

**THE EFFECT OF SEMITIC PRIMAL RELIGION ON ISRAELITE RELIGION: A PATTERN
FOR A CONTEXTUAL BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IN NIGERIAN CHRISTIANITY**

**FOLUSO OLUGBENGA BABATUNJI
(STUDENT NUMBER: 207510574)**

**SUPERVISOR
PROFESSOR GERALD WEST**

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DECLARATION

I, Foluso Olugbenga Babatunji PhD candidate hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, and shall only be submitted for the purposes of the above mentioned degree.

Foluso Olugbenga Babatunji

Date

As the supervisor, I hereby approve this thesis for submission.

Professor Gerald West

Date

University of KwaZulu-Natal

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ABSTRACT

This research adds to the many voices from African Biblical scholarship, contributing towards an analysis of how Africans relate to the Bible in the way they do. While social, political, and even cultural factors are important, this thesis examines the role of primal religion in African interpretation of the Bible.

The perception of Western scholars of African primal religion has not always been that wholesome. But this study has brought to light how significant a role primal religion has played in African interpretation of the Bible, particularly for those to whom the Bible is a key resource in their struggle for basic existence. Primal religion in Nigeria (specifically among the Yoruba) serves as a fundamental tool in the interpretation of the Bible. The enduring effectiveness of primal religion, this thesis argues, can be found in the weekly sermons preached in Nigerian churches, churches that are growing in membership. In other words, this kind of interpretation appeals to the African person in ways that missionary and colonial forms of biblical interpretation do not.

The effectiveness of the primal religion is an anthropological phenomenon; therefore it goes beyond the African context. The thesis analyses how the primal religious beliefs of the biblical Israelites too had had an effect on their religious thought, and in the thesis I argue that this is analogous to the African situation in Nigeria among the Yoruba.

Therefore the research juxtaposed how the ideo-theological orientation of the writers of certain texts in the Old Testament (affected by the Semitic background, and their perception of God's message to them and their context), and the manner the ideo-theological orientation of the Nigerian preacher/Christian (affected by his/her primal religion) and his/her perception of the Bible affects his/her interpretation.

The thesis analyses the enduring effect of Near Eastern religious thought on the Old Testament, and then goes on to analyse the effect of African primal religion on how a selection of Yoruba preachers/Christians interpret the Bible. These two sets of analysis are then brought into critical dialogue, with a view to revealing a similar pattern.

Apart from presenting a comparison between the role of primal religion in the Israelites' religion and Yoruba Christianity, this research also examined briefly how the biblical interpretation peculiar to these

Yoruba preachers plays a role in the nation-building. I believe the Church has a role to play in the community in which it is professing its faith. In some other African nations, there had been cases or contexts whereby the Church rose to its occasion in fighting for independence, or/and even standing against dictatorship in every form. This thesis concludes with a reflection on how the kind of interpretation preachers are giving to the Bible today in Nigeria effects positive change in the values and orientation of civil society more generally. Can this type of Christianity offer a push in the right direction in the practice of politics and governance in Nigeria?

DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to the Lord God for the enabling grace, mercy, and favour granted me to start and complete this project through various challenges that attended the process.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to and motivation for the research

In the words of Paul Achlemier,¹ biblical criticism is the scholarly ‘study and investigation of biblical writings that seeks to make discerning judgements about these writings.’ It asks when and where a particular text originated, how and why, by whom, for whom, and in what circumstances it was produced. It determines what influences were at work in its production, what sources were used in its composition and what message it was intended to convey. One can historically trace the ambience of biblical scholarship by reflecting on how Western authors have dealt with it over the years since it emerged as a subject for study in the rationalism of the 17th and 18th century. Without going into details regarding the history of biblical scholarship I wish to point out that, through the application of numerous critical methods referring to sources, form, narrative, redaction, textual aspects, canonical and rhetorical characteristics, exegetic reasoning based on psychological, socio-scientific, postmodernist and feminist considerations, the Bible has gone through a long period in which one analysis was followed by another.

‘Other voices,’² in Biblical scholarship have been coming from Africa where numerous studies by African scholars describe what happens when the Bible is read in an African context. I consider these studies as representing two paradigms, namely the liberationist reading which is prevalent mostly in South Africa, and the inculturationist reading which is generally practised in sub-Saharan Africa. Martey³ depicts these two theological approaches as historically related to the cultural and political movements that defined the continent in the 1970s. Both are rooted in struggles for independence, the first one against the oppressive system of apartheid while the second one, closely associated with African cultures and traditions, was inspired by efforts to attain freedom from colonizers.

To the many aspects of contemporary African biblical scholarship the present research wishes to add a different facet what makes Africans relate to the Bible in a way entirely their own and not necessarily based on their social, political and even cultural experiences but rather on some intrinsic factor that originates in

¹ Paul J. Achtemeier (ed.). 1985. *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. New York: Harper & Row.

² R. S. Sugirtharajah. 1991. *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*. London: SPCK.

³ Emmanuel Martey. 1993. *African Theology Inculturation and Liberation*. New York: Maryknoll.

their primal religion and that plays a role in their interpretation of the Bible. I will present evidence in support of this claim based on an analysis of several sermons by African preachers.

Hitherto the Western perception of African primal religion has, generally, left much to be desired. The current study will focus on the important role played by this religion in bringing the message of the Bible to people who, in the contemporary world, find hope for a basic existence only in the Bible. Today the primal religion in Nigeria, specifically among the Yoruba, serves as a veritable tool in the interpretation of the Bible. Its effectiveness is evidenced by the growth in membership of those churches where such biblical interpretations subsist. In other words, this kind of interpretation appeals more to the African mind than the formerly used Western method.

The effectiveness of the primal religion is an anthropological phenomenon. It goes therefore beyond the African context. It is my intention to show how also the early thought of the Israelites was influenced by their primal religious beliefs. I believe an analogous process is at work among the Yoruba in Nigeria. The present research will juxtapose the ideo-theological orientation of the writers of certain Old Testament texts (affected by their Semitic background and the Israelites' perception of God's message to them in their specific context) with the ideo-theological orientation and Bible interpretation of the Nigerian preachers/Christians as influenced by their primal religion. I attempt to highlight the effect of Near Eastern religious thought on the Old Testament and I have described how some Yoruba preachers/Christians interpret the Bible along lines that reflect an impact of African primal religion. I have thereafter compared and contrasted these different readings of Bible texts with a view to revealing a pattern that is common to both.

In addition to presenting a comparison between the roles played by primal religions in the Israelites' faith and in Yoruba Christianity, the research has also briefly examined how the biblical interpretation peculiar to these Yoruba preachers functions in nation building in Nigeria. I believe that the church's role in the community in which it professes its faith. In some other African nations, there have been examples of the church rising rose to the occasion by participating in the fight for independence or even by opposing dictatorship in all its forms. The present work seeks to discuss how the preachers' interpretations of the Bible in Nigeria can effect positive change in the values, orientation, and ultimately patriotism of the civil society. Can Christianity as it functions today give the practice of politics in Nigeria a push in the right

direction? More precisely, the research examines how preachers interpret the Bible; the factors responsible for these particular interpretations and for the obviously positive response of their Yoruba congregations. It will attempt to suggest ways in which this response can be employed to bring about positive changes in Yoruba society.

1.2 Research Problem and Objective

My target is to examine the relationship between the Israelite religion and some religious concepts of the Ancient Near East and to identify the latter as elements of the primal religion of the Israelites. Therefore texts of the Old Testament will be investigated with a view to tracing in these the strands of primal beliefs. The works of various authors relevant to this subject will be examined.

Secondly, I will focus on the degree to and the manner in which African primal religion affects Bible interpretation today in Nigeria, and attempt to confirm that there is a particular relationship between the two. This third area to be covered is the crux of the research. My objective is to juxtapose the results of the two analyses (the relationship between the Israelites' primitive concepts as found in the Ancient Near East and the Old Testament and the relationship between African primal concepts and African Christianity) in order to demonstrate that the features of primal beliefs are catalytic vehicles of 'revealing the mind of God' in a given context. According to Draper, 'Interpretation of the Bible still needs certain tools, which are made available through the contextual background of the reader.'⁴ In the case study of the present research, primal religious ideas of the reader or the interpreter are one of those tools.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The research is based on the construct that most African biblical scholarship uses, namely the African contextual hermeneutic model of biblical interpretation, called the tri-polar theory of interpretation, and the African biblical scholarship comparative paradigm.

The former was developed by Christina Grenholm and Daniel Patte, and adapted by Jonathan Draper. This model was also reviewed in a paper by Gerald West.⁵ It is the adaptation of Draper that added the third pole

⁴ Gerald O. West, "Interpreting 'the Exile' in African Biblical Scholarship: An Ideo-Theological Dilemma in Postcolonial South Africa." *In Exile and Suffering: A Selection of Papers Read at the 50th Anniversary Meeting of the Old Testament Society of South Africa Otswa/Otssa, Pretoria August 2007*, edited by Bob Becking and Dirk Human. Leiden: Brill. 2009: 247- 267.

⁵ Bob Becking and Dirk Human (eds.). *In Exile and Suffering: A Selection of Papers Read at the 50th Anniversary Meeting of the Old Testament Society of South Africa Otswa/Otssa, Pretoria August 2007*, 2009: 247- 267.

to the construct. As its name indicates, the Tri-Polar Exegetical Model comprises three dynamic and interactive poles or phases of interpretation referred to as distantiation, contextualization and appropriation.

1.3.1 Distantiation

To explain what Distantiation means, Draper draws on the original work of Rudolph Bultmann and Paul Ricoeur locating the relationship between exegesis and interpretation. Exegesis is the literary analysis of the biblical text. It is the platform on which the reader or preacher pays attention to the text's specific needs or problems in its own context. He absorbs what exactly the text is saying in its own context before he addresses it on his own terms. In the distantiation phase the preacher turns to traditional exegetical tools, and relevant literatures in order to get acquainted with the meaning of the particular text or passage. According to Loba-Mkole, this stage involves the original biblical culture that refers to the whole context in which the biblical author, his/her message and his/her first audiences were embedded.⁶ This is called distantiation, the first of the three tripods that one could identify as the textual pole.

1.3.2 Contextualization

Contextualization implies the realization that no text has a total or complete meaning. A text's meaning is determined by the person reading it and his or her situation. It is an obvious fact that the reader today is living in a different world from the first reader or readers of the text. In the stage of contextualization, one is concerned with finding out what the text meant, both to its first readers and to those who read it today. According to Draper, a text may carry important meanings, but these differ depending on who is handling the text.⁷ The reader gains an understanding of him/herself and his/her situation through the text. Contextualization helps to understand ourselves as historical beings rooted in a specific time and place who are confronted by a historical text that is rooted in another specific time and place.⁸ In this phase of biblical hermeneutics the meaning of the text is determined by its readers and the reality of their location. In other words, this stage of exegesis requires of the readers, or the reading community, a degree of self awareness and an understanding of their own context and world view. Determining who we are in relation to the text,

⁶ Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole. *Triple Heritage: Gospel in Intercultural Meditations*. Sapientia Publishers: Pretoria. 2005: 29.

⁷ J.A Draper. "Reading the Bible as Conversation: A Theory and Methodology for Contextual Interpretation of the Bible in Africa". *Grace and truth, a Journal of Catholic Reflection for Southern Africa*, Volume 19 No 2. 2002:13.

⁸ J.A Draper,. "Old Scores and New Notes: Where and What is Contextual Exegesis in the New South Africa". In *Towards an Agenda for Contextual Theology: Essays in Honour of Albert Nolan*. Speckman, McGlory, T. and Kaufman, Larry T. (eds.). Cluster: Pietermaritzburg. 2001:17.

and what our location is in society and history, is part of the contextualization process, the second pole of the tri-polar exegetical model.

In examining the relationship between distantiation and the context of the reader of a text, Draper⁹ identified what West calls a ‘third pole’ in biblical hermeneutics.

1.3.3 Appropriation

The third pole is discernible when the two first poles above connect. According to West, we can discern an emerging presence, hovering between the textual and contextual poles. This presence is of course the reader. It is the reader who enables the text and the context to engage in conversation. The movement between the text and the context is back-and-forth. It is the appropriative reader who makes text and context mutually engage.¹⁰ West examines the process whereby the reader engages both the text and his context. Thereto he analyzes Draper’s amplification of a ‘tri-polar’ movement between distantiation or ‘letting the text be other’ (through socio-historical and/or literary exegesis), contextualization, that is ‘analyzing my situation as a reader/hearer’ (using sociological, economic and anthropological tools), and appropriation. According to West, there are ‘elusive elements’ within the reader that constitute the act of appropriation. These, one discovers, are the reader’s ideo-theological concepts. Grenholm and Patte describe these as the ‘believers’ religious perceptions of life’, which ‘include interpretative traditions of all kinds that shape our pre-understandings of the biblical texts and reflect the religious experience of the presence or absence of the divine through which believers perceive their relation to the conditions of their life’. In other words, the reader/hearer’s perception of the text and his/her perception of his location enable him/her to appropriate the text. Therefore hermeneutics is a drama of perceptions and these differ from one location, and from one ideo-theological orientation, to another.

1.3.4 Relevance of this Theory to the Research

In ‘Old Scores and New Notes: Where and What is Contextual Exegesis in the New South Africa’,¹¹ Draper presents the ideal of interpretation thus:

⁹ J.A. Draper. ”’For the Kingdom of God Is Inside You and It is Outside of You’, Contextual Exegesis in South Africa,” in *Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament*. P.J. Hartin, J.H. Petzer (eds.). Leiden. 1991:242.

¹⁰ Bob Becking and Dirk Human (eds.). In *Exile and Suffering: A Selection of Papers Read at the 50th Anniversary Meeting of the Old Testament Society of South Africa Otwsa/Otssa*, Pretoria August 2007, 2009: 247- 267.

¹¹ Speckman and Kaufmann (eds.). *Towards an Agenda for Contextual Theology: Essays in Honour of Albert Nolan*. 2001:149.

