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An Examination of Social Injustice in 2 Samuel 12:1-13 and its Lessons for Political and Church Leaders in Nigeria

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Abstract

Social injustice is one of the problems confronting the Nigerian society especially, the political class and which must be quickly addressed. Research have shown that although, many leaders in the Nigerian public, private and even religious groups have failed in upholding justice, that of political class is more alarming. This study examines the effects and response to social injustice in Nigeria with an attempt to re-evaluate the critical meaning and usage of words in 2 Samuel 12:1-14 and its relevance to Nigerian political leaders. The methodologies adopted are historical, exegetical and empirical. The findings showed that just as social injustice and misuse of leadership authority are prevalent in the time of Prophet Nathan, so it is in the Nigerian society today. 2 Samuel 12:1-14 highlights the displeasure of God against King David concerning his infidelity, ungratefulness and disloyalty; he was therefore rebuked and called to repentance through Prophet Nathan. While the study recommends that Nigerian leaders should encourage social justice in the society by their words and actions, it concluded that the prophetic ministry in contemporary Nigerian church must develop the boldness to confront and call to order, political leaders found with oppressive attitudes and injustices, to have social restoration in the society.

Keywords: King David, Prophet Nathan, Nigerians, Leadership, Social Injustice.

Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that social injustice has been one of the causes of affliction in Nigeria's development. Thus, without mincing words, the phenomenon has ravaged society and destroyed most of what is held as cherished values. Unfortunately, the political leadership classes saddled with the responsibility of directing the affairs of the nation have been the major culprit in perpetuating this act. Social injustice according to Michael Austin is a wrongful action against individuals within society. This occurs when the unequal get treated equally while equals get treated unequally.¹ Since Nigeria gained independence in 1960, tribalism, nepotism, corruption, insecurity, discrimination, rigging of elections has dominated the economic, political, judicial, cultural, religious and ethnic lives and minds of many Nigerians. Cornelius Fawenu says, social injustice in contemporary Nigerian society is similar to what happened at the time of Prophet Nathan in ancient Israel and the message God sent to rebuke King David about his oppressive behaviour and the killing of Uriah. This is relevant to many leaders in Nigerian society, especially the political leaders.² It has been noted also that, this menace also affects individuals and groups in different range from violation of basic human rights, social needs and discrimination.

It is unfortunate that, in spite the fact that a large number of politicians are members of the various religious bodies in Nigeria, it has been alleged that a lot of fraud and atrocities in the political circle are rampant.³ In Nigeria today, as in many African countries, the church seems not to have been able to exert her prophetic influence over the leaders. Church leaders who are supposed to be God's spokesmen seem not to have the boldness to challenge their church members who are involved in decadence because they are in political leadership positions. Taiye Opoola in an interview, assert that the church was given a leadership mandate when Jesus said that His followers are the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13-16). This presents the kind of influence that is expected from the church as a change and preservative agent. She is, therefore, supposed to play this role by using her prophetic voice to call the political leadership of the Nation to order when they err.⁴

This paper examines the text of 2 Samuel 12:1-14 and looks at the role of Nathan as a prophetic voice during the reign of King David, his confrontation with David after the murder of Uriah and the takeover of his wife. The message in the book of 2 Samuel 12:1-14 has been analyzed and interpreted with the aim to address social injustice in the Nigerian Society, particularly among the politicians using the contents of the selected text. It is expected that the paper will serve as a challenge to the political and Church leaders in Nigeria.

David as a King in Ancient Israel

The narrative of the books of Samuel communicated one of the important transitions in history of Israelite activities, namely from the leadership of the Judges to the establishment of a monarchy. It encompasses the entire ancient Israelite history and establishment of the state with new political and religious structures.

¹Michael J. Austin, *Social Injustice and Social Works*, Retrieved on June 20, 2024, from [Htt/en.Wikipedia.org/wiki.social_injustice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/social_injustice).

²Oral Interview, Reverend' Cornelius Fawenu, immediate past secretary, CAN, Kwara State Chapter, at his church, 03/04/2024.

³Oral Interview with Emmanuel Obafemi, The Registrar, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, 06/04/2023.

⁴Interview, Evangelist Professor, Taiye Opoola at his office, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, 03/05/2023.

