of reliable leadership. If the allotment texts had suggested a lack of unity among the tribes during Joshua's lifetime, Judges gives the impression of almost total disarray after his death(2003).

In this pattern, how the people of Israel failed consistently was a reality that was conspicuously evident in the worship of other gods. This is soberly presented in the book of

Judges. Similar to Israelites' apostasy and syncretism displayed in Judges, the book also showcases the way people neglected their poor and vulnerable individuals. That is, the refusal of coming to each others' assistance and even that of intertribal warfare were observed in the book of Judges to be among the top instances of irregularity and irresponsibility among the Israelites (2006).

Stances of irregularity and irresponsibility that seemed to be prevailing after the demise of Joshua is considerably revealed in the book of Judges. In this regard, the book provides pieces of information that affirm the ingrate attitudes of the people of Israel. Considering the mercy and grace of God enjoyed by the Israelites under both Moses and Joshua and even on their way to the land of promise, one would assume that they would wholeheartedly obey God and serve their fellow beings, but reverse was often the case. The consequential events of their godlessness could further be described in the context of societal decadence which had adverse effects on the citizenry. In this wise, where God was not taken to be the first option in everything, there would be unpleasant and unwanted occurrences such insecurity that could deny people of the divine benefits within and among each other. Indeed, where there is insecurity there would not be growth and development.

Preventive Technique in Judges 6-7

As it has been revealed, lives of the Israelites were full of bitter experiences because of their carefree attitude towards the divine instructions. It could be opined that where there is disobedience the result would not but to be evident in trials and other unpleasant situations. However, out of magnanimity, Yahweh seemed to have shown unconditional love and care to the wayward Israelites. In their bitter experiences Yahweh raised some personalities as judges for the people of Israel to lead in the fight against the persistent enemies. This was hoped to amount to the needed relief (2008).

Amidst oppressions and persecutions of the enemies, Israelites cried to Yahweh. But this rather evoked divine frustration than immediate deliverance because it was abominable to Yahweh (God) for them to embrace disobedience and still wanted divine rescue. However, beyond human worldview or norm, God still made provision of deliverance for these wayward individuals. In this wise, while the people of Israel were being oppressed by their enemies, God could be seen as a tender-hearted leader who ever unconditionally cared for His people through human agents. In effect, He chose some individuals like Gideon as judges in Israel so as to rebuke, strategise preventive technique in relation to the deliverance of his helpless people (2003).

On this note, it is important to submit here that preventive technique against insecurities of Israelites in the hands of their enemies were not efficiently materialised in a vacuum. It was through the competent leadership roles of people like Gideon as judges in Israel which remained indomitable and indubitable security strategy in ancient Israel. Now, as a judge in Israel what were the roles of Gideon? In ancient Israel, the term "judge" was seen as a high ranking office that functioned at different capacities so as to save, serve, and preserve Israelites from both internal and external enemies. Contrary to the conventional roles of "judge" in the contemporary society, in the Bible, "judge" seems to have deeper meaning vis-à-vis more responsibilities. It could be observed presumably in Judges of 4:5; 1 Samuel 7:15-17; and 8:1-3 that while some judges like Deborah exercised judicial duties in the Bible as interpreters of

covenantal law, principally, judges functioned as military leaders to rebuke, defend, and deliver the people of Israel of the consequences of their disobedience (2006).

Likewise, from the second millennium BCE onward, in the ancient Semitic world, the term “judge” was well pronounced. It has been discovered that the title judge was used to qualify human rulers at Mari in northern Mesopotamia and in Phoenicia. In a similar pattern, in the Phoenician colony in North Africa at Carthage and of the Moabites, the officials’ activities also included judicial role. Also, in Genesis 18:25; Judges 11:27; and Isaiah 33:22 the term “judge” was used as title of deities which included the Canaanite gods Baal and Sea (Yamn), as well as to Yahweh (2006).