We have to allow the text to be different to us, alien, intended for others, as a first step to entering its world of discourse. This process of “letting the text be other” I call distantiation. The second step involves knowing who we are in the conversation, what our situation is, and how we relate to the communication offered by the text. This process of “analyzing my situation as a reader/hearer”, I call contextualization. The third step involves deciding on the nature of the communication taking place and its implications for my context. This process of “accepting the meaning and implications of the text for myself and community”, I call appropriation...

This is a summary of the tri-polar theory of interpretation and it suggests an ideal of interpreting the Bible. What is the relevance of this theory to the present research? There is a fundamental understanding that there exists no neutral or absolute meaning of a text, or of any human communication. In human communications, according to M.A.K. Halliday,¹² an important fact regarding the speaking and understanding of language is that both always take place in a specific context. Essentially this means that language comes to life only when functioning in some environment. The same could be said of interpreting the Bible.

Interpreting it in isolation of his own background may severely limit the meanings and insights distilled by the interpreter. To make the Bible alive to a person, it must be interpreted in consonant with his/her experience whereby experience reflects the sum total of events in a person’s life. Experience is an active factor in developing mind-sets. One’s mind-set consists in beliefs that affect one’s attitude to the exterior world. It informs one’s thought and world-view. Among the Yoruba in Nigeria, the experience of their primal religion has become innate in them and it has produced a particular sort of spiritual paradigm or pattern that today, in the perception of Yoruba Christians and preachers, seeks to find a place in their interpretation of the Bible. I have come to imagine that, what enables Yoruba preachers/hearers to appropriate biblical texts is the fact that, as they are affected more and more by harsh economic and social challenges (their context), they tend to revert back to their innate mind-set, focusing on the primal deity, not necessarily for worship but for the succour it may offer. In the primal religion of the Yoruba sacrifices are made to appease or to curry favour with the deity, but not necessarily to worship as early European missionaries conceived of worship. The Yoruba-Christian mind-set is still conditioned by the primal religion that forms its background. In the Yoruba traditional setting one approached the deity to empower,

¹² Speckman and Kaufmann (eds.). *Towards an Agenda for Contextual Theology: Essays in Honour of Albert Nolan*. 2001:150.

protect and fortify oneself against enemies that could confront one in the form of a situation, a phenomenon (witches and wizards), an entity, or even the very god one approaches (with a view to appeasing him). Some Yoruba Christians still have this at the back of their minds when they go to church. Every situation, be it of an economic, social or personal character, is viewed against the backdrop of the spiritual. For example, a Yoruba Christian who loses his/her job blames it on enemies having succeeded in their plot against him/her. The Yoruba therefore needs to pray hard (while fasting for 3 to 7 days, or going into the mountains to pray for a certain number of days) in order to regain employment. Furthermore, in Nigeria Bible interpretations such as the following are very popular. At the time of Elijah's departure, Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him. When he got to the bank of Jordan, he stood by it, took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him and smote the waters and said: *Where is the Lord God Elijah?* And the waters parted and Elisha went over¹³. Bishop David O. Oyedepo, the general overseer of Living Faith Church, interprets the text thus:

Any material that has come in contact with the anointed of God (a minister) carries with it the unction for manifestation. Such material is what is referred to as mantle in our context...The virtue that operates in the mantle (the handkerchief from the man of God) is the virtue of God. That is why I never feel anything leave my body when all those miracles take place by the mantle.¹⁴

In Nigeria, it is believed that any clothing material that comes from an 'anointed' man of God can perform miracles. The belief came about through interpretations such as the one by Oyedepo above.¹⁵

Oyedepo's appropriation of 2 Kings 2: 12 -14 is motivated by, firstly, his understanding of the passage as normative for faith and life of the Yoruba community. His appropriation is inspired, secondly, by the local context that induces the Yoruba Christian to look for miracles whenever he/she goes to worship and, thirdly, by a mind-set that, conditioned by the African primal religion in its background, continues to see objects as carriers of the power of the deity of which miracles may be expected. Such animistic beliefs that belong to the essence of the Yoruba primal religion are still displayed by Christians today.

The Yoruba Christian preacher's context consists in his/her experience of, what he/she considers as, spirituality in an understanding that is informed by the Yoruba primal religion in his/her background. The

¹³ "2 Kings 2:12-14.

¹⁴ David O. Oyedepo. *Wonders of the Age: Manifestation of the Sons of God*. Dominion Publishing House: Lagos. 1996.

¹⁵ These collected sermons shall be examined in Chapter Five.

enduring presence of aspects of the primal religion is a characteristic of the Yoruba mind-set because this type of interpretation appeals also to those who are born Christians. Therefore it is obviously an authentic part of the Yoruba context.

It should be noted briefly here that Yoruba preachers, like ordinary readers in general, use a form of tri-polar approach to texts, but there is no conscious moment of distantiation. They do not engage with the biblical text critically. Distantiation, the first pole in the tri-polar method of biblical interpretation, implies an analytical attitude that deliberately creates critical distance between the interpreter and the text. However, one could argue that Yoruba preachers typically interpret biblical texts as if they had originated in a context very similar to their own. There is, in other words, little distantiation.

The third pole, namely appropriation, is the outcome of the engagement between distantiation and contextualization. When Yoruba preachers pick a biblical text to interpret, they base their choice on its perceived value in preaching. They then engage with the text whereby *inter alia* their social, economic, and primal religious background play a role. Thus, the third aspect of the tri-polar theory emerges and that is appropriation. This is the climax of the interpretative process whereby their praxis is made known through which the interpretation appeals to the hearers. That this appeal is considerable is apparent from the popularity of this type of interpreters.

1.4 The African Biblical Scholarship Comparative Paradigm

The second theory applied to the present research is an earlier form of the tri-polar approach. It is analysed by Knut Holter¹⁶ as a method that facilitates a parallel interpretation of certain Old Testament texts or motifs and supposed African parallels, letting the two illuminate each other. The Nigerian biblical scholar Justin Ukpong, in an essay titled, ‘Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Africa,’ published in *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends*, divides the history of academic African biblical interpretation through comparative studies into three phases. Phase I (1930s-70s) he describes as characterized by reactive and apologetic approaches focused on legitimizing African religion and culture and dominated by comparative methods. He tagged phase II (1970s-90s) reactive-proactive: the African context was used as a resource (back up supply) for biblical interpretation and the resulting works were

¹⁶ K. Holter. *Old Testament Research for Africa: A Critical Analysis and Annotated Bibliography of African Old Testament Dissertations 1967-2000*. New York. 2002:88.

dominated by the inculturation-evaluative method and liberation hermeneutics. The third phase (1990s) he calls proactive as it was characterized by the recognition of the ordinary reader and by the African context as subject or focus of discussion whereby liberation and inculturation methodologies dominated. In each phase, an obvious dialogue is taking place between the context of the biblical text and the religious and social context of the African.¹⁷

This research is located within the ambit of all three phases. It aims to show that the Old Testament narratives mirror in their texts some Ancient Near Eastern ideologies. The first part of the research attempts to trace the strands of Semitic primal religion in Old Testament narratives and juxtaposes these with general Near-Eastern beliefs in order to point out analogies with certain Israelite New Testamental concepts that suggest an influence of Near-Eastern primal religions. The research continues with an examination of the general traditional religious ideas of the Nigerian Yoruba in their African context with a view to presenting these as facilitating factors in the process of appropriation of Bible texts. The third part of the research is concerned with some biblical interpretations by contemporary preachers in Nigeria and with exposing the intrusion of Yoruba traditional religious ideas into the hermeneutics, proving that it is the Yoruba primal religio-social ideas that bring biblical texts and the said Yoruba context into a mutual engagement, resulting in the type of interpretations that Yoruba Christians and preachers give to the texts of the Bible.

This last paragraph exhibits the reactive aspect of the research. By comparing the appropriative nature of the writers of Old Testament narratives with the appropriative tendencies of the African Bible reader, one is to some extent being apologetic for one's mode of interpreting the Bible. Instead however, if Old Testament narratives are generally accepted as the word of God, then the interpretation by the Nigerian preacher/Christian should also be accepted.

The same paragraph also reflects the proactive aspect of the research (the 'proactiveness' of the second phase of comparative studies in African biblical interpretation and the 'proactiveness' of the third phase).¹⁸ It indicates that this work is making use of the African context, both as a resource for biblical interpretation

¹⁷ Justin S. Ukpong. "Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Africa: Historical and Hermeneutical Directions," in G.O. West and Musa W. Dube (eds.), *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*. Brill: Boston. 2000:11–28.

¹⁸ West and Dube (eds.) *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*. 2000:12.

(owing to the issue of inculturation), and as the explicit subject of biblical interpretation (owing to the presentation of the Yoruba Christian as an ordinary reader).

1.5 Methodology

The research is hermeneutical and empirical. The African biblical scholarship comparative paradigm and the tri-polar interpretation model chosen as the theoretical framework of this study determine its methodological approach which is structured into four parts. The interest and importance of African primal religion for African Christianity is examined. Next, since primal religion is the thread that links the research from beginning to end, the structural analysis of primal religions by Harold Turner is surveyed and delineated. This analysis is modified to be able to tag the data to the four areas of study, namely the Ancient Near East, Ancient Israel, Old Testament Narratives and the sermons of the Yoruba Pentecostal preachers.

Next, general Near-Eastern beliefs are analyzed with a view to showcasing those primal elements that are analogous with Israelite primal concepts. The claim that Ancient Israel has absorbed such primal elements is verified by an examination of relevant features in Old Testament narratives. This examination involves features of primal religions in ten texts from Old Testament narratives.

Since the study is drawing on the contextual approach as part of the tri-polar interpretation model, it focuses next on an analysis of the Yoruba context whereby the Yoruba primal religious ideologies are presented. Scholars in this field have researched these ideologies, but in the case of the present study they will be treated as contextual issues and presented as part of the conditions and circumstances of Yoruba Christian preachers. Next, a historical survey is given of the emergence of the Independent African Churches among the Yoruba, due to the engagement between European missionaries and African Christians as mediated by the African primal religion. The role of African primal elements in the emergence of Yoruba Christianity will be discussed.

An effect of the primal religion is discernible also in the sermons of the neo-Pentecostals among the Yoruba. An empirical study of their sermons is included, based on field research. Thereto sermons have been collected in three areas of Yoruba land and are scrutinized for evidence of Yoruba primal ideas.

To illustrate the methodology of this research work, I would like to show the results of the comparative approach as employed by Justin Ukpong.¹⁹ He distinguishes five outcomes of the comparative approach in biblical studies. The first one is the evaluation of elements of African culture, religion, beliefs, concepts and practices in the light of the biblical witness, to arrive at a Christian understanding of these elements and bring out their value for witness. The second result is similar to the first one in that it is concerned with presenting what a biblical text or theme has to contribute to the critique of a particular issue in an African context (society or church life). The difference is that in the second case the values are presented as problems to be solved ('liabilities to be challenged') with the help of the biblical message. This involves analysing the biblical text and determining what challenge it poses to the context or, alternately, defining its implications for the context, by using historical-critical tools. In Ukpong's third instance, one may arrive at a new understanding of the biblical text, informed by the African situation and making it African while it is still Christian. This is attained by interpreting biblical themes or texts against the background of African culture, religion, and life experience, using historical-critical tools to analyze the text. The fourth outcome of Ukpong's comparative treatment is that continuity is shown between African culture and Christianity so that it becomes possible to communicate the biblical message by using concepts from either the Bible or from African culture that Africans can identify with. This is by Ukpong referred to as 'erecting bridgeheads'²⁰ for communicating to Africans the message of the Bible. The fifth outcome - the most important one for the present research - is the discovery of biblical models or biblical foundations for aspects of contemporary church life and practice in Africa, also by using historical-critical research methods in analysing biblical texts. The fifth outcome which is similar to the result expected from the present research would be the outcome of this research work, and this is communicative of the methodology of the research. The above mentioned outcomes of Ukpong's comparative study are overlapping and, in order to get a clear insight into the possibilities of the comparative method for the present work, I have had to examine them separately as I have done above.

1.6 Field Work Methodology

Area. The research adopts the qualitative research approach which depends typically on the written or verbal or/and observable conducts as data sources. This provides a rich descriptive data because they are presented from the participants' viewpoint. Field work is done in the Yoruba Pentecostal community and

¹⁹ West and Dube (eds.). *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trend*: 2000.

²⁰ West and Dube (eds.). *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*, 2000.

churches, limited to the areas of Ibadan, Remo and Lagos. The selected areas are inhabited by part of the Yoruba speaking population of Nigeria. They are located in three Nigerian states, namely Oyo, Ogun, and Lagos states.

Participants. The Pentecostal churches in the area described above are numerous. For the purpose of gathering a considerable number of sermons or Bible interpretations that typically display those elements that I assess to be mirroring features of Yoruba primal socio-historical and religious ideas, the following churches were selected: the Redeemed Christian Church of God, the Living Faith Church otherwise known as Winner's Chapel, the God-Will-Do-It Ministry, Mountain of Fire and Miracle, and some notable preachers on 'deliverance', commonly called 'deliverance ministers'. These are diverse yet typical forms of Pentecostalism in the area.

Methods of Data Collection. The interpretations of various scriptures in the publications of these ministers which I include as sermons in the present thesis are examined with the purpose of identifying perceived elements of Yoruba primal religious philosophies in their interpretations of biblical texts.

Methods of Data Analysis. The data is selected from major and popular books and publications of these ministers, which present their messages to the larger public. The collection of the data involved the following steps. Twenty publications were chosen containing the interpretations of the ministers concerned, in three areas of the Yoruba land, viz-a-viz Lagos, Ibadan and Ijebu, and Remo areas.

The chosen sermons are fairly recent, dating from between 1990 and 2010.

Sermon Analysis. Since the research considers a number of concepts related to Bible interpretations by certain Nigerian Yoruba preachers, the leading research question is: What factors are responsible for the way in which Nigerian Yoruba Christian preachers involved in the present study interpret the Bible? The research claims, and seeks to prove, that they are influenced to a substantial degree by their primal religion that is intrinsic in them.