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From the biblical standpoint, kingship over Israel was prerogative of Yahweh (Judg. 8:23, 1 Sam 8:7; 12:12). During the period of the Judges, the Lord empowered individuals as leaders of Israel. However, with the oppression of the Israelites by the Philistines, the need for a king was felt more than ever. James Soggin submits that the people at this period desire for glorious victories under the supremacy of a warlike race, to fight enemies which had settled on the western coast of Palestine. This warlike race from its base was forcing its conquests into the heart of Israel. In Samuel's day, Israel began to have kings which were supposed to be defenders of their people because the hope of judgeship had been disappointing through the corruption of the sons of Samuel.⁵ The functions of the king was to maintain justice, both in domestic and in an international affair.

The monarchy began with Saul, the first king. When Saul died, Israel needed a new king and David was the sensible choice. He had already been chosen by Samuel to succeed Saul (1 Sam. 15:1-8) and had already become well known among the tribes of Israel. He had killed Goliath and had become a successful leader in Saul's army. He had shown himself as a humble man in his attitude to Saul. He was able to gather a large band of men which he trained as an effective army. David had gained approval of the Philistines without betraying his loyalty to his own people (1Sam 27:8-12) According to Norman Gottwald; all these made David a suitable choice as the next king in Israel.⁶ The people of Judah welcomed David as their new king (2 Sam. 2:1-14). David was first anointed king at Hebron, a place which was once an abode for Abraham by the people of Judah (Gen 13:18). After this, he was eventually made king over the whole of Israel (2 Sam 5:1-3). In contrast to Saul, David's spiritual sensitivity and devotion to God made him a suitable candidate for the throne. Archer assert that David committed a number of serious errors, and these did not come out of ignorance of what was right, but from been impulsively driven by the need of the moment without reflecting on the consequences. David's lies cost people their lives (1 Sam 21); his temper jeopardized his royal destiny (1 Sam 25); his unwillingness to take firm disciplinarian action contributed to the bloodshed within his family (2 Sam 13-14) and his pride brought a pestilence that devastated the land (2 Sam 24). In spite of all these, David remained God's choice. He was godly but was not immune to lapses in judgment.⁷

Background Study of the Text: David and Uriah's Wife 2 Samuel 11:1-27.

The passage in 11 Samuel 11:1-27 presents the background study of the story of David decadence against Uriah and the confrontation of Prophet Nathan. Doris Carson assert that David stayed at home in Jerusalem instead of leading his troops in his military engagement because it seems he found himself in a tragically compromising situation.⁸ However, Fredrick Bruce feels that verse 1 does not imply that David's duty was to accompany the army as his presence in person was hardly necessary when an Israelite victory was so certain. The Ammonites' army was quickly destroyed and its capital city besieged. By now the Israelite army was wonderful and David's position was secure.⁹

⁵James A. Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament, Third Edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 2006), 151.

⁶Norman K. Gottwald, *A Light to the Nations: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), 33.

⁷George Archer, *A Survey of the Old Testament Introduction*, 41.

⁸Doris A. Carson, R.T Trance, J.A Motyer and G.J Weaham *New Bible Commentary* (Leicester; Illinois: intervarsity Press, 1994), 327.

⁹Fredrik F. Bruce, *International Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapid: Zondervan Publisher, 1986), 381.

While relaxing on the upper floor, David caught sight of Bathsheba, who was taking her bath. He inquired about her and he was told that she was the wife of Uriah the Hittite who was probably a mercenary in David's army.¹⁰ Dan Tsumura avers that the note in Verse 4 about her uncleanness means she had just finished menstruation when David had a carnal knowledge of her. Therefore, the pregnancy was due to David's adultery with her. An issue of concern is the fact that Bathsheba's morality seems also questionable, since there was no record of any resistance on her part; after all it takes two to tangle. However, the biblical author puts all the blame on David.¹¹ In his comment, Nicolas Geisler says David was the king and was acting in a very high-handed fashion, abusing his power and position. Attempt by anyone to resist the request of the king may result into untimely death of such individuals.¹²