Expositing the term “judges” as charismatic leaders, Max Weber, the early twentieth-century sociologist, exposit “judges” to mean those who arose in times of emergency. These individuals were not selected or chosen due to their lineage or status, but possibly because of their potential skill. It is significant to note that the selection was often depicted by the words “spirit of Yahweh came upon” them. There are instances in Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; and 15:4 where the phrase “spirit of Yahweh came upon” was used for Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. In a like manner, describing the kings of Israel, the same phrase was adopted in some cases (1 Sam 10:6; 14:6; and 16:13) (2006).

The judges were therefore local tribal leaders who intervened to their respective tribes in times of crisis. This is evident in the manner of their call (rise) and role as is seen in the various narratives. Almost without exception each of the judges comes from different tribes and, appropriately enough, are always involved only with hostile neighbours in their immediate proximity. The number twelve is hardly a coincidence although we do not have one judge for each of the tribes known to us (2008).

It is important to note that the job descriptions of the biblical “judge” were properly defined and specifically mapped or spelt out as a responsible leader who was selected to save, serve, and preserve the lives of his people. It has been discovered that a judge was not chosen because of his personal interest but he was chosen to exhibit his selfless service to God and humanity. As an interpreter of the covenantal law and military officer, judge must be responsive and responsible for the rebuke, defence, and deliverance of his people, ensuring that the people were adequately protected and preserved from the hands of the enemies.

In this pattern, implicitly, Gideon was divinely chosen in the line of Moses and Joshua as a judge who seemed to have achieved more victories with divine aid (2006). That is, Gideon as a judge was selected to oversee the welfare of Israel as a nation. As a people of covenant who were chosen to represent God well in their dealings, sadly, the Israelites chose the part of disobedience. As a result, God delivered them into the hands of Midian (Judg 6:1). In effect, to awaken the Israelites to their, God again allowed their territory to be overrun by the Midianites. Although they did not conquer the land to settle down permanently, however, as nomadic tribes they preferred the people of Israel to work of sowing and later did sweep over the land. With a dreadful force they confiscated the crops, and drove off all the farm animals available (1978).

In the same vein, it has been discovered that because of their evil deeds, the people of Israel did not only suffer in the hands of Midianites but also experienced humiliation and perpetual servitude under the Amalekites and the children of the east (Judg 6:3). In the pattern of Midianites, Amalekites could also be described as nomadic peoples of the deserts south of Palestine and the children of the east designated the great Syrian who severely plundered the people of Israel (1978).

These unwanted incidents that God that allowed to befall the people of Israel could be opined to have brought fear to the mind of every Israelite, and insecurity to the entire land. In effect, where there is fear and insecurity there seems to be reality of emotional instability which could lead to depression and economic retardation that is the resultant agent of poverty and other similar challenges such as militancy and banditry that sustain retard growth and development of any the land.

Since the insecurity and other related problems could usurp growth and development of any locality, meanwhile, in order to attain growth and development sustainable security is second to none. This is argued to be achievable through appropriate and efficient preventive technique. In this wise, having rebuked the people of Israel of their waywardness, God seemed to be interested in saving, serving and preserving their lives and properties through Gideon, His human instrument. As a judge with a competent leadership role, God perhaps chose Gideon to institute appropriate and efficient preventive technique against activities that paved way for the enemies to plunder the land. To Okwueze (2008), Gideon seemed to have regular that singled him out for the fight against the Midianites (Judg 6:11-24).

In this manner, Gideon was prudent he was energetic; he destroyed every idol among his people. The argument could be if the Israelites would claim God's defence and deliverance they must remove every barrier that stood between them and their God. More importantly, Gideon's task was not only to tear down Baal's alter which could be seen as being massive, but to erect on the rock where the sacrifice had consumed an ordered, dignified altar to the Lord (1978). In this pattern, Gideon promptly, punished those Israelites in Transjordan who had refused him assistance. In this wise, he forthrightly strategized and was able to defeat the Midianites (2006).