The analysis of the sermons is based on ‘Grounded Theory’ as used by Glaser and Strauss.²¹ Grounded theory is a systematic qualitative research methodology in the social sciences that emphasizes the generation of theory from data in the process of conducting research. It is a research method that operates almost in a reverse fashion from the traditional research method and that, at first, may appear to contradict more scientific methods. Rather than beginning by researching and developing a hypothesis, the first step consists in data collection through a variety of methods. In the data collected, key points are marked following a series of codes that are extracted from the text. The codes are then grouped into similar concepts in order to make them more workable. From these concepts, categories are formed, which are the basis for the creation of a theory.

The sermons are analyzed in an inductive way. The conclusion of my research theory is drawn from the facts presented by the sermons. This method of sermon analysis is adapted from Andre Verweij’s analysis of Lenten sermons, using grounded theory, as regards the suffering of Jesus.²² In the present research the sermons are of a different genre and analyzed for a different purpose. But the grounded theory as adopted by Verweij is a useful tool for exploring sermons’ fabrics. The analysis involves the following steps.

Open Coding, which means labelling the sermons in a direct, open way, is the first level of ordering the sermons into categories. At this stage the material is conceptualized with a view to determine the genres of style they present. Two motifs that in the church of Africa have emerged as being central to readers’ encounter with the Bible are the Faith Gospel and the Demonic Possession.²³ These two constitute the main and most visible of motifs in Yorubaland, the area used for a case study by the present researcher. This point shall be discussed more extensively later in this thesis.

In the section dealing with open coding, the aim is to bring the selected sermons under these two categories. The categories are based on similarity of themes or content and data are grouped through a process of constant comparison.

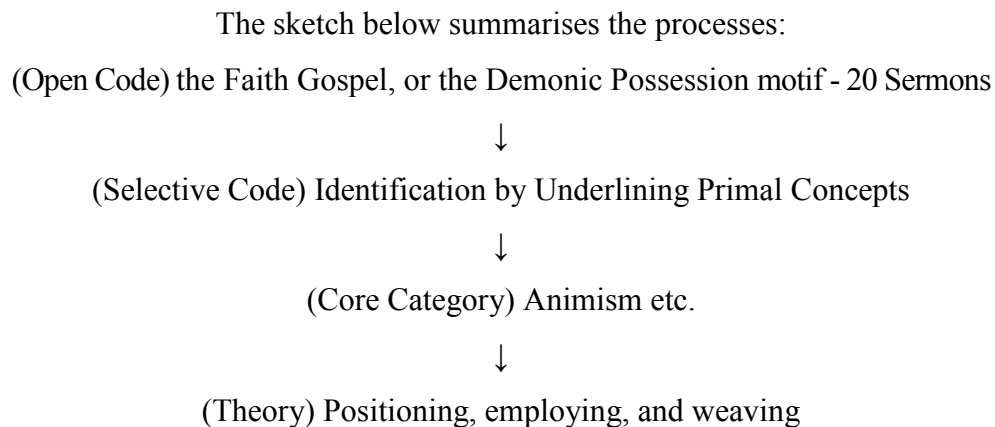
²¹ Barney G. Glaser. *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis. Emergence vs Forcing*. Sociology Press: Mill Valley. 1992:5; Barney.G. Glaser (ed). *Examples of Grounded Theory: A Reader*. Sociology Press: Mill Valley. 1993: 6; Anselm L. Strauss. *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1987. K. Charmaz. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA. 2006.

²² Research Andre Verweij. May 2009.

²³ Paul Gifford. “The Bible as a Political Document in Africa.” In *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*, (ed.) Niels Kastfelt, Hurst & Company: London. 2003:16–35.

The sermons that have been open coded according to the two themes are thereafter dissected to identify the specific primal concepts they contain and, on the basis of the findings, they are further divided into groups based on particular distinctive features of primal religion. This involves conceptualizing all incidents in the data that can be identified as elements of primal religion. This process that, done painstakingly, yields many concepts is called **selective coding**. Selective coding implies the identifying of core categories within primal religion as they occur in the sermons.

The final step involves the search for **theoretical codes**. These are the most abstract codes that form the framework of my grounded theory. The theoretical codes are found in the process of constant memoing, comparing, and reviewing the coding. My theoretical codes therefore are ‘positioning’, ‘employing’, and ‘weaving’, in relation to biblical interpretations that are influenced by the primal religion of the interpreters. The theory is coded as follows: Ministers *position* their teaching on Spiritual Warfare by *employing* particular features of primal religion. By this *positioning* through *employing*, they *weave* a fabric of a certain biblical interpretation.



1.7 The Crisscrossing of the Tri-polar Theory of Interpretation and the Grounded Theory

Although Grounded Theory seems to contradict the traditional model of research that consists in choosing a theoretical framework and applying it to the research subject, the two theories are employed together in the present research. The grounded theory, resulting from the research, is given a place equal to that of the theory adopted from the tri-polar model.

The theoretical framework of the thesis, adopted from the tri-polar model, supports that, through the *context* and *mindset* of Christian Yoruba preachers (their experience which is partly a product of their primal religious background, which also is a triangular reaction between the three poles of distantiation, contextualization and appropriation) occurs, leading to the birth of a certain biblical interpretation, even though the selected materials indicate that distantiation plays a minimal role in the interpretations.

The theory that Christian Yoruba preachers position certain biblical ideas through employing concepts that can be identified with aspects of their primal religions connotes that they are weaving a new fabric of biblical interpretation in Africa. The fabric reveals who we are and what our location is in society and history. I believe that the instrument that informs this process is found in the traditional ideologies that are inherent in the Yoruba preacher as much as in other African Christians. The various methods of analyzing sermons lead ultimately to an insight into ways in which sermons that employ features of primal religions differ from sermons in which such features are absent.

CHAPTER ONE

PRELIMINARY LITERATURE STUDY AND LOCATION OF THE RESEARCH WITHIN THE EXISTING LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The main focus of the thesis is an analogy between the influence of primal elements in the ANE on the religion of Ancient Israel, and the influence of the same in the African Traditional religion on African Christianity, therefore the four subjects of examination of the thesis shall be the Ancient Near Eastern religious outlook, some texts in the Old Testament where the character of the Near Eastern religious ideas are traceable, the religious outlook of the Yoruba traditional religion, and the sermon texts of Yoruba Christian preachers. Moreover, in these four subjects there are certain elements of religion that are sharing equivalent qualities which are referred to as the primal elements of religion in this thesis. These are traceable in the four subjects of examination. But before this tracing is done in the four areas of research, certain literature which had examined religious outlook of the four areas shall be presented.

The first attention shall be brought to the Ancient Near East, looking at the work of authors on the general outlook of the ANE; and then authors on the general religious outlook. Authors on the primal religious elements traceable in the Ancient Near East would be featured in chapter four, where a broad survey and comparison of both the latter and the Old Testament shall be done. In other words this literature review shall do a brief presentation of some literature where a general overview of religious outlook of both Ancient Near East and the Old Testament. Then a survey of literature on the general overview of primal religious elements in both subjects in comparison shall follow in chapter four where a survey on the specific primal religious elements shall be done

Finally the literature review in this section will conclude with the general nature of African primal religion, but African Christianity and the role of African primal religion in it shall be discussed in details in chapter two.

2.2 Ancient Near East

Many writers have examined various aspects of the Ancient Near East by drawing on the wide collections of texts and tablets, which have enabled some glimpse into the ancient world. For example it is conventional to have works which are comparative studies between the Bible and particular theme(s) or text(s) from the ANE or the Mediterranean world. Some works examine the literature, religion, cosmos, politics, law, economy, and the people. Some of them are general discourses on the subject matter, while some engage in a comparative analysis between the ANE and the ancient Israel. I will first focus on the literatures that deal with the general overviews, and then followed by the one that compare the ANE and the ancient Israel.

These books that present the aspects of general life in the ANE serve as introduction to studies in many fields that can be established as features in the ancient civilization, ranging from sociology, religion, law, politics, gender, to science, architecture, technology and so on. The purpose of reviewing them in this thesis is to allow the ANE to have its own voice before reading into it the aspect of focus of the thesis as mentioned. Firstly this ‘voice’ will enable a grasp of the subject matter in its entirety, which will enhance a proper analysis. It is hardly possible to be able to analyse a subject that one is partly familiar with. Secondly, this thesis is creating a study out of an aspect of the ancient world; that is, focusing on a particular characteristic of the ANE and tagging it as an independent feature or concept from the familiar studies in the ANE, which in another study might be given a different design. There are certain concepts of the ANE that shall be regarded as religious and foundational for certain concepts in the Hebrew Bible. Therefore in appropriating these concepts to the ambit of this study, one must first enter into the world of ANE as it is allowing the subject matter to be different to my world as a first step of entering its sphere of discourse.

Therefore the following literature that focuses on a broader spectrum of the ANE other than the religious aspects shall first be reviewed. They do not focus essentially on the aspect of my position: the religious worldview. But a careful integration as it were shall ensue presently with the position of this study, after a dialogue with the subject matter the way it had been presented to us by these scholars.

2.3 General Overview of ANE

The first to be examined is the volume edited by Mark Chavalas.²⁴ It is a good summary of central themes and issues in various fields of the ANE history. In it there are four combined studies that attempt to present an up to date summary and current themes relating to ANE. In the volume, Gonzalo Rubio surveys a number of issues relating to the cultural history of southern Mesopotamia, that is, views on linguistic divisions of early Mesopotamia, in particular the issues on pre-Sumerian, and post Sumerian languages; the history and contemporary state of understanding the concept of land tenure in Mesopotamia and its effects on understanding the general economic structure and economic institutions that existed, stressing current views that ‘institutional economies’ and ‘non-institutional household economies’ played significant roles in ancient Mesopotamia. He raised a caveat on appropriating a ‘historicistic’ approach when analyzing literary categories that are not historical. And furthermore in his contribution, he argues that the Mesopotamian Law collections did not serve as true legal codes, but reasonably were academic traction instruments for training scribes, and ended the section with a contemporary summary of the history of Babylonia.²⁵ In the same volume, Steven J. Garfinkle presents a synopsis of the history of and research on the Assyrians from the earliest periods until the end of their empire. He endeavours to portrait the Assyrians and their cultural development and attainments from a point of view different from that of the biblical authors, which is more positive and constructive than the latter. He concludes with a view of future path of research in the subject.²⁶ The third contribution is made by Gary Beckman who presents a summary and history of the Hittites and identifies major areas of research and problems a researcher can encounter in studying the Hittite history, which includes the failure of the Hittite scribes to employ a dating system in their records, which made it very problematic for early researchers to assign documents to their proper period.²⁷ The last chapter of the book, written by David C. Snell, focuses more extensively on a wider range of topics than the previously discussed. He approaches the topics with a brief summary of the history of Syria in the third and second millennia BCE, followed by that of the discovery from a selected group of sites from Syria and Israel (Ebla, Sehna/Subat-Enlil, Mari, Hazor, Emar, Ugarit, Meggido, and Dur-Katlimmu), which in his view is strangely remarkable in that the choice of the sites is somewhat misleading and partial. He argues that Qatna, Kabri, Pella, Ashkelon should have been added to the mentioned sites. He concludes with an attempt to summarize contemporary views and debates on the relationship between the biblical texts and history: the

²⁴ Mark Chavalas (ed.), *Current Issues and the Study of the Ancient Near East*, Regina Books: Claremont. 2007.

²⁵ Mark Chavalas (ed.), *Current Issues and the Study of the Ancient Near East*, 2007: 5-51.

²⁶ Mark Chavalas (ed.), *Current Issues and the Study of the Ancient Near East*, 2007: 53-96.

²⁷ Mark Chavalas (ed.), *Current Issues and the Study of the Ancient Near East*, 2007: 97-112.

literary/source criticism, form criticism, and so on, and the recent historical approaches. One can adduce that this volume can be used to sample various contemporary research on the history, topics and thoughts of the Ancient Near East from scholars in the fields represented, and identify various pitfalls a beginner can encounter in venturing into such fields.

Among the literatures portraying general overviews of the ANE is the book by Marc Van de Mieroop²⁸ in which he examines the landscape of methods in studying the data of Mesopotamia. This he does by placing the textual data into a new model, evaluating previous scholastic methods on the history of Mesopotamia, and revealing that its treatment should be different from that of the ancient Greek and biblical historiography. Furthermore, Mieroop investigates into the primitivism/modernism debate, the Marxist interpretations, the work of Max Weber and more modern approaches.²⁹ The chapter he devotes to gender survey in the texts shows that there is little done in scholarship in the ANE in this field. It demonstrates that preconceptions and assumptions about women in classical antiquity and Islam have influenced modern scholarship, and this might have contributed to the fact that little had been done in the field of gender role in ANE within its cultural context.³⁰ This is an eye opener to the fact that there could be no end to aspects of social life that can be studied in the ANE. Much elements of our modern world could be found to have been in existence even in the antiquity. It could be easy then to claim that the elements of primal religion in the ANE cannot be that strange to our religious world in the contemporary world.

Stephen Bertman³¹ is another author that also engages the culture, history and people of ancient Mesopotamia in his thirteen chapter book. In it he discusses a general introduction to the geography and environment with a gazetteer of major sites.³² In the second chapter he evaluates the archaeology and history of the ancient civilization, where he presents a discussion of the history of exploration, the methods of archaeology, and the major historical sources. Here he does a survey of Mesopotamian history, and a listing of major rulers.³³ This is a common aspect focussed upon in the studies of the ANE among contemporary scholars, because almost about 80 per cent of those literatures on general examination into the

²⁸ Marc Van de Mieroop, 'Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History' in *Approaching the Ancient World*, 6, Routledge: London. 1999.

²⁹ Marc Van de Mieroop, 'Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History' in *Approaching the Ancient World*. 6, 1999:108-119.

³⁰ Marc Van de Mieroop, 'Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History' in *Approaching the Ancient World*. 6, 1999:155.

³¹ Stephen Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Oxford University Press: Oxford. 2005.

³² Stephen Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 2005:1-37.