David's attempt to force Uriah to "go home" to have intercourse with his wife was fruitless (6-13). David Howard opines that the soldiers probably took an oath at the beginning of the campaign to abstain from sexual relations during war (I Sam.21:4-5). It is probable that David's suggestion to Uriah to wash his feet in verse 8 refers to a ritual that would release him from this oath of sexual abstinence. Uriah on the other hand had a high idea of the duties of a serving soldier, and so he did not return to his own home but to the battlefield. David had hoped that his adultery would remain hidden and the pregnancy would be transferred to Uriah. Unfortunately for him, Uriah's action terminated that hope, and the alternative was to kill Uriah.¹³ David may actually be afraid of the public ridicule the issue would bring and therefore decided to kill Uriah through the help of Joab, his army commander. David supposed that the killing of Uriah had solved the problem not knowing that his atrocity was clearly seen by God. Joab plan the death, but David was the real murderer. Verse 27 confirms that the whole truth was known to God.

Textual Analysis of 2 Samuel 12:1-14

This section is the Textual Analysis of II Samuel 12:1-14 and this gives an understanding of the passage. It attempts to analyze the verses of the passage using exegetical framework. Also, it focuses on critical issues raised, roles of additional words from the passage functions and how they affect the meaning of the sentences.

Vs. 1 "And the Lord sent Nathan to David".

Two critical issues were raised in verse one. The first one is found in the first phrase **וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֶת-נָתָן** "and the LORD sent Nathan" is added with *na-bi* "prophet". In the codices manuscript, it also follows in the same pattern (PC Mss) and as it was seen in the codex Sinaiticus where similar title was added. The phrase written in the mentioned manuscripts means "and the LORD sent Nathan the Prophet" instead of **וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֶת-נָתָן** "and the LORD sent Nathan" as it is in the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS) recorded in this passage. The addition of the word *na-bi* "the prophet" to the phrase has some implications for the passage.¹⁴ This study asserts that these words gave added information about the personality of whom the LORD sent. Second, it differentiates

¹⁰Alan F. Segal, *Review of Sinning in the Hebrew Bible, by reviewer of Biblical Literature*, New York, 56.

¹¹Dan T. Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (Grand Rapids: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 68.

¹²Nicolas L. Geisler, *A popular Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker 1996), 134.

¹³David M. Howard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996), 523.

¹⁴K Elliger and W. Rudolph, *BibliaHebraicaStuttgartensia, Hebrew Edition*, (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2007), 220-221.

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who is the man among others bearing the name Nathan" as there may be many persons bearing the name as at that time. The additional word actually clarifies the real person sent to King David irrespective of other people that bear the name Nathan.

Vs 3. "But the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children: it used to eat of his morsel, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him."

One critical issue raised in this verse is found in the first phrase *כַּבֵּת לִּי-לוֹ, בְּכֶבֶת* which "for daughter" in manuscript PC MSS cite instead of *כַּבֵּת* "as or like a daughter" as it is used in BHS manuscript. The difference is the use of kaph *כ* preposition translated "for, at, to" instead of lamed preposition meaning "to, for, at". Thus the phrase is written in the mentioned manuscripts as "and it became for a daughter to him" instead of "and it became like a daughter to him" as it is in the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS) used in this passage.¹⁵ Based on the fact that all other manuscripts agreed with BHS, including the oldest Old Testament manuscript, Aleppo Codex and Leningrad Codex dated 920CE and 1008 CE respectively. It is therefore safe to agree with BHS in the use of "like a daughter" instead of for daughter".¹⁶ Also, the additional word reveals the intimate relationship between the ewe and the poor man.

Vs. 6 "And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

The only issue raised in this verse is the use of *אַרְבַּעַתְּיָם* in *textus Graecus ex recensione Luciani*. The word is translated "sevenfold, seven times more". The manuscript *Graecus ex recensione Luciani* is a Greek version of Old Testament. *אַרְבַּעַתְּיָם* "seven fold" was used to replace *אַת-הַכֶּבֶשֶׂה, יְשַׁלֵּם* "and this ewe he will repay four" as it is used in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia BHS. Since the Septuagint is a later translation of the Old Testament, the replacement cannot be considered as the likely original word used in the original text. Thus, the text presented by BHS is therefore retained.¹⁷ This study opines that the word used in the passage as presented by Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia BHS "and this ewe he will repay fourfold" is similar to the oldest manuscript of the Old Testament.

Vs. 9 "Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight?"