These activities of Gideon, as a judge in Israel are argued to have been appropriate and efficient preventive technique against every evil that seemed to remove divine security from the Israelites. It is assumed that wherever leadership takes a deliberate responsibility to call evil by its right name and always prompt in the rebuke of evil, there seems to be a sense of moral upgrade that sustains peace, tranquillity, and security of lives and properties.

Nigerian Insecurities

The issues of insecurities in Nigeria are not occurrences of chances. While these issues could be traceable to corruption related activities, on a prerequisite it could be submitted that a corrupt individual is not a product of chance it would rather be outcome of his moral laxity. In this pattern, Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Okorie (2014) assert that Corruption leads to unemployment, unemployment to conflicts and conflicts to insecurity. It is evident that numerous Nigerian youth are preys to terrorists and are easily radicalised due the issues connected to unemployment.

When people are not engaged in meaningful work and are lacking the basic necessities of life, they bring attention to their plight by engaging in destructive behaviour at the slightest provocation. There is a common saying that 'an idle mind (hand) is the devil's workshop.' Nigeria is made up of jobless youths who are ready to do any thing, even engage in criminal activities as a way of engaging themselves if nobody does. These Jobless youths resort to armed robbery, electoral violence, assassinations, kidnapping, and rituals as a way of making a living. This is why according to political activist Odumakin (2012) "with 60 million unemployed youths, Nigeria will have no peace." While we are not oblivious of the fact that there are other reasons why people engage in criminal activities, we cannot rule out the fact that activities resulting from unemployment are indirect consequences of corruption(2014).

Meanwhile, the greatest wants of a sustainable security in Nigeria are the wants of sound but deliberate moral characters that could efficiently and productively curb corruption and its related outcomes such as insecurity. It implies that life seems to be nourished and refreshed in a conducive environment, but where there is insecurity it becomes another narration completely.

In fact, it could be argued that the issues of insecurities are greatly engendering havocs to human lives and properties. Also, it is admitted here that for any nation to thrive in any aspect, the issues of insecurities need to be intentionally suppressed through appropriate and efficient defensive techniques. In this wise, security could be opined to be the pillar upon which every meaningful development could be achieved and sustained. In a like manner, it also plays crucial role in the development of nations for which Nigeria cannot be excepted (2015). Meanwhile, the issue of security of any nation is suggested not to be downplayed particularly in Nigeria where the efforts of Buhari's administration seem not to be yielding any positive result.

In the case, Nigeria insecurity has taken various forms in different parts of the country. In this South-West armed robbers seem to take over. In this pattern, while in the North, cross-border bandits are now operating at ease, kidnapping is thriving in the South-South. On a sad note, these unwelcomed occurrences are now the latest multi-million naira vocation in these various regions. In fact, the disheartening incidents do not except any age. In reality, men, clerics, government officials, academics, professionals, women and children are not spared. Indeed, everyone is now victim (2011).

It is very glaring that "the alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has fuelled the crime rate and terrorists attacks in different parts of the country, leaving unpalatable consequences for the nation's economy and its growth (2014)." In fact, under this current administration of Buhari no place seems to be for lives and properties in Nigeria. In a situation where people live in fear because of insecurity it would not only have adverse effect on the national growth and development it could also influence emotional instability which may lead to

unprecedented illness of any kind. This seems have a considerable place in the Nigerian insecurity.

In corroboration, to this current administration of Buhari, insecurity has become one of the major problems. It is really evident everywhere in Nigeria that lives and properties are no longer saved anywhere. In reality, every Nigerian is under the threat of insecurities ranging from Niger Delta avengers in the Niger Delta to kidnappings in the South-East, and Boko-Harm insurgency and herders-farmers clashes in the North (2018). However, to permanently curb security challenges Nigerian government seems not to be laxative in this regard. According to Ndubuisi-Okolo and Anigbuogu (2019) monies are allocated to the various tiers of Nigerian government at all levels for the development, including the security of lives and properties of their areas but no availed. The possibility would be that these monies are diverted by those in position of authority into their private purse.