³³ Stephen Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 2005:39-58.

ancient world touch either in part or majorly on the political life of the ancient world. Thirdly he discusses the structure and stratification of society, including the features of the monarchy, taxation, justice and law, and the biographies of key political leaders.³⁴ He unlike many others who write on the general aspects of life of the ANE, touches on the religious facet, in which aspects of ritual, religion, and cult are discussed. He also does survey of the major deities.³⁵ This is useful to the discussion that shall ensue in this section later.

The everyday life of the Mesopotamians in the area of various life cycles like birth, death, marriage, etc; aspects such as clothing, cosmetics, food, drinks, music, toys, sport, education, and health are also examined.³⁶ In the twelfth chapter, the survey of the influences of Mesopotamian culture and literature on the sacred scripture of the West, Hebrew Bible and the Apocrypha, the New Testament, and the Koran is presented.³⁷ This is also a major view that connects many researchers into the ANE together: influence of the latter on the secondary religions, a premise on which my thesis shall attempt to berth.

Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat's volume is another book that reveals a general overview of life in Mesopotamia, starting with a brief account of the rediscovery and 'decipherment'³⁸ of ancient Mesopotamia, followed by chapters illustrating the geographical and historical realities.³⁹ She outlines the history with a view of providing a context for the rest of the discussion in the volume, starting from the permanent settlement and domestication of the people, to the civilizations from the agricultural settlements to cities, and the periods that marked the third to the first millennia.⁴⁰

Law is another concept that had been examined in the ANE exclusively without necessarily joining it with religion. Claus Wilcke⁴¹ transliterates, translates and surveys the early Sumero Akkadian legal material in a discussion that focuses on the earliest law codes and edicts, (both private and scholastic), constitutional and administrative law, (about kingship, taxation, and the court system), litigation (parties, procedures, types of settlements), personal status (laws about citizenship, slavery, class, gender, age), family (marriage, marital

³⁴ Stephen Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 2005: 61-72.

³⁵ Stephen Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 2005: 113-134.

³⁶ Stephen Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 2005: 273-304.

³⁷ Stephen Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 2005: 311-323.

³⁸ Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat, *Daily life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Hendrickson: Peabody. 2002:1.

³⁹ Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat, *Daily life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Hendrickson: Peabody. 2002:11-13.

⁴⁰ Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat, *Daily life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Hendrickson: Peabody. 2002:17-35.

⁴¹ Claus Wilcke, *Early Ancient Near Eastern Law: History of Its Beginnings: The Early Dynastic and Sargonic Periods*, Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake. 2007.

property, dowry, gifts to the groom, divorce), property and inheritance, treaties, and contracts (landed property, fields and houses, movable property, loans, pledges, exchanges, sureties, hires, oaths, and crimes). Although the author did not focus on religious or cultic laws, yet the book is a useful material for the study of the origins and evolution of the socio-economic and legal materials in the Hebrew Bible, and this goes for all literatures that focus on the general aspects of life of the ANE that have been reviewed above.

Intellectual life is another aspect of life of the ANE which authors have ventured into. In a collection of forty essays⁴² scholars examine various aspects of the intellectual life of ancient Mesopotamia, but only a handful of them that are relevant for this section of review shall be examined. For example, Joan Goodnick Westenholz writes ‘Thoughts on Esoteric Knowledge and Secret Lore,’ which concentrates on the abundant lexical texts that are alleged to have the secret knowledge of the gods.⁴³ She discusses the various words used to carry the meaning or ideas of esoteric knowledge, and places the ideas on the spectrum of magical ability.⁴⁴ She believes that the ability to understand the organization of the world, through these words, makes it possible to effect magical powers on the universe.⁴⁵ She recognizes the interest of the scribes of the words in the mysterious knowledge of the ancients.⁴⁶ But this raises questions about the ancient scribes’ use of words that carry more than one meaning, which she attempted to answer by suggesting that cryptic writing system is embodied by principles of secrecy. Deliberate mystifications may have been a motive behind creation of orthographical words in the Early Dynastic period, e.g. the *UD.GAL.NUN* orthography found only in *ED* literary texts containing mythical narratives.⁴⁷ It was a most learned and highly erudite system of sign values based on clever etymologies, which could be comprehended only by the most knowledgeable.⁴⁸ It is interesting to know that in the area of magic among the Yoruba, a person’s prowess in the control of elements of the earth has much to do with the amount of esoteric knowledge he/she possesses.⁴⁹ This is being pointed out here to forebode that there are many areas comparable between the ANE and Yoruba primal religion, all the more so both possess the structural power to influence the respective religions they involve with: ancient Israelite religion and Christianity

⁴² Jiri Prosecky (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Ancient Near East: Papers Presented at the 43rd Rencontre Assyriologique International*, Prague, July 1-5, 1996, Oriental Institute: Prague. 1998.

⁴³ Jiri Prosecky (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Ancient Near East*, 1998: 541.

⁴⁴ Jiri Prosecky (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Ancient Near East*, 1998: 542.

⁴⁵ Jiri Prosecky (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Ancient Near East*, 1998: 543.

⁴⁶ Jiri Prosecky (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Ancient Near East*, 1998: 546.

⁴⁷ Jiri Prosecky (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Ancient Near East*, 1998: 546.

⁴⁸ Jiri Prosecky (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Ancient Near East*, 1998: 547.

⁴⁹ J. Omosade Awolalu, *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, Longman: London. 1979:75.

Another article in the volume that generates interest especially for its comparative analysis of the book of Daniel in the Old Testament is ‘The Esoteric meaning of the Name Gilgamesh’ written by Simo Parpola. The author examines the ‘evidence that names in the Epic were purposely edited in order to provide them with hidden semantic content.’⁵⁰ The concept of words conveying more than one meaning was widespread in the ANE. The sacred name of Yahweh is a classic example in the Hebrew text. He notes that breaking names into their component parts in search of esoteric meanings hidden behind them was an interpretive technique practiced in the ancient Mesopotamia.⁵¹ Among the Yoruba, the *Babalawo* has the knowledge of esoteric names of common items, which empowers them to perform extraordinary feats. If a particular leaf, tree, or even wind is called by its esoteric name, it would be able to carry out instruction given to it by the *Babalawo*.

There are more articles in the volume which are of important interest to this thesis; and Michael B. Dick’s study titled ‘The Relationship between the Cult Image and the Deity in Mesopotamia’ is particularly significant. This is because it echoes the idea of certain element primal religion that can also be traced to the Yoruba. Dick’s examination of the conceptual structure and details of the creation of cult statues and the attendant washing of the mouth ceremony (*mis pi*) as found in Mesopotamian texts shows that the deity was present in the cult image after the *mis pi* ceremony was performed.⁵² This ritualistic feature can be traced also in the other three subject matters, details of which shall be presented later.

Dale Launderville’s book focuses on the thesis that royal authority in early Greece, the ANE, and Israel, is guaranteed by the religious. The monarchs were believed to rule under the directives of the gods and therefore were regarded as responsible to them for maintenance of justice, peace, and prosperity within their kingdoms. This he demonstrated for legitimating royalty by focussing on the Greek Archaic age, which is articulated in Iliad and the Odyssey; the united monarchy of Israel, expressed majorly in Samuel, Kings, and the Psalms; and Old Babylonian Mesopotamia, as articulated in the Code of Hammurabi and royal inscriptions. He admits that outside the fact that the three shared a pattern of religious validation for

⁵⁰ Jiri Prosecky (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Ancient Near East*, 1998: 318.

⁵¹ Jiri Prosecky (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Ancient Near East*, 1998: 319.

⁵² Jiri Prosecky (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Ancient Near East*, 1998: 111.

monarchy (attributed to Zeus, Yahweh, and Enlil respectively), each political culture has its own distinguishing type of traditional pattern.⁵³

Considering the ANE in the matter of literacy, David Toshio Tsumura, in his essay “‘Mis-spellings’ in Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit,” persuasively claims that some of the irregular spellings in Ugaritic texts, especially in KTU 1.10, should not be regarded as “mis-spellings” but as variant spellings reflecting a different phonetic reality of the language for that particular scribe.⁵⁴ It is adducible from the foregoing that literacy was a characteristic feature of the ANE civilization, considering the volume of evidences pointed out by scholars that it was a world of engineering, architecture, science, mathematics, deciphering of words of esoteric meaning among others, features on which the modern civilization probably owes its foundation. The primal characteristics of the ANE do not essentially portray it as primitive or unlearned. It could even be regarded as the foundation or basis on which many aspects of the contemporary socio-cultural life are built. For example, Graham Davies surveys inscriptions published between 1990 and 2000 in his essay titled ‘Some Uses of Writing in Ancient Israel in the Light of Recently Published Inscriptions,’ and suggests that there is evidence of ‘military administration, a literary, prophetic or legal text, evidence of temple practices and contributions to their cost, a legal plea, a list of provisions, and indirect evidence of papyrus documents of various kinds and developments in the tax system(s) of ancient Israel.’⁵⁵ Most Pentecostal preachers among the Yoruba today whose sermons are rife with the primal elements are very educated personalities. Some of them were universities dons before taking up the ministries: therefore the ‘primality’ of certain concepts in their sermons is not borne upon literacy or illiteracy; that is just the nature of the primal religion: it is intrinsic, not studied.

A professional economist, Morris Silver devoted two books to aspects of the ancient economies, including the entire Mediterranean world.⁵⁶ In one of these two volumes he engages with the question whether the ancient Mediterranean world knew private or individual merchants or entrepreneurs apart from the royal ones. According to him, an entrepreneur is an individual who has acquired some familiarity with the

⁵³ Dale Launderville, *Piety and Politics: The Dynamics of Royal Authority in Homeric Greece, Biblical, and Old Babylonian Mesopotamia*, Eerdsmans: Grand Rapids. 2003: xvii + 407.

⁵⁴ Piotr Bienkowski, Christopher Mee, and Elizabeth Slater (eds.), *Writing and Ancient Near Eastern Society: Paper in Honour of Alan R. Millard*: 143-153.

⁵⁵ Piotr Bienkowski, Christopher Mee, and Elizabeth Slater (eds.), *Writing and Ancient Near Eastern Society: Paper in Honour of Alan R. Millard*: 169-170.

⁵⁶ Morris Silver, *Economic Structures of Antiquity*, Greenwood Press: Westport, 1995, and *Ancient Mythology Economically*, E.J. Brill: Leiden. 1992.

preferences and economic opportunities of distant markets and has access to capital to implement his insights.⁵⁷ Today a variety of socio-economic roles prepare an individual to be an entrepreneur, but in antiquity the appropriate roles would have been much more limited to officials and members of the elite. Nevertheless there is a body of evidence pointing to the existence of independent merchants as illustrated in the various nations of the ANE.⁵⁸ There are cycles of stories about the kings of Akkad, in Mesopotamia, in an Akkadian tablet from Amarna and in Hittite fragment, called ‘King of Battle,’ in which merchants who are obviously independent, petition Sargon (2334-2279), the founder of the Dynasty, offering to pay his expenses to open the trade routes to the north and northwest.⁵⁹ Also in the late third millennium, according to Hans Neumann,⁶⁰ Sumer merchants called *damkar*’s do not appear on royal ‘ration lists’ and their seals do not show royal representation. He claims that the ‘accounts balanced documents’ demonstrate that merchants acted as agents for the palace, but it would seem that these particular traders were not members of the bureaucracy, or employees of the crown. Neumann cites a loan document from Nippur in which a merchant declares that he will repay the amount lent if he gets back from his commercial journey called *kaskal*. One would readily agree with Neumann that this promise clearly suggests both independent finance and commercial activity.⁶¹

There are more evidences that demonstrate that the Assyrians trading in Cappadocia in the early second millennium were basically independent business persons not agents of temples or palace; also in the old Babylonian period.⁶² Morris Silver presents an example in which in two liver omen texts, one Kuru, probably to be identified with Kuru the *tamka-rum* attested in contemporary texts, makes sacrifices of lambs in order to foresee whether his business affairs will prosper.⁶³ Furthermore among the Hittite, the evidence found is that of their laws in paragraphs 5 and 6 which require that if someone kills a travelling Hittite merchant he must pay compensation and replace the goods of the merchant; and according to Morris Silver, if seen in the context of similar provisions in the laws, one has to understand that the payments are due to the merchant’s family or partners, not to the king.⁶⁴ The reason why I am citing the work of these scholars in

⁵⁷ Morris Silver, *Economic Structures of Antiquity*, 1995: 158.

⁵⁸ Morris Silver, *Economic Structures of Antiquity*, 1995: 159.

⁵⁹ Morris Silver, *Economic Structures of Antiquity*, 1995: 159.

⁶⁰ Hans Neumann, ‘Ur-Dumuzida and Ur-DUN’ in Dercksen (ed.), *Trade and Finance in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Leiden: Netherlands, 1999: 43-53.

⁶¹ Hans Neumann, ‘Ur-Dumuzida and Ur-DUN’ in Dercksen (ed.), *Trade and Finance in Ancient Mesopotamia*: 53.

⁶² Morris Silver, *Economic Structures of Antiquity*, 1995:168.

⁶³ Morris Silver, *Economic Structures of Antiquity*, 1995: 168.

⁶⁴ Morris Silver, *Economic Structures of Antiquity*, 1995: 169.

the economy of the ANE is to show that the Old Testament also alludes to the independent entrepreneurship: that of Abraham⁶⁵ and Isaac⁶⁶ are prominent examples where it is assumed that they prospered in their private business enterprises among peoples who were not their kindred. They were in lands other than theirs, yet they increased in properties. This could not have been other than the result of serious entrepreneurship. This could be said to be a proof that the life of ANE, which is evidenced by archaeological artefacts, can sufficiently be traced in the Old Testament. Therefore it would not be extraneous to expect certain religious concepts to be located within the two subjects similarly: the ANE and the Old Testament, and tracing an equivalent element, as the case is in this thesis- elements of primal religion will join abounding existing works that had engaged in comparative analyses in various dimensions between the two.