There are two issues raised in the verse. The first is that *אֶת-דְּבָר* "word of" is missing in *test Graecus ex recensione Luciani*. The exclusion will thus render the phrase as "why did you despise the LORD" this can be seen as a later redactor omission to smooth the reading of the passage. The text of the passage as presented by BHS is therefore retained. The other issue is the replacement of *בְּעֵינַי* "in my eyes" with *בְּעֵינַי אֵרֶךְ* "in Lord's eyes". In the manuscript, this could also be treated as the same with the former. The manuscripts mentioned are of later dates.¹⁸ This study therefore asserts that the text as presented by Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia BHS should take precedence over other manuscripts. It could therefore be adopted as a reliable manuscript for research work.

Vs. 11 "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house;'"

¹⁵Francis Brown, S. B. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown- Driver –Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 400.

¹⁶Aleppo Codex, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* 3 no. 2, 13.

¹⁷Harris, R. Laird, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 523.

¹⁸Duncan M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature*, 10.

In this verse, there were two critical issues in multiple plus quam 20 codices manuscript ;לְרֵעִי; "to your companion" is replaced with ;לְרֵעִי; "to your companion". The difference here is that the first was pointed with vowels while the last was not. However, it does not alter the translation of the passage and its meaning. It is therefore retained. Furthermore, עם "with, beside, by, among" joined with makkeph to "with your wives" is replaced with אִתְּךָ to form "your wives". אִתְּ is translatable, it is just a particle of direct object or direct object marker.¹⁹

It therefore, changes the phrase as מְקִימִים עֲלֶיךָ רַעַה מִבֵּיתְךָ, וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶת-נְשֵׂיךָ לְעֵינֶיךָ, וְנָתַתִּי לְרֵעִיךָ; וְשָׁכַבְתָּ. Considering the grammatical ordering rules, this study asserts that the text as presented in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia BHS would likely be the nearest to the original text. This shows the meaning and intention of the passage as presented in the original manuscript.

Interpretation of 11 Samuel 12:1-14 and Its Lessons for Political and Church Leaders in Nigeria

This section examines the Interpretation of II Samuel 12:1-14 and attempts to analyze and interpret the verses with the exegetical arrangement of the passage. It also intends to relate the understanding of the passage to convey lessons to Church and Political leaders in Nigeria.

א וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֶת-נָתָן, אֶל-דָּוִד; וַיָּבֵא אֵלָיו, וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ שְׁנֵי אַנְשִׁים הָיוּ בְּעִיר אַחַת, אֶחָד עָשִׂיר, וְאֶחָד רָאשׁ. 1. "And the Lord sent Nathan to David. And Nathan came to him and said there were two men in the same town: one a man of great wealth, and the other a poor man."

This verse indicates that prophet Nathan was sent to King David for a particular purpose to address the issue of injustice involving a leader and the adherents. Thus, the phrase "and the LORD sent Nathan" serves as both link phrase and introductory phrase to the Chapter. It refers to God as the source of the message delivered by Prophet Nathan who has been prepared to communicate the message to King David. In the opinion of Harris Laid, Prophet Nathan was commissioned as divine agent sent to King David, such as in the case of angels to humanity. It was used to the sense of being commissioned for a special assignment, action or as a prophet. Thus, God instructed Prophet Nathan to convey a special message of His displeasure as well as the judgment to King David as consequences of his wickedness to Uriah who was killed as a result of King David infidelity with his wife. The lesson derived from this text according to Ben Philbeck, is the fact that divine message is readily available to caution and judge any individual who does evil, notwithstanding the person's relationship with God.²⁰ Leaders, particularly, Church and political leaders in Nigeria should not use their position to do evil because such will not go unpunished. Divine heralds will surely forward messages of judgment to the culprit like in the case of King David.

2. ב לְעֵשִׂיר, הָיָה צֹאן וּבָקָר--הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד. "The rich man had very many flocks and herds;"

Prophet Nathan approached the issue with narratives of two people of great differences, a rich man and poor man. Rush Clement avers that, in ancient Israel, parable was often used as tools to communicate divine messages to individual or the nation as a whole. The word translated "rich" or "wealth" in this text points to the undecided attitude in the Old Testament on riches and wealth.²¹ The verse opened with "for the rich". This indicates direction, result of transition and change in the life of the rich man as against that of the poor. The use of the word "rich" here referred to wealth and riches in tribal period to the blessings in materials of farmers in cattle, sheep as can be seen in Genesis 13:2.