In a similar pattern, notwithstanding the efforts of the Nigerian government in putting security agencies in place to curb insecurities, no desirable results have been recorded as far as insecurities are concerned. Still, Nigeria is truly witnessing unprecedented incidences of insecurities, ranging from the activities of Fulani herdsmen; Boko-Haram insurgencies, armed robber attacks, kidnapping, political/religious crisis, and murder. Insecurities in Nigeria have also resulted in the destruction of oil facilities by Niger Delta militants, Child Abduction/Trafficking and to say but few(2019). Therefore, it seems appropriate to investigate the biblical preventive technique vis-à-vis Nigerian insecurities.

Biblical Preventive Technique as a Panacea for Nigerian Insecurities

As it is being discovered in the book of Judges 6 and 7, disobedience led to evil which was the principal prerequisite of various insecurities that seemed to threaten the lives and properties of Israel. In this regard, in the biblical world, during the era of Gideon as a judge in Israel in particular, the study reveals the preventive technique against insecurities to be effective, efficient, and productive. In this wise, it could be established here that as it was in ancient world so is prevention not only better but also easier and cheaper than cure in this modern society.

As a competent and patriotic leader in Israel, Gideon seemed to be so responsible, responsive, and prompt in his preventive technique initiative. Accepting his divine call to be an assignment of service to God and humanity, Gideon seemed so interested and intentional to take bull by the horns. He would not only rebuke the Israelites of their perpetual evil but would also strategise the means of curbing the root cause of the evil through the removal of the idol which turned their minds against moral responsibilities.

Then as it is in contemporary society, Nigeria in particular, the study postulates that moral responsibilities would not only serve as an effective, efficient, and productive preventive technique against insecurities, but would also nurture and sustain the security of lives and properties. In this pattern, where Buhari led administration would be both competent, patriotic, and deliberate in the preventive technique initiative against insecurities, there would be results that are not formidable. Similar to the disobedience of the biblical era, particularly judges' dispensation, where Nigerian leadership considers corruption to be the root cause of the present indiscriminative insecurities and all hands are deliberate but sincere on deck there would be nurtured and sustained security indiscriminately in the Nigerian

society. In the pattern of the biblical preventive technique initiative, if Nigerian leadership exemplarily removes and destroys every systemic corrupt practice, moral responsibilities would be embraced and evident as norms, unemployment and poverty would be reduced, insecurities would be prevented, and there would be nurtured and preserved security in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Prevention is not only better but also easier and cheaper than cure says the word of elders. In this wise, it could be concluded here that to prevent any ugly occurrence would only do more good than harm to any concerned individual. In effect, prevention is an act that is considered to be efficiency and productive technique for attaining indiscriminative and sustainable security in any locality, Nigerian society in particular. Prevention, if promptly and appropriately embraced and applied would not hinder insecurities, but would also build, nurture, and preserve of security of lives and properties.

While the study discovers the root cause of insecurities in the biblical times to be disobedience, however, the Israelites' patriotism to moral responsibility in the society is seen as the efficient and productive 'preventive technique' against insecurities in the land. In a like manner, while insecurities have become perpetually great challenges to the Nigerian lives and properties, notwithstanding, acknowledging and adopting the biblical 'preventive technique' would be the right choice for every Nigerian.

In this wise, through the exploration of the book of Judges 6 and 7 the work considers the preventive technique adopted by Gideon, a judge in Israel to be an efficient and productive weapon against insecurities. Indeed, if it could be deliberately embraced and applied by the Nigerian leadership, insecurities would be drastically controlled and curbed. In effect, there could not but flourishing and sustainable security in the Nigerian society.

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