2.4 Religious Outlook of the ANE

The same method employed in the first aspect of the literature review above shall be employed here. The general overview of the religious concepts shall first be presented, then the aspects of the religious ideologies which are in congruence with the characteristics that are equivalent to the other three subjects of this research: Old Testament narratives, Yoruba religious ideologies, and the sermons that are analysed in a latter chapter of this research, shall ensue. There are many concepts in this presentation of general religious overview that will not be correspondingly traceable within all the four subjects. There are gray areas within each of the four subjects which are not congruent to the others, but are distinctive categories to their subject matter. There are features of the primal religion of the ANE traceable in the Old Testament, the Yoruba religious ideologies, and ultimately in the Yoruba Pentecostals; these are the elements of the primal religion that the thesis will present as the core categories.

According to Jack M. Sasson in his review⁶⁷ of ‘Religions of the Ancient Near East,’ by, Helmer Ringgren, translated by John Sturdy, it is difficult, to write on Ancient Near Eastern religions. This is so not because there is a lack of data; there is a bountiful supply of documents, though they are at times one-sided: texts which catalogue the names of gods, details of divine acts, and so on; but the problem is that the data contain an abundance of differing statements about the nature and power of individual deities. ‘When information

⁶⁵ Genesis 20.

⁶⁶ Genesis 26: 12-14.

⁶⁷ Jack M Sasson, Helmer Ringgren, and John Sturdy. ‘Religions of the Ancient Near East.’ In *Journal of Biblical Literature*. Vol 94, No. 3 (1975): 456-458

about gods, their deeds, and their worship is gathered from sites that stand apart geographically, the reconstruction that results cannot but appear to be shot through with contradictions.⁶⁸ Apart from some universal, qualities that had been allotted to gods (e.g., Anu- sky-god, Shamash- sun-god), there is no ‘canonical, permanent, or firm conviction’ among the Mesopotamians, for example, concerning their gods or their powers and limitations. The manifestation and the worship of the same deity were different from place to place and period to period, even when limited to a specific period of time and to a definite region, sometimes totally. Certain multifaceted factors are responsible for these; they included a city's political power; the nature of its main deity and the traditions which had accumulated around him; the personal god of its ruler; the presence of foreign representatives in its court; the economic ability to sustain its temples, priests, and acolytes.⁶⁹ It is noted that the fewer the number of deities are supported by a particular locality, the heavier the burden of responsibility and power that was distributed among those worshiped. Then, too, there seems to have been a tendency to assign almost henotheistically, at certain moments, other gods' powers to a city's chief deity. Such a development could be extended, at times to even the lower gods.⁷⁰

Martin Noth,⁷¹ nevertheless claims that the complicated history of the ANE religions is still able to furnish us with the background for the Old Testament. ‘It reaches into many areas of study, complicated by abundance of phenomenon and developments. A presentation of these would have to range wide and treat an abundance of material.’⁷² But however vast and intricate these materials could be, they serve as the basis of information for the study into the period that cradled the Old Testament. He reiterates the common features one will encounter when studying the religious world of the ANE, ‘in spite of different arrangements of the details and names.’⁷³ According to him the characteristics of the historical background of these religions are common ‘throughout the entire Near East in spite of different arrangement of details and names.’⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Jack M Sasson, Helmer Ringgren, and John Sturdy. ‘Religions of the Ancient Near East.’ In *Journal of Biblical Literature* 1975: 456-458.

⁶⁹ Jack M Sasson, Helmer Ringgren, and John Sturdy. ‘Religions of the Ancient Near East.’ In *Journal of Biblical Literature* 1975: 456-458.

⁷⁰ Jack M Sasson, Helmer Ringgren, and John Sturdy. ‘Religions of the Ancient Near East.’ In *Journal of Biblical Literature* 1975: 456-458.

⁷¹ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, Adam & Charles Black: London. 1964:278.

⁷² Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 278.

⁷³ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 278.

⁷⁴ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 278.

Martin Noth's examination shall first be presented. It is obvious that 'one of the oldest religious concepts is the belief in a great female deity, a universal mother of all life, particularly of human and animal life, who embodied fertility as such in herself. A young god was frequently associated with her of the type of the so-called dying and rising gods, who represented the quickly blooming and fading vegetation, so striking in the Near East. He appears mostly as the beloved of the great goddess, suddenly loses his life in one way or another, is mourned by the goddess, but finally awakes to life anew.'⁷⁵ This deific pair appears in Mesopotamia as Ishtar and Tammuz; in Asia Minor as Magna Mater (Cybele) and Attis; in Egypt as Isis and Osiris; in Syro-Palestine as Ashtart, Asherah or Anat for the great mother goddess,⁷⁶ 'while the youthful god did not have a generally accepted name as far as we can see. Here and there he seemed to have been worshipped under the name of *Eshmun*.⁷⁷ The records belonging to a later Hellenistic period give him the title of majesty, 'Adonis,' which corresponds to Hebrew *adhon*, 'Lord.'⁷⁸ The worship of life and fertility were done as divine in this pair. It was a common belief that fertility and life in nature 'were magically produced and continually renewed in these deities' by explicit rituals that runs through a consistent cycle of nature life during the year, performed through sexual intercourse, 'in which the divine propagation of life was portrayed by priests and priestesses at the sanctuaries.'⁷⁹ These later are described in the Old Testament under the titles, *qedheshim* or *qeheshoth*. The idea of resurrection of human from the dead through being included magically in the dying and rising of the youthful god, arose in connection with these cults of renewal of life.

Another common feature in the religious outlook is the great cosmic gods, the heavenly and astral gods, who were worshipped everywhere in the ancient Orient.⁸⁰ The heavens originally mean the great vault of air over the earth, and the domain of the winds and clouds in which divine beings held sway, who could be either beneficial or devastating.⁸¹ Stars were considered deities because of their regular movements, and as deities were 'guarantors of universal order and frequently guarantors of justice as well.'⁸² Noth claims that

⁷⁵ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 280.

⁷⁶ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 280.

⁷⁷ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 280.

⁷⁸ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 280.

⁷⁹ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 281.

⁸⁰ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 281.

⁸¹ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 281.

⁸² Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 281.

‘with the progress of reflection the divine powers of the earth, the underworld, and the deep were frequently joined to the cosmic might of the heavens.’⁸³

The next common characteristic according to Noth is the existence of numerous localised divine beings, lumped together in the Old Testament as ‘Baals of the Canaanites,’ living in sacred trees or springs on mountain tops, or sacred rocks, as ‘owners’ (Hebrew, *baalim*) of these ‘through a materially conceived sanctity of designated localities.’⁸⁴ The *numina* (the localised divine beings) at first did not have separate identity, and were originally not regarded as gods, ‘but as either beneficial or dreadful spirits which in the limited surroundings of their dwelling provided either fertility of the land or wrought sinister, and demonic consequences’⁸⁵ they were provided with offerings as gifts at their sacred places – their abodes. The offerings originally were foods simply deposited, later were transposed into immaterial state by being burned.⁸⁶

In the fourth place are relationships between the deities and persons or group of people. Noth writes that the ‘connection between place and deity was more prevalent in well-settled, civilised regions. Personal tie is frequent among tribes not yet sedentary – they tend to have a warmer sense of human ties than is customary with inhabitants of civilised lands.’⁸⁷ The phenomenon of deity-relation is seen in cults of tribal gods, which had roots in the areas of non-sedentary life, though continued on after transition to sedentary life.⁸⁸ The tribal gods were seen in human terms in patriarchal societies as ‘ancestor,’ ‘tribal brother,’ and ‘relative,’ whereby he was viewed as then lord, leader, and judge of the tribe.⁸⁹ A tribe had just one single actual tribal god who claimed the cultic supremacy in the circle of the members of the tribe with their own personal tie with a particular divinity. This often resulted into henotheism.⁹⁰ In the migrative tribe, the cult moves with them. The phenomenon of the community sacrifice is likely native to all these tribal cults. The personal tie became particularly evident whenever the deities were named father gods, conforming to the human form

⁸³ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 281.

⁸⁴ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 281.

⁸⁵ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964:281.

⁸⁶ A striking allusion to this is revealed by Noth as recorded in the Old Testament – Judg. 6: 17 – 21; 13: 15 – 20. The evidences in the Hebrew texts of these primal elements would still be discussed later in this research.

⁸⁷ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 282.

⁸⁸ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 282.

⁸⁹ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 282.

⁹⁰ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 282.

which they probably had originally before they became venerated by their offspring.⁹¹ This was traced at two spots in the realm of ancient oriental religion, namely once in the patriarchal narratives of the Old Testament and a second time in the area of Syro-Palestinian culture during the Hellenistic-Roman period⁹². This type of cult which naturally has left only random literary or inscribed evidence, presumably expanded more generally in the ancient oriental world, particularly among those who had not yet become sedentary. This particular phenomenon of the community sacrifices (Hebrew, *shelem*), connected with a sacrificial meal was likely native to all these tribal cults.⁹³ Basic to this type of sacrifice was the thought of eating in common with the deity and mysterious union between deity and tribal members is brought about by the common partaking of the sacred sacrificial animal.⁹⁴

Combination of local and personal tie in the cults of certain city gods was common. The cults played important role in the ancient Orient from primeval times. Such city gods were the *genii loci* of the city settlements and their territories.⁹⁵ They nonetheless were the ‘divine lords of the historical communities of the city dwellers and as such the guardians of the urban community, its fortunes, and its affairs.’⁹⁶ The city deities were accorded urban houses, or temples, just like the city dwellers. By nature the temple is primarily part of the city. Still on the combination of deities, various divine beings were identified with one another in the historical process and merged with one another in the cultic worship.⁹⁷ ‘Deities from the various mentioned categories were united with one another, whether in the course of a change in the religion produced by historical developments, such as commingling of populations, or whether by conscious priestly or ‘theological’ deliberation.’⁹⁸ Thus almost any local *numen*, because of the process of historical development in sharing in divine activity, could ascend into the circle of great universal deities and be identified in his cult with the god of the heavens.⁹⁹ Cosmic deities could at the same time take over the role of city gods because they had a famous cultic site in a given city, as frequently happened in Mesopotamia.

⁹¹ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 282.

⁹² Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 283.

⁹³ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 283.

⁹⁴ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 283.

⁹⁵ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 283.

⁹⁶ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 283.

⁹⁷ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 283.

⁹⁸ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 283.

⁹⁹ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 283.

Another common feature is how a pantheon of deities emerges in the Orient world. Noth writes, ‘Tribal gods were united at local cultic centres with the *numina* native there, as their worshippers became newly sedentary in the regions dominated by these *numina*. The plenitude of deities of different kinds of classes in a particular region led to priestly speculations on the relations of these deities to one another. Consequently they usually ‘arrived at developed ideas of a pantheon with a whole hierarchy of divine beings’¹⁰⁰ Through this process deities were brought together in a relation of kinship, in which there was a ‘father of the gods,’ or also a ‘king of the gods,’ or a ‘lord of the gods.’ This at times may result into many deities getting absorbed into one great deity.¹⁰¹

Another characteristic of the religious world-view is that what the deities think or do were projected in the way and manner humans think or do things; they are even presented physically in human forms. ‘It is only demons and spirits of lower rank that appeared in the frequently see total or partial animal form.’¹⁰² These latter were often portrayed as guardian forces in the form of fantastic composite creatures at the entrances of temples and palaces. ‘Theriomorphic beings of similar type were figured to be the serving attendants of great deities. In some areas like North Syria Asia Minor-Mesopotamia, frequently an anthropomorphic deity was shown standing on the specified animal or on a pair of these animals.’¹⁰³ According to Noth’s claim, the golden calf recorded in the Old Testament was not meant to be an image of deity, but as mere pedestal of an unseen deity not shown but envisioned standing on it.¹⁰⁴ Egypt alone had a large number of deities in animal form from primeval period.¹⁰⁵

Another religious idea among the people of the Near East is that humans were created by gods to serve them.¹⁰⁶ ‘They were devoted to the fulfilment of the requirements of the gods as to care and services.’¹⁰⁷ There was not a well-defined border between the world of the gods and that of men. Kings and rulers were the ones in whom the human society which they controlled was represented or even embodied; and these had close relationship with the deities; of course these views were varied in the various areas of the Near

¹⁰⁰ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 284.

¹⁰¹ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*: 284.

¹⁰² Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*: 284.

¹⁰³ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*: 283.

¹⁰⁴ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*: 284.

¹⁰⁵ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, p. 285.

¹⁰⁶ As cited in C.J. Gadd, *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient Near East*, The Schweich Lectures 1945 by Noth: 285.

¹⁰⁷ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*: 285.

East.¹⁰⁸ ‘It is scarcely right to assume a general and unanimous ancient oriental view of the divinity of kingship and of the individual kings.’¹⁰⁹

The cult of the gods at the place of worship was a complicated thing in which ‘various elements were united one with another.’¹¹⁰ At the beginning, the cult served the gods as the requirements were. The offerings were usually food and drinks placed at the god’s sacred places. Burning of the offerings probably belonged to the non-sedentary elements, who presented their offering from the animals of their flock, ‘not only roasting these herd animals at the fire, but for the gods, burning them to ashes, for naturally they presented to their god as food what was also customary as food among men.’¹¹¹ Of course this evident practice in the Old Testament depicts that ancient Israelite practices are very analogous to the ANE, and there not easy to be extricated from.

The issue of ‘community sacrifice’¹¹² where by humans participate in the sacred meal was also prominent. ‘Only a portion of the material sacrificed was presented to the deity. The rest was consumed in a sacrificial meal. Thus the meal constituted and energized the community. These matters were originally so powerful and unquestioned; basically the service of the gods in the cults also had the objective of strengthening or even actually making possible the benevolent activity of the gods through feeding and strengthening them.’¹¹³

The ceremonies of the cultic priests and priestesses completed the divine action. For example the battle and victory of a god over powers hostile to them and threatening life were played by the cult and therewith realized. The ‘sacred marriage’ whereby sacral sexual intercourse was a prominent part of these rites, in which divine propagation of life was portrayed did not only depict but directly complete the life-developing and life-giving activity of the gods.¹¹⁴ This phenomenon clarifies the close connection between cult and

¹⁰⁸ Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature*, Chicago, 1948, as cited by Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*: 285.