¹⁹David. M. Howard, *An Introduction To The Old Testament Historical Books*, 143.

²⁰Ben F. Philbeck, Jr. "1-2 Samuel," in *The Boardman Bible Commentary*, 3 no. 1 Samuel- Nehemiah, 45.

²¹Rush Clement, *A Royal Privilege: Dinning in the Presence of the Great King*, 70.

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In fact, abundance of crops and livestock is seen as signs of wealth, blessing and power from God.²² In other word, this shows that the rich man had been blessed by Yahweh. He had “herds and cattle”. In the Bible, this refers to group of sheep or group of sheep mixed with goats usually kept as important source of food, milk, and cultic sacrifice (Amos 6:4, Genesis 31:19, Numbers 15:3. Deut. 32:14). Richard Bailey opines that the rich man had great possession of domestic animals raised and reared for domestic purposes including feeding his house hold as well as his visitors. He had no reason to look elsewhere to take care of his needs.²³ The lesson derived from this text is a lack of contentment by the rich man. Though, he had so many flocks and herds, he was not satisfied with what he possessed and coveted the only lamb of the poor man. Many Church and political leaders in Nigeria have enough money and wealth but never satisfied. In June 2024, amidst the high cost of living, the federal government purchased SUV Cars worth 160 million each for senators in Nigeria. This issue have generated a lot of concern for Nigerians who in their opinion can be describe as oppression of the poor.²⁴ Another painful experience in Nigeria according to Emmanuel Obafemi is the fact that while many Church leaders collect all kinds of offerings from their members in the name of sowing seed for blessings from God, some political leaders especially state Governors are so greedy that they collect all forms of taxes from poor people who are managing to make ends meet. For instance, many Governors collect taxes from petty Traders, pepper sellers and those who sell common vegetables to survive.²⁵ Church and Political leaders must desist from this type of character to avert the wrought of God.

ג וְלִרְשָׁאִין-כֹּל, כִּי אִם-כֶּבֶשֶׂה אַחַת קִטְנָה אֲשֶׁר קָנָה, וַיְחִיָּהּ, וַתִּגְדֹּל עִמּוֹ וְעַם-בְּנָיו יִחְדּוּ; מִפְּתוֹ תֹאכַל וּמִכֶּסֶּוֹ. כָּבֵת. "But the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children: it used to eat of his morsel, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him."

The verse indicates circumstances of the poor man and the position the lamb plays in the life of the poor man before he experienced injustice. Rush Clement asserts that, this is a pointer to the situation that the poor man in the narratives was maltreated. Furthermore, Prophet Nathan gave an account of a grievous injury done to the poor man by the rich man that he could not challenge the actions or ask for justice. The text illustrates the condition of the poor man that was afflicted by a superior power.²⁶

The word "like a daughter" indicates the gender and the association between the poor man and the lamb. According to Rudolf Klein, it was used to indicate the relationship between the poor man and the ewe especially the intimacy. Hence, the poor man had only one ewe precious to him, raised and reared for domestic purposes. This could only mean that this lamb was a pet or favorite in the family.²⁷ The lesson derived from this text, is the fact that the poor man cherished the lamb by taking

²²KrushElliger and W. Rudolph *BibliaHebraicaStuttgartensia, Hebrew Edition*, (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2007), 220-22 1.

²³Richard C. Bailey. David In Love And War: The Pursuit of Power in 2 Samuel 10-12. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series*, 30.

²⁴Interview with Professor YemiOke on “State of the Nation” (Politics Today), Channels8 Television, Lagos 25/06/24.

²⁵Interaction with Emmanuel Dada Obafemi, Registrar, University of Ilorin, in his office 23/06/23.

²⁶Rush Clement, *A Royal Privilege: Dinning in the Presence of the Great King*, 70.

²⁷Rudolf W. Klein. *Samuel, books of" The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), 200.

care of it very well like a daughter to him and did not look unto another person's property. Similarly, in Nigeria today, while many church leaders take away some precious things such as cars, houses, lands and so on from members in the name of providing divine solution to their problems, some political leaders take away what seems to be precious from citizens. They empty national treasury and keep for themselves and their families, money meant to execute public projects. Many state Governors also takes what seems precious to their citizens such as lands, demolition of their buildings and shops in the name of road extensions or operation clean the state without any compensation to the affected citizens. These actions cannot be giving any other name but wickedness to the poor citizens.