¹⁰⁹ I. Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, 1943, cited by Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*: 285.

¹¹⁰ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*: 285.

¹¹¹ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*: 285.

¹¹² Cited in Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*: 285.

¹¹³ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*: 286.

¹¹⁴ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*: 286.

myth. The drama of the cult was not just poetic presentations, but representations of events in the divine world.

The work of others scholars who summarize the aspect of religion of the ANE, often building on the work of Noth, shall further be reviewed here. Benjamin R. Foster¹¹⁵ claim that ANE religions were the product of a long historical development among many different peoples, and as a consequence the relationships among these religions are often complex. For example, the cultures of southern Asia Minor and northern Syria and Mesopotamia in many cases shared a common way of life and religious tradition as a result of the Euphrates River, which rises in Asia Minor, flows through northern Syria and to Mesopotamia. An important commercial route, the Euphrates also served as a channel for ideas. The culture and religion of Sumer, in southern Mesopotamia, were different from those of northern Mesopotamia, but were eventually adopted with modifications in the north. Peoples from northern Mesopotamia in turn immigrated to Sumer after the third millennium BC, causing transformations in the population and culture of the south.

Certain aspects of ANE religion can be associated with prehistoric environments and subsistence strategies.¹¹⁶ For example among farmers of the ANE, the gods were invoked for fertility of the soil, availability of water, and favourable weather. Religious festivals were associated with seeding, spring growth, harvest, and the transformation of grain in food preparation. The gods of shepherds and herders were concerned with the fertility and safety of sheep, goats, and cattle. According to him, many herders were nomads who venerated the sun, moon, stars, and the planet Venus. In the marshlands of southern Babylonia, people saw their gods as fish and other creatures of the fertile and mysterious depths of the rivers.¹¹⁷ Among keepers of orchards, gods were identified with the productivity of the date palm and its clusters of life-giving fruit. Some gods were associated with striking features of the landscape: Ashur, the national god of the Assyrians, had his origins in a promontory beside the Tigris River.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Benjamin Read Foster, *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*, University of Virginia: Virginia. 1995: 12-20.

¹¹⁶ Benjamin Read Foster, *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 1995: 12-20.

¹¹⁷ Benjamin Read Foster, *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 1995: 12-20.

¹¹⁸ Benjamin Read Foster, *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 1995: 12-20.

According to Alberto Ravinell Whitney Green,¹¹⁹ with the growth of complex and stratified societies, beliefs derived from local environments and ways of life were brought together in each region to form unified *pantheons*, or hierarchies, of all the gods worshiped in that land. These pantheons could include thousands of gods, some of whom were seen as local forms of gods worshiped elsewhere. With the growth of cities, some gods became the patrons of particular communities and were worshiped in large temples. Over time, some gods became conquering warriors and kings, even as they maintained their age-old concern with water, weather, and fertility. By the end of the 4th millennium BC, Ancient Near Eastern gods were generally thought of as having human form but superhuman powers. Each deity governed a certain part of the universe, such as the sky or earth; an aspect of nature, such as reproduction or rainfall; or a facet of human society, such as warfare or metalworking. Many scholars also agree with this theory of unified hierarchies among the gods which is unique to the ANE.¹²⁰

Jean Bottero contributed that Mesopotamian religion includes the beliefs and practices of the peoples of Babylonia and Assyria from the earliest times to the late fourth century BC.¹²¹ The earliest Mesopotamian religious practices must be reconstructed from remains such as temples, burials, and artistic imagery, examples of which date from as far back as the 7th millennium BC.¹²² Written sources appeared in Sumerian beginning at the end of the 4th millennium BC that indicates religious practices, and there are sources in Akkadian and other Semitic languages beginning about 2500 BC.¹²³ Mesopotamian religion represents a continuous development from the religion of the Sumerians. Various Semitic peoples (for example, Akkadians, Amorites, Assyrians, and Arameans) who were influenced by Sumerian culture or who settled in southern Mesopotamia adapted the structures of Sumerian religion to their own beliefs and

¹¹⁹ Alberto Ravinell Whitney Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, Biblical and Judaic Studies, Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake: 2003.

¹²⁰ Alberto Ravinell Whitney Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, Biblical and Judaic Studies, p. 53; Lowell K. Handy, *Among the Host of Heaven: The Syro-Palestinian Pantheon as Bureaucracy*, Eisenbrauns: USA, 1994, pp. 65-97 He provides new directions for thinking, arguing that the structure of the pantheon worshipped in Syria-palestine mirrored the social structure of the city-states in that region; David R. Tasker, *Ancient Near Literature and the Hebrew Scripture about the Fatherhood of God*, Peter Lang: New York, 2004 p. 33, Jeremy A. Black, Anthony Green, Tessa Rickards, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary*, University of Texas Press: Texas, 1992, p. 9. They claim that the pantheon assimilation process is syncretism; Jimmy Jack McBee Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays*, Eisenbrauns: USA, 2002: 326; Tony W. Cartledge, *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, Sheffield Academic Press: Sheffield. 1992: 101.

¹²¹ Jean Bottero, Teresa Lavender Fagan (trans.), *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago. 2004:5.

¹²² Jean Bottero, Teresa Lavender Fagan (trans.), *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago. 2004:10.

¹²³ Jean Bottero, Teresa Lavender Fagan (trans.), *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia*: 10.

practices.¹²⁴ Later immigrant populations tended to adopt the Mesopotamian culture they found on their arrival. Mesopotamian civilization eventually spread throughout the ANE, diffusing its religious ideas to Syria-Palestine, Asia Minor, and the Mediterranean world.¹²⁵ This depicts how these religious concepts are diffused from one period to the other, and peoples to the other.

Other scholars broach the concept of pantheon of deities as a major aspect of the religion of the ANE. From written sources that gradually became more frequent during the 3rd millennium BC, it is evident that the Mesopotamian flood plain was densely populated with a network of cities, towns, and villages grouped into political, religious, and military alliances. Each city was home to a major deity, visualized in human form and residing in a cult image, or statue, that stood in a house or temple.¹²⁶ The relationships among the different city deities were defined by a pantheon in which both kinship and status were important: The moon god was frequently viewed as the father of the planet Venus, for example, and the gods of large cities were usually more important than the gods of small villages.¹²⁷ Although often identified with a specific city or cult place, the major deities were honoured everywhere, sometimes in local forms with local names, as it had been earlier discussed. After the Sumerian civilization was absorbed by speakers of Semitic languages, many Sumerian deities were called interchangeably by Sumerian and Semitic names.

The gods had specific areas of responsibility; for example, the sun god oversaw justice, honesty, and fairness. Major Babylonian deities included the sky god, An (Semitic Anu, whose wife is Antu), with his major sanctuary at Erech (Uruk); Enlil, wife Ninlil or Mulliltu and son of Anu, god of the wind, major sanctuary at Nippur; Utu (Semitic Shamash), the sun-god, with sanctuaries at Sippar and later Larsa; Nanna (Semitic Suen or Sin), the moon god, with sanctuaries at Ur in Sumer and Harran in Asia Minor; and hundreds of others. A late Mesopotamian list of gods contains more than 1800 names.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Marvin Perry, Myrna Chase, Margaret C. Jacob, *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics, and Society*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: New York. 2009:11.

¹²⁵ Marvin Perry, Myrna Chase, Margaret C. Jacob, *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics, and Society*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: New York. 2009:12.

¹²⁶ Daniel C. Snell, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*: 43; J. Richard Middleton, Brian J. Walsh, *Truth is Stranger Than It Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*, InterVarsity Press: Illinois. 1995:114.

¹²⁷ Daniel C. Snell, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*, 1995: 43.

¹²⁸ C.L. Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East: Military Violence in Light of Cosmology and History*, Walter de Gruyter & Co.: Berlin. 2009: 26; Louis Lawrence Orlin, *Life and Thought in the Ancient Near East*, University of Michigan: Michigan. 2007:173.

Tony W. Cartledge's work¹²⁹ is in tandem with others about the contents of the Gilgamesh epic. With the growth of nation-states and empires in the second half of the 2nd millennium BC, certain city gods became national gods, especially Ashur in Assyria and Marduk in Babylonia. Marduk, for example, was portrayed in the Babylonian creation epic, called *Enuma Elish* (When on High), as assuming supremacy over the other gods in return for protecting them from attack by Tiamat, the ocean. Marduk then reorganized the universe, placing Babylon and his own temple at the center, thereby supplanting Nippur, the city of the god Enlil, who had previously been the chief god of the land. In this way religion expressed Babylonian nationalism. Marduk was thought of as the son of Ea and father of Nabu (Nebo), god of scribes; his wife was Sarpanitum.¹³⁰

2.5 Problems in Understanding Ancient Near Eastern History

It had been observed that the evidence is not complete and there are big apertures in what we know of the history of the ANE, because total excavation is not humanly possible, then the excavated texts are more often scrappy and patchy. Furthermore most of the documents are only 'administrative notes and legal transactions.'¹³¹ In other words they come from a particular historical and cultural period which as it were cannot explain the whole scenario of vast and complex social, cultural and political contexts. For example, writing a complete history with the available material sources is analogous to writing 'the history of Britain using worm-eaten records found in a monastery (cf. the papyri of the funerary endowment of Neferirkare c.2400); a civil service department (cf. the Drehem archives relating to supplies of cattle-pen c.2100); a gentleman's private study (cf. the texts from the house of the 'purifier' and administrator at Ur c.1800); and perhaps a section of the British library (cf. the enormous archives from the great temple at Bogazky c.1400 – c.1200), all separated by centuries from each other.'¹³² Years of painful study of such documents are needed in order to establish a single detail of social behaviour.

Nevertheless, modern technology had made it possible to develop a more detailed and scientific material for the study of this period and people. For example, James Bennett Pritchard¹³³ apprise that the information

¹²⁹ Tony W. Cartledge, *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, Sheffield Academic Press: Sheffield. 1992: 135-140.

¹³⁰ Louis Lawrence Orlin, *Life and Thought in the Ancient Near East*, University of Michigan: Michigan. 2007:173.

¹³¹ Amelie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East, c 300 – 330BC, Vol 1*.

¹³² Amelie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East, c 300 – 330BC, Vol 1*.

¹³³ James Bennett Pritchard, Daniel E Fleming (eds.), *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of texts and Pictures*, Princeton University Press. 2011.

made readily available for his recent book are from some of the most important recently discovered source materials for the study of the history of the ANE, which is a sequel to a volume he edited 17 years ago. Between then and when this new volume was published, archaeology has provided a wealth of new materials for understanding the peoples of the ANE and their culture.¹³⁴ In the world of scholarship in ANE, new literary texts emerging from archaeology are being more precisely interpreted, as well as the ‘previously known ones, and science has contributed more of controlled excavations,’¹³⁵ thereby ‘supplying new documentation for the art, architecture, religion and daily life in the ancient world.’¹³⁶

Going through a literature survey on the subject, many of the books’ focus is intensely on the political and social organisation of the peoples: rise and fall of kings and cities, materials on royal courts, wars, economy, law, architecture, science and society and inter-state relations, even in the discussions on the Levantine region where Israel belongs.¹³⁷ Nevertheless some of their writings on the cultural and social aspects of the ANE also provide clues into the religious aspect of the subject which is the interest of this research, inasmuch as culture and religion are inseparable in some ancient societies. For example, Marc Van de Mieroop presents the relationship between the nomads and sedentary people as very important in the political and social life of the Near East, though the livelihood of the former was not tied to the agriculture that supported the urban centers. They were a permanent feature of the Near East, but in certain periods they became more visible in the urban record because they interacted more closely with city residents, competing for political power. This probably could be a pointer to the early life of Ancient Israel and how their relationship with the peoples of the Near East could have served as medium through which most of the features of their primal religion were imbibed.¹³⁸

The religious aspect of the subject in the whole range of books which dealt with it can be grouped thus: Myths and Epics, Treaties, Legal Texts, Historical Texts, Inscriptions, Execration Texts Hymns, and Correspondence; and they came from Mesopotamia, some from the Hittites, Egyptians, Assyrians, the Babylonians, Palestinians, Canaanites and Aramaics, South Arabians, Akkadians etc. ‘The materials through

¹³⁴ James Bennett Pritchard, Daniel E Fleming (eds.), *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of texts and Pictures*. 2011

¹³⁵ James Bennett Pritchard, Daniel E Fleming (eds.), *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of texts and Pictures*. 2011

¹³⁶ James Bennett Pritchard, Daniel E Fleming (eds.), *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of texts and Pictures*. 2011

¹³⁷ Mark Chavalas (ed.), *Current Issues and the Study of the Ancient Near East*, Regina Books: Claremont, 2007; Marc Van de Mieroop, ‘Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History’ in *Approaching the Ancient World*, 6, Routledge: London. 1999; Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat, *Daily life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Hendrickson: Peabody. 2002.

¹³⁸ Marc Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca.3000 – 323BC*, Blackwell Oxford. 2004.

which all these information are obtained are partly archaeological and partly literary. These literary sources consist of hymns and prayers to the individual gods, incantations for warding off demons and omen texts based on divination craft, and grave inscriptions.¹³⁹ The archaeological artefacts range from the remains of ancient cultic structure like Temples, altars etc; to representation of deities in sculpture or relief, or miniatures, and on coins. These artefacts portray at times mythical events or cultic scenes¹⁴⁰

The materials available had apparently been remarkably useful for scholars attempting an examination into the Ancient Near East especially in relation to the religious aspect. This thesis is relying on the works of these scholars to cast an examination into this important subject area for studying the background of ancient religion of Israel. The materials are relics of some activities of certain epochs, and there can be no deniability of the fact that the story each of the artefacts, inscriptions and parchments of texts are telling are indicators of real and actual events, which had served as raw materials for scholars to produce literatures for the study into the world. It is these scholarly works and literatures that shall serve as reservoir of facts here, from where primal elements in the religious aspects of the ANE shall be fathomed out. Their roles in the religion of ancient Israel shall then be showcased.