ד וַיָּבֵא הַלֵּךְ, לְאִישׁ הָעֵשִׂיר, וַיִּחְמַל לְקַחַת מִצְאָנוֹ וּמִבְּקָרוֹ, לַעֲשׂוֹת לְאֶרְחֵי הַבָּא-לוֹ; וַיִּקַּח, אֶת-כֶּבֶשֶׁת הָאִישׁ .
Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flocks or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared it for the man who had come to him”.

This verse connects other texts, and serves as a continuation of the narratives in the passage. The passage explains the circumstances of the rich man before he laid hand on the lamb of the poor man. He was unwilling to take out of his abundance flocks to entertain his visitor. It indicates the visitor that came to the rich man and the event that follow the visit and how it affected the neighbor of the rich man negatively as a sign of injustice. Johnson Adediran says, the word to take" in the concept of the narratives indicates "force" and this is a common occurrence from some leaders in the contemporary Nigerian society that need redress particularly, in the political leadership. For example, even when citizens voted people of their choice to occupy a particular position during election, tugs are sent by some politicians to hijack ballot boxes with the use of force by to make election favourable to another candidate.²⁸

Many people in the position of political power in Nigeria used their offices to enrich themselves and also cheat on the masses, rob them of the legitimate right without been challenged by church leaders. In his submission, Fawenu submitted that many Prophets in Nigeria appears docile and are not speaking the truth against politicians who commit evil as Nathan did. Rather, many so called Prophets and ministers of God are "spiritual advisers" to these deadly politicians, who collect large sum of money to build mega Churches. They collect large 'Greek gifts' and invariably sell their conscience. They would rather preach prosperity and materialism to political leaders instead of challenging their moral decadence.²⁹ Prophets engaging in this type of behavior should learn from the integrity of Nathan and ensure that justice is maintained in all interaction with political leader in order to reduce social injustice in the society. as it was in the case of the encounter of Prophet Nathan with King David.

ה וַיִּחַר-אַף דָּוִד בְּאִישׁ, מְאֹד; וַיֹּאמֶר, אֶל-נָתָן, חִי-יְהוָה, כִּי בֶן-מָוֶת הָאִישׁ הָעֵשִׂי זֶה...
Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man: and he said to Nathan."As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die;"

This verse commences with the reaction of King David to the prophet narratives. According to the phrase "and David kindled his anger greatly" means, he was displeased with this kind of injustice under his administration and consequently pronounced judgment in fierce anger. According to Francis Bruce, the phrase, "and David kindled his anger greatly" serves as indicator of reaction to the prophet

²⁸Oral Interview, Pastor Johnson Adediran, District Superintendent, CAC Araromi, Tanke, Ilorin, 05/07/2023.

²⁹Oral Interview, Reverend' Cornelius Fawenu.

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story in the passage. However, the pronouncement done in anger and haste indirectly accompanies the speaker as the offender. In the perspective of this study, it was used to show the response that follows the accounts presented to King David in the narratives by the prophet. Francis Bruce says, reactions to difficult situation should be under control in order to avoid greater future consequences like in the case of King David.³⁰ Church and political leaders in Nigeria must learn from this text that judgment should not be pronounced in anger but rather give room for proper investigation in order to get to the root of every matter to avoid future disaster. It is common knowledge that it is the honest poor that get arrested by overzealous police officers on patrol in the mere suspicion that their haggard, hungry looks suggest they might be criminals and dumped and forgotten in detention.

6. וְאֵת-הַכֶּבֶשֶׂה, יִשְׁלַם אַרְבַּעַתַּיִם: עֶקֶב, אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה, וְעַל, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-חָמַל. "And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

This verse serves as both a link phrase and an introductory phrase to the text intention which shows the response of King David. This illustrates the measure of restitution expected from the wrongdoer according to the Holy Scripture on what should be paid back, which must be in fourfold, (Exod. 22:1). As a result of this narrative, the prophet intended to get judgement of King David. Having consider it to be a case under his leadership and not doubting when he heard it from Prophet Nathan; he instantly gave judgment against the offender, and confirmed it with an oath, (2Sa 12:5, 6). That the culprit must die as the Lord lives for the injustice as a result of taking away the lamb of the poor man, he should restore four-fold, according to the law four sheep for a sheep (Ex 22:1). The acts of wickedness and murder without mercy goes along with four folds' restoration as it was written in the word of the Lord. The lessons to church and political leaders here is the courage to accept mistakes and be ready to pay the consequences thereof.

ז וַיֹּאמֶר נָתַן אֶל-דָּוִד, אַתָּה הָאִישׁ; כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲנֹכִי מִשְׁחִיתִיךָ לְמַלְכָּה עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאַנְכִי. "Nathan said to David, "You are the man. Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, "I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul"

This verse is a continuation of the previous verses of the narratives, which exposed the culprit in the person of King David. He was called to righteousness. He was reminded of how he was anointed as a king and how he benefited from divine protection. However, he misused the privileges given to him, walked contrary to the will of the Lord and put the name of the Lord into reproach. Ben Philbeck submits that, the text here serves as a directional sign of drawing personal attention to the person responsible for the action. In the beginning the prophet used allegory to pass the message across; however at this stage he directed the message to King David as the offender represented in the narrative intention.³¹ Many political leaders in Nigeria accumulated wealth by stealing government money and this is known by some security agencies and church leaders but nothing is done or pronounced against them. As the secret of evil deed was revealed in the life of King David in ancient Israel, Prophets and church leaders should be bold to confront political leaders who are revealed for corrupt practices and stop all forms of injustice in the society. Church leaders must continue to emphasise that injustice goes along with greater consequences irrespective of the individual's position.

³⁰Francis. F Bruce, *International Bible Commentary*.

³¹Ben F. Philbeck, Jr. "1-2 Samuel," in *The Boardman Bible Commentary*.

ט מדוע בזית את-דבר יהוה, לעשות הרע בעיני בעיני, את אוריה החתי הפית בחרב, ואת-אשתו לקחת לך, 9. Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword of the Ammonites"

This verse commences with a question "Why do you despise the word of the LORD" This statement revealed God's displeasure through the prophet. He confronted King David of the evil he had done in the sight of God. And how he had planned the death of Uriah the Ammonites and murdered him. Though, King David was acquainted with the commandment of the Lord he despised the word of God in the acts of infidelity and murder. John Egbeniyi says that King David action here was a great level of injustice as it led to the death of a poor man. Furthermore, after the murder of the husband he took the wife of the victim to be his wife. He was not satisfied with the provision of God in his life. Church leaders and political leaders should be contented in all their dealings.³² Nigeria is a country where government has no provision to cater for the poor, yet is always out hounding and criminalizing many of them that have decided to live by hawking and doing sundry works but yet oppressed in diverse ways. The lesson derived from this text is, that having taking oath of office with either the Bible or Quran on swearing day, all acts of injustices by any political leader in Nigeria against the poor could be regarded as great injustice punishable by God.

י ועתה, לא-תסור חרב מביתך--עד-עולם: עקב, כי בזתני, ותקח את-אשת אוריה החתי, להיות לך. 10. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised the, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife."

This verse commences with "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house. The prophet replaced allegory with direct messages, pronounced the punishment to the culprit for the evil acts he committed against the Lord. The lesson derived from this text according to Michael Ajiroba is the fact that to look down on the word of the Lord could bring trouble and punishment of God upon a particular leader and his household irrespective of the connection. He submitted that many political leaders in Nigeria often neglect the oath made with their religious books when they later get to office. To him, they must hold the word of the Lord with great value in order to avoid the judgment of God. Unfaithfulness in responsibility permits judgment and punishment of God upon any wrongdoer.³³ Political leaders in Nigeria should learn from the experience of King David to be good examples in the society.

יא פה אמר יהוה, הנני מקים עליך רעה מביתך, ולקחת את-נשיך לעיניך, ונתתי לרעיך; ושכב עם-נשיך, 11. Thus says the LORD, 'Behold. I will raise up evil against you out of your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun".