According to Jack M. Sasson in his review¹⁴¹ of ‘Religions of the Ancient Near East,’ by, Helmer Ringgren, translated by John Sturdy, it is difficult, to write on Ancient Near Eastern religions. This is so not because there is a lack of data; there is a bountiful supply of documents, though they are at times one-sided: texts which catalogue the names of gods, details of divine acts, and so on; but the problem is that the data contain an abundance of differing statements about the nature and power of individual deities. ‘When information about gods, their deeds, and their worship is gathered from sites that stand apart geographically, the reconstruction that results cannot but appear to be shot through with contradictions.’¹⁴² Apart from some universal, qualities that had been allotted to gods (e.g., Anu- sky-god, Shamash- sun-god), there is no ‘canonical, permanent, or firm conviction’ among the Mesopotamians, for example, concerning their gods or their powers and limitations. The manifestation and the worship of the same deity were different from place to place and period to period, even when limited to a specific period of time and to a definite region,

¹³⁹ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, Adam & Charles Black: London. 1964: 37

¹⁴⁰ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 37.

¹⁴¹ Jack M Sasson, Helmer Ringgren, and John Sturdy. ‘Religions of the Ancient Near East.’ In *Journal of Biblical Literature*. Vol 94, No. 3, 1975: 456-458.

¹⁴² Jack M Sasson, Helmer Ringgren, and John Sturdy. ‘Religions of the Ancient Near East.’ In *Journal of Biblical Literature* 1975: 456-458.

sometimes totally. Certain multifaceted factors are responsible for these; they included a city's political power; the nature of its main deity and the traditions which had accumulated around him; the personal god of its ruler; the presence of foreign representatives in its court; the economic ability to sustain its temples, priests, and acolytes.¹⁴³ It is noted that the fewer the number of deities are supported by a particular locality, the heavier the burden of responsibility and power that was distributed among those worshiped. Then, too, there seems to have been a tendency to assign almost henotheistically, at certain moments, other gods' powers to a city's chief deity. Such a development could be extended, at times to even the lower gods.¹⁴⁴

The characteristics of the historical background of these religions are common throughout the entire Near East in spite of different arrangement of details and names. The specific discourse on the primal elements in the ANE shall be presented when its comparison with the Old Testament shall be made later in the thesis.

Summarily, however complicated the history of the ANE religions is, it has been able to furnish us with the background for the Old Testament. The history reaches into many areas of study, complicated by abundance of phenomenon and developments.¹⁴⁵ But however vast and intricate these materials could be, they serve as the basis of information for the study into the period that cradled the Old Testament.

2.6 Comparative Overview between ANE and Old Testament

There are many authors who have done many comparative studies between the ANE and the Old Testament. One of them, Joshua Berman engages the Hebrew texts from a new perspective by drawing out parallel elements from each.¹⁴⁶ He presents the Pentateuch as a document of social and political thought, proposing that it can be read as the earliest formula on records for the establishment of an egalitarian polity. The design that comes into view is that of a society that stands divergently from the type of social orders that are found in the surrounding cultures of the ANE, that is Egypt, Mesopotamia, Ugarit, and the Hittite empires, where the hierarchical structure of the polity was arranged on the figure of the king and his cortege. Berman

¹⁴³ Jack M Sasson, Helmer Ringgren, and John Sturdy. 'Religions of the Ancient Near East.' In *Journal of Biblical Literature* 1975: 456-458.

¹⁴⁴ Jack M Sasson, Helmer Ringgren, and John Sturdy. 'Religions of the Ancient Near East.' In *Journal of Biblical Literature* 1975: 456-458.

¹⁴⁵ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.), *The Old Testament World*, 1964: 278.

¹⁴⁶ Joshua Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought*, Oxford University Press: Oxford. 2008: 23 – 29.

shows that the egalitarian ideals of the Pentateuch are expressed in a broad way and the expression is fashioned through its theology, politics, economics, and in its narrative literature. In the book Berman cites parallels from the modern period as an empirical tool to illustrate his proposition. His first approach is to engage with the social implications of divine hierarchies in Ugarit and Mesopotamia and the relationship between humans and the divine, comparing it with the theology of the Genesis, where the Bible depicts that humanity is created to increase its own potentials over against the former where it is depicted that humanity is created to serve the gods.¹⁴⁷ He even distinguished his study of the Sinai covenant in Exodus and its preservation or renewal in Deuteronomy as compared with the model of suzerainty treaties from older cultures in the ANE from other studies in this area, by highlighting how the Pentateuch version puts on the back burner the monarchic hierarchy and directs the treaty form to the common Israelite.¹⁴⁸

He argues that Deuteronomy should be read as an articulate discourse on social equality within Israel, which invalidates a vast array of hierarchies, and provides structures to safeguard the possible appurtenances of kings, priests, Levites, and judges.¹⁴⁹ For example he notes that Deuteronomy 16: 18-20 charges the public with the responsibilities of proper jurisprudence precisely because any individual may be called upon to serve as a judge.¹⁵⁰

Berman also shows the uniqueness of the Pentateuchal laws among the other Ancient Near Eastern principles guiding the economic life with an emphasis on the matters of land tenure, debt incurred through crop failure, and systems of support within communities as seen by the Pentateuch.¹⁵¹ In other words, he is saying that the biblical law codes preserving economic equality are unique in the ancient world since they alone are presented as divine revelation, though it is only through the regulation of time, which are created by these laws whereby individual liberties are protected against the hierarchies of the typical ancient monarchies, that this distinctiveness come into view.

Berman further compares the accessibility of the contents of the Pentateuch to the Israelite public with the secrecy and elitism of literacy established throughout the ancient world. The evidence from Egypt and

¹⁴⁷ Joshua Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought*, 2008: 2-49.

¹⁴⁸ Joshua Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought*, 2008: 38-42.

¹⁴⁹ Joshua Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought*, 2008: 59-78.

¹⁵⁰ Joshua Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought*, 2008: 70.

¹⁵¹ Joshua Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought*, 2008: 100-101.

Mesopotamia proves that there were divisions in class maintained by the restriction on literature and literacy to the common person in the ancient world.¹⁵² He looks to biblical examples in which literacy and its advantage were not restricted to a minute class of scribes and the ruling elites, though he admits that it is not possible to know the extent to which the Israelite public could access the sacred texts.¹⁵³ On the whole, this discussion is a presentation of how the Pentateuch's features create a concept of society that is maintained 'through the merits of its members, rather than on the basis of the authority of its power brokers.'¹⁵⁴

The comparative analysis of Berman seeks to reveal how different the ANE is from the ancient Israel; and this is a type of literature which had continued to come up in the recent times concerning the ANE and ancient Israel. Earlier scholars had always been pointing out the facts that the ancient Israelites drew so much from their Near East past to form the Old Testament texts as we have it. Such scholars in this type of comparative study of the ANE like John Walton cited below abound in recent times.

This approach is different from mine in this thesis. I am comparing the analogous elements within the two subjects with a view of positing that the ANE forms bedrock of certain ideas found in the Israelites' Old Testament texts, while not refuting the claims of these scholars whose view are that the Old Testament texts portray different concepts from the ANE especially because they are divinely sourced. It is agreeable that the Old Testament is a revelation from God to God's people, but it is pertinent also to add that God can reveal His thoughts using any of His designed arrangement among humans and nature too. The ANE could possibly be a designed contextual order to midwife into existence His thoughts among the Israelites. As would be shown in this research, the religious primal elements of the Africans traceable in the sermons of the Yoruba Pentecostal preachers is serving as catalyst to draw more people to their ministries, in the long run, to God, but the theme of the preachers cannot but be extraneous to what the African primal religions emblemizes. Although it is early to engage in this argument at this juncture, but it is significant to locate my comparative design within the modern genre of comparisons in the ANE in this section.

John Walton makes an analysis of comparative study of the ANE with the Old Testament by alluding to the principles of comparison, among other things. He demonstrates that the biblical authors were fully

¹⁵² Joshua Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought*, 2008: 110-114.

¹⁵³ Joshua Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought*, 2008: 121.

¹⁵⁴ Joshua Berman, *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought*, 2008: 169.

entrenched in the ANE ‘cognitive environment’¹⁵⁵ and must be read in the light of that environment if one will be able to appreciate their significance in ancient times and avoid imposing one’s own modern world view on them. Some of the principles of comparison he alludes to are that firstly, both similarities and differences must be considered; secondly careful background study must precede comparative study, thirdly, similar functions may be performed by different genres in different cultures.¹⁵⁶

In the second chapter of his book, Walton presents an elaborate review of two types of scholars: the critical and the confessional. He shows how comparative studies have posed challenges to both types of scholars, and how it has met with resistance from them, and how they have both used the method for polemical purposes. But then he presents what appears to be the mediating position, which he calls the ‘integrated role’¹⁵⁷ of comparative studies, and to this he gives three aspects namely: critical analysis, which ‘serves to provide a wide range of information by which we can understand in more advanced ways the history and literature of the biblical world;’¹⁵⁸ defence of the biblical text, which even non-confessional scholars can contribute to; and exegesis, about which Walton warns, ‘if we do not bring the information from the ancient cognitive environment to bear on the text, we will automatically impose the parameters of our own modern worldview, thus risking serious distortion of meaning.’¹⁵⁹

As much as Walton’s integrated comparative method reveals an idealistic approach to studying a subject matter, it is also hard to avoid critiquing that he violates the very principle, because ‘modern imposition,’ which is a phrase intoned throughout the book, is unavoidable. Everyone commits a theoretical imposition. All the requirements of analysis cannot be done without the spectacles of the analyzer. For example, the circumscription of a body of data, a delimitation of context, the formulation of questions which are generated from the interaction with the data, and the construction of categories with which to analyze the data, all come from the interpreter, and his/her worldview. But overall, I agree with Walton as to the interpretation of the Old Testament via the ANE; because the thesis of this research is that, the ANE have

¹⁵⁵ John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, 2006: 19.

¹⁵⁶ John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, 2006:18-28.

¹⁵⁷ John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, 2006: 39.

¹⁵⁸ John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, 2006: 39.

¹⁵⁹ John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, 2006: 40.

played the role of enabling a particular interpretation of the Hebrew texts through the religious¹⁶⁰ elements of the former. Similarly the role certain religious elements in the African primal religions are playing in the interpretation of the Bible by certain preachers of a certain context is construing the latter.

John Walton's volume also presents a synthesis which demonstrates similar concepts between the Hebrew Bible, and its Ancient Near Eastern neighbours. In this synthesis, he locates the uniqueness of the Bible in many concepts in comparison with the ANE; for example, covenant with the Deity (or deities) as the case may be, and also in the depiction of the divine nature of Yahweh. Walton believes that Yahweh, unlike all the other Ancient Near Eastern deities, desires a relationship with his people and revealed to them (in the Hebrew Bible), not just His will but also his character. In this comparative work, description of the certain ANE concepts as it relates with the Old Testament was outlined. For example, the reading which Walton gives to Jeremiah 31: 33 in the light of Mesopotamian divinatory notions of the gods writing their will on the exta of an animal¹⁶¹ is that the human heart in Jeremiah changes into a medium of revelation that will be able to communicate to others about Yahweh.

He also depicts celestial divinatory background for understanding the stopping of the sun and moon in Joshua 10: 12-15; this he interprets as a report of the manifestation of an unfavourable omen, instead of the conventional reading: an account of an astronomical miracle.¹⁶² Furthermore, according to him, Mesopotamia had facade or surface ethics while the Hebrew Bible developed inner or deeper morality (right or wrong);¹⁶³ the Gods of the Ancient Near East acted on whim at times but Yahweh never did so;¹⁶⁴ the ancient Near Eastern gods existed in the cosmos, Yahweh above it;¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ I tag them religious; another may not see them as religious. But they surely are elements discoverable in both subject matters under study.

¹⁶¹ John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, 2006: 257-258.

¹⁶² John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, 2006: 262-263.

¹⁶³ John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, 2006: 152-154.

¹⁶⁴ John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, 2006: 141.

¹⁶⁵ John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, 2006: 98 and 195.

Ancient Near Eastern rituals were as a result of common sense and experimentation, the Hebrew Bible's came as revelation.¹⁶⁶ All these comparisons reveal that Walton is a confessional scholar, which contradicts central attitude of this thesis; the comparative scheme of this thesis is not to engage in it with a view to presenting one as better than the other, but to simply spotlight the similarities between the four subject matters: the ANE, certain Hebrew texts, certain Yoruba ideologies, and the sermons of certain Yoruba Christian preachers.

Furthermore, one of the literatures where comparative analysis between the ANE and Old Testament has been done is the one edited by Mark W. Chavalas, and K. Lawson Younger Jr.¹⁶⁷ It is a volume of fourteen articles with contemporary information on studies in Mesopotamia, Syria and Ugarit, starting from the earliest times to the Neo-Babylonian era. It also focuses on the patriarchal era and the interaction between Mesopotamia and the kingdoms of northern Israel and Judah. But the ones that shall be focussed upon are those that evince similar concepts with the nub of this thesis. The main article titled 'Assyriology and Biblical Studies: A Century of Tension,' written by M. Chavalas, accounts the origin of Assyriology. He reveals that because the motivation behind embarking on archaeological studies in Mesopotamia in the mid nineteenth century C.E. came chiefly from a group of scholars who wanted to prove the accuracy of the Bible, there were at the beginning many false interpretations of data discovered in Mesopotamia, and erroneous interpretations of details in the biblical narratives in the light of the discoveries from Mesopotamia.¹⁶⁸

According to him early Assyriologists had to surmount bias and mis-understandings they have attracted to themselves consequently, in order to gain general approval of their work as furnishing the academic world accurate account of Mesopotamian history.¹⁶⁹ This tension incited some of the early Assyriologists to promote the priority and superiority of Mesopotamian culture and to attempt to discourage scholars who sought to work in both disciplines.¹⁷⁰ But contributions in the volume show that a solid foundation has been laid nevertheless for more cautious work in the study of the culture of Mesopotamia and the Hebrew Bible.

¹⁶⁶ John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, 2006: 137 and 142.

¹⁶⁷ Mark W. Chavalas, and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (eds), *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, Sheffield Academic Press: Sheffield. 2002.

¹⁶⁸ Mark W. Chavalas, and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (eds), *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, 2002: 21-67.

¹⁶⁹ Mark W. Chavalas, and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (eds), *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Exploration*, 2002: 36.

¹⁷⁰ Mark W. Chavalas, and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (eds), *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, 2002: 45.

This tension could still continue to be created in the studies of ANE if researchers come and read into it preconceived notions from their categories of studies. This error I have attempted to eschew by taking an examination of all genres of focus on the ANE before directing the study towards my own focus.

Furthermore in this volume is an article titled ‘Sumer, the Bible, and Comparative Method: Historiography and Temple Building’ written by Richard E. Averbeck. He deals firstly with a notion that it was possible to identify the narratives of Genesis to Kings as history writing by comparing it with the history writing in pre-Sargonic royal inscriptions.¹⁷¹ He does a critique of the notions of Van Seters and Thomas L. Thompson on the nature of history writing on the premise that there is an analogy that certain Sumerian texts served as a historical record of the past in their society, and possessed complete historical information even though they were written with the colouration of ethnic and ‘theological’ viewpoints.¹⁷²

Averbeck suggests that Genesis to Kings possess a similar social function for the Israelites, therefore must be classified as history writing and be approved or accepted as containing consistent historical value, though the viability of the comparison is not established in the work.¹⁷³ This has always been a matter of controversy in scholarship. In the next chapter, a series of chosen texts would be analysed with the aim of identifying certain elements analogous to certain features in the ANE. These texts would be taken from within the narratives of Genesis to Kings only because the thesis recognizes that these are texts which practitioners of Christianity employ in the day to day involvement with the Bible: Sunday school, Lectionaries, sermons, Bible study etc. The focal point of the work is on this category of Bible users, it is therefore essential to use as pericope the familiar texts, which they engage with, in the Old Testament.

Furthermore, scholars like Averbeck may engage in their studies to enlist in the age long debate of the historicity of some of the Biblical texts through the employment of the archaeological evidences of the ANE, on the contrary the motive of this thesis in delving into the ANE studies is to locate the background of certain elements traceable in the Old Testament in the ANE, and not to involve in the debate of historicity or dates of texts or narratives per se.

¹⁷¹ Mark W. Chavalas, and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (eds), *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, 2002: 88-125.

¹⁷² Mark W. Chavalas, and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (eds), *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, 2002: 90.

¹⁷³ Mark W. Chavalas, and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (eds), *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, 2002: 91.

Secondly, Averback compares the account of Gudea's temple building found in Gudea cylinders with the biblical accounts of temple building.¹⁷⁴ At the conclusion of the article he presents a list of common motifs and concepts between the two subject matter, and providing abundance of biblical references after each entry.¹⁷⁵ He avoids making the comparison in tiny bits like Walton, in order to elude presenting components that could be easily faulted. But his notion could have been more persuasive if he had employed a more meticulous approach, because the comparison is done between two subject matters identified from different periods and contexts, but in this thesis an attempt would be made to employ the same typology in locating the core category from all the subject matters to be compared.

Ronald A. Veenker in 'Syro-Mesopotamia: The Old Babylonian Period' does a review of the events of the Old Babylonian period setting his attention on Hammurabi, the dominant figure of this period known for his impact on justice in the ANE in the codification of laws.¹⁷⁶ In his comparison, for example, Veenker depicts the greater severity in the penalty for theft in Hammurabi code than that of the Hebrews' covenant code.¹⁷⁷ Comparison between the ANE and the Old Testament reveals concepts that are comparable, not necessarily similar. The comparison may reveal concepts that are correspondingly parallel to each other. The comparison of the ANE and the Old Testament in this thesis will not be done automatically without identifying both similarities and differences in the parallelism.

2.7 General Overview of concepts from the ANE that could be found in the Old Testament

This section shall examine the literary work that had been done on some of the texts in the Old Testament where the features of the ANE could be traced in the religion of the Israelites.

The first opinion to be considered is that the studies in the ANE had provided much information about the early period of the religion of the Israelites more than the Bible itself had offered. Jimmy Jack McBee Roberts writes that the light that Ugarit texts have thrown on Canaanite religion and culture has 'provided a helpful foil against which to discuss Israelite religion.' He also claims that the Ugarit language has also contributed to a better understanding of Hebrew lexicography, syntax, and prosody.¹⁷⁸ How are the contents

¹⁷⁴ Mark W. Chavalas, and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (eds), *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, 2002: 124- 125.

¹⁷⁵ Mark W. Chavalas, and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (eds), *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, 2002: 124-125.

¹⁷⁶ Mark W. Chavalas, and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (eds), *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, 2002: 159.

¹⁷⁷ Mark W. Chavalas, and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (eds), *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, 2002: 162.

¹⁷⁸ Jimmy Jack McBee Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays*, 2002: 6.

of the Ugaritic literature relevant to this research? It is because the literature reveals more of the context in which the Israelites emerged than the Hebrew Bible itself. Many of the names, words and concepts in the Pentateuch for example have been placed into a better perspective of understanding which corroborate the fact that the ANE elements are in the Old Testament. For example, when the royal palace of Ugarit was uncovered, a large number of cuneiform tablets were found. Some were in the known languages of the Bronze Age.¹⁷⁹ Most, e.g. Akkadian and Sumerian were written in known cuneiform writing system which involves hundreds of different signs.¹⁸⁰

However, there were many tablets and inscriptions in a totally unknown cuneiform consisting of only thirty signs. This number is far too low to allow it to represent a syllabic system let alone a mixed logographic-syllabic system such as ancient Akkadian or modern Japanese. The system had to be phonetic with each sign standing for one or two phonemes.¹⁸¹ This writing system was the oldest alphabetic system ever discovered. Within a year, two scholars working independently had cracked the alphabet and language through using some brilliant assumptions and deductions and much hard work. These tablets revealed, to the incredulous eyes of the epigraphers, was a literature written down in about 1375 BCE but of much older in origin. This literature described the exploits of the Canaanite gods, known from the Hebrew Bible, in the form of great epic cycles. Among the interesting revelations is that, in the words of Charles Pfeiffer,¹⁸² ‘Many of the sacrifices mentioned in the Ugaritic texts have names which are identical to those described in the book of Leviticus. Ugaritic texts speak of the Burnt Offering, the Whole Burnt Offering, the Trespass Offering, the Offering for Expiation of the Soul; the Wave Offering, the Tribute Offering, the First Fruits Offering, the Peace Offering, and the New Moon Offering. The term "offering without blemish" also appears in the Ugaritic literature.’¹⁸³

Moreover, up until when this literature was discovered, we have had only the Israelite view of Canaanite religion. The authors-editors-redactors of the Bible loathed and denounced Canaanite Religion not least

¹⁷⁹ C. L. Seow, ‘Ugaritic,’ in Bruce M. Metzger, Michael D. Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to Ideas and Issues of the Bible*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2001: 542.

¹⁸⁰ C. L. Seow, ‘Ugaritic,’ in Bruce M. Metzger, Michael D. Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to Ideas and Issues of the Bible*, 2001: 542.

¹⁸¹ C. L. Seow, ‘Ugaritic,’ in Bruce M. Metzger, Michael D. Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to Ideas and Issues of the Bible*, 2001: 542.

¹⁸² Charles F Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra and the Bible: Baker Studies in Biblical Archaeology*, Baker Book House, 1962: 57.

¹⁸³ Charles F Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra and the Bible: Baker Studies in Biblical Archaeology*, 1962: 57.

because the common Israelite people had been attracted by it.¹⁸⁴ Now, Ugaritic literature has provided us with the point of view of scribes and poets who were proponents of the Canaanite cult.¹⁸⁵ This, for the first time, enables scholars to contrast and compare Israelite and Canaanite religious and moral values, ceremonies etc. Three key benefits afforded by Ugaritic literature are: Firstly it offers an independent view into the Canaanite poetic tradition in a form similar to the one in which it was adopted by Israel's earliest poets.¹⁸⁶ Secondly, by knowing the original nature of the higher culture adopted and adapted by the early Israelites, we can better understand the drastically different religious outlook that the biblical authors expressed using the stock phraseology of Canaanite literature.¹⁸⁷ There is also a parallelism in the Yoruba extraction of Nigeria. The words 'Olorun' and 'Olodumare' adopted by early Christians who translated the Bible into Yoruba, are the traditional or primal religious diction for 'God'. Thirdly it extends our knowledge of a sister language of the Early Canaanite language out of which Hebrew developed¹⁸⁸.

In other to show that the extra biblical source could be more reliable in understanding accurately how certain concepts from the ANE could be found in the Old Testament, the views of some writers concerning the documentation of the ANE would be briefly discussed here. Chris A. Rollston¹⁸⁹ elucidates that the pre-Hellenistic (i.e. to 332 BCE) history of Syria-Palestine is much less understood than that of Egypt and Mesopotamia, not because there is less to know, nor because literacy was unknown, but because writing was recorded on papyrus and wood which decay rapidly in the climate of the settled areas of Syria-Palestine. On the other hand, the civilizations in Mesopotamia used almost indestructible clay tablets from c. 3000 BCE almost up to the Christian era.¹⁹⁰ Hence, we have massive numbers of contracts, personal letters, school practice tablets, epics, omen tablets etc. from Mesopotamia. These enable us to examine subjects as varied as language, diseases, inflation, ethnic changes, theology and history.¹⁹¹ In Egypt, the writing media tended to be papyrus and temple walls.¹⁹² Both of these can survive thousands of years in the Egyptian climate.

¹⁸⁴ Jimmy Jack McBee Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays*, 2002: 6.

¹⁸⁵ Jimmy Jack McBee Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays*, 2002: 6.

¹⁸⁶ Jimmy Jack McBee Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays*, 2002: 6.

¹⁸⁷ Jimmy Jack McBee Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays*, 2002: 6.

¹⁸⁸ Jimmy Jack McBee Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays*, 2002: 6.

¹⁸⁹ Chris A Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel*, Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta. 2010: xv.

¹⁹⁰ Marc Van de Mieroop, 'Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History' in *Approaching the Ancient World*, 6, 1999:166.

¹⁹¹ Marc Van de Mieroop, 'Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History' in *Approaching the Ancient World*, 6, 1999:166.

¹⁹² Marc Van de Mieroop, 'Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History' in *Approaching the Ancient World*, 6, 1999:166.

The literary data from ancient Egypt, while not as wide and varied as that from Mesopotamia, is still relatively plentiful.¹⁹³

The situation is very different for the literate societies of Syria-Palestine, lying between Egypt and Mesopotamia, including Ancient Israel.¹⁹⁴ In the Hebrew Bible, references to writing are frequent and literacy is often taken for granted. The Hebrew Bible itself is clearly a remnant of a much wider literature, yet all the inscriptions from, say 1200 BCE to 300 BCE found in Israel, probably the most excavated country in the world, would scarcely cover one or two closely printed pages.¹⁹⁵ The bulk of these inscriptions are on ostraca, i.e. notes written on pieces of broken pottery using water-soluble ink which only good luck has saved from the elements.¹⁹⁶ Of course, we do have the Hebrew Bible itself. However, we must remember, that any preserved document, such as the Hebrew Bible, is preserved precisely because some group considers it, for whatever reason, to be extraordinarily important. Thus, such a document, requiring huge efforts to recopy and preserve, would certainly not be typical of the generality of the documents that existed at the time of its creation. Also, the Hebrew Bible was authored, edited and redacted over a long period of time by various groups is likely to give an inaccurate picture of the period that might be covered by a given narrative. Therefore such extra biblical writings provide information which is needed about the pre-Israelite Late Bronze Age, when much of the synthesis between them and the Canaanites took place.

Israel's response to Canaan's culture is further shown by the examinations by various authors. For example, the united Israelite kingdom under Solomon borrowed its administrative system and the Wisdom tradition of education administrators from the Egyptians.¹⁹⁷ A conclusive proof is found in the biblical Book of Proverbs which probably started out as a Wisdom textbook. Proverbs 22:17-24:22 "...is modelled on an Egyptian work, The Instructions of Amen-em-ope. This may have been composed as early as the thirteenth century B.C., but was still being copied centuries later, and may well have been studied during his training by an Israelite scribe of the prophetic period."¹⁹⁸

¹⁹³ Marc Van de Mieroop, 'Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History' in *Approaching the Ancient World*, 6, 1999:166.

¹⁹⁴ Marc Van de Mieroop, 'Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History' in *Approaching the Ancient World*, 6, 1999:166.

¹⁹⁵ Marc Van de Mieroop, 'Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History' in *Approaching the Ancient World*, 6, 1999:166.

¹⁹⁶ Marc Van de Mieroop, 'Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History' in *Approaching the Ancient World*, 6, 1999:166.

¹⁹⁷ Stuart Weeks, *Early Israelite Wisdom*, Oxford University Press: Oxford. 1994:129.

¹⁹⁸ E. W. Heaton, *Solomon's New Men*, Pica Press: London 1974: Xxxiii.

R.B.Y. Scott corroborated the above when he also writes that the Israelites appropriated their literary and artistic higher culture from the Canaanites.¹⁹⁹ The channel was the scribes, architects and artists of local cities such as Jerusalem, whose Jebusite-Canaanite population remained in the city after it became the Israelite capital or from the Phoenician cities of present-day Lebanon whose Canaanite culture flourished unbroken from the Middle Bronze age until Hellenistic times.²⁰⁰ Furthermore, the adoption of the Egyptian administrative system, and its cultural values, may have led to greater stratification in Israelite society, a deliberate distancing of the rulers from the ruled, and the splitting of the kingdom after the death of Solomon and exacerbated the social problems denounced by some of the prophets.²⁰¹ This may be a little digression from the main stream of the research, but it is to demonstrate that some elements in Israel's ideologies were founded upon her affinity with the Ancient Near East.

Aaron Chalmers²⁰² admits the place and significance of ecstasy or trance-like state in the experience of Israel's prophets remains a controversial issue. But he