This statement announced the judgment of God upon King David that evil will be against him from his household. Opoola says, consequences of evil deeds cannot be under estimated or overvalued because only time will make known the effect in the life of the culprit and the households. This implies that the offender and the house will suffer the consequences of their leaders' evil actions.³⁴ Church and political leaders in Nigeria must not sow the seeds of evil for the present generation and

³²Oral Interview, Pastor John Egbeniyi, Master Builder Bible Church, Ilorin, 04/09/2023.

³³Oral Interview, Pastor Michael Ajiroba, Christ Apostolic Church, Halleluyah Chapel, Ilorin, 05/06/2024.

³⁴Oral Interview, Evangelist Professor TaiyeOpoola, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

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the unborn generation in order to prevent future disaster. King David did not put this in to consideration while involved in infidelity and murder. Drawing lesson from the above text, James Atoyebi says, leaders in the society and particularly political leaders in Nigeria should do regular reassessment of all their actions and decisions. They should examine the types of seeds they are sowing for their households in order to prevent future problem and punishment of God. He submitted that betrayals of trust in any position of responsibility could permit punishment of God upon any personality and their house hold.³⁵

12. **יב כי אתה, עשית בסתר; ואני, אעשה את-הדבר הזה, נגד כל-ישראל, ונגד השמש.** "For you did it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."

This statement demonstrates that there is no secret deed hidden before the Lord, everything is opened to Him. According to Egbeniyi, it was declared to the culprit that the consequences and punishment will be in the open. This declaration manifested in the family of King David through the act of incest among the children and rebellion against his Kingship and later lost four of his sons.³⁶ The lesson derived from this text, is the fact that wickedness demonstrated by any church, political leader and individuals in the secret may be paid back in the open. For instance, it might lead to house hold misfortune, which could be avoided if the particular person walks according to the law of the Lord.

13. **יג ויאמר דוד אל-נתן, חטאתי ליהוה; ויאמר נתן אל-דוד, גם-יהוה העביר חטאתך--לא תמות.** David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die".

This statement announced the responses and speech of King David conviction and repentance from the evil he committed. Though forgiven; he will face the judgment and the punishment with his household. Furthermore, it includes the assurance given by the prophet to King David that he would not die, but be preserved to repent from wicked ways and turn to God. Ajiroba assert that, there is great lesson noteworthy in this expression of the prophet "The LORD also has put away your sin: you shall not die". This expression shows that King David found mercy in the sight of the Lord that calls for repentance from his wicked ways and his turn to God. So, if erring Church or political leaders in Nigeria will repent and do the will of God, by retracing their steps back from all forms of injustice, not only will they be forgiving of their sins but, God's protection could also be guarantee for them and their households.³⁷

Conclusion

The significance of Exegesis of 11 Samuel 12:1-14 is not merely complementary but to some extent a comprehensive study of King David and Prophet Nathan as leaders in ancient Israel. How the King responded to the prophet's message, requesting for mercy of his evil actions and repentance certainly has a moral lesson for all examinations. The passage composition focuses on critical meaning of additional words and how these have affected the passages in the narratives were examined along synopsis of all the characters in the narratives. Also, the reconciliatory and restorative role of Prophet Nathan in the life of King David were considered.

³⁵Oral Interview, Pastor James Atoyebi, Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries at the Regional Headquarters of the Church, Tanke, Ilorin, 04/03/2024.

³⁶Oral Interview, Pastor John Egbeniyi, Ilorin.

³⁷Oral Interview, Pastor Michael Ajiroba, Ilorin.

The methods presented in this paper are meant to assist readers on textual criticism as well as casual users to observe the variety of words and complexities of their usage. In particular, the language of the passage and the terms used was discussed in detail. The paper illustrates the important steps in the exegetical process with few examples. This study would be useful and meaningful in defining the language of the passage on the basis of textual critical functions.

It is recommended that, if integrity in political and religious leadership would ever be attained in Nigeria, the Nigerian Prophets have a role to play as voices of the Church. Their role should center on challenging and rebuking erring leaders in the society with wisdom irrespective of their position or status just as Prophet Nathan to David- Bathsheba-Uriah narrative. The paper concluded that modern day Prophets should be courageous to challenge political leaders who oppress the poor and takes away what seems to be most valuable in their lives." This, step will bring a comprehensive solution to the problem of injustice, exploitation and other vices which go unchallenged in the life of political and religious leaders in Nigerian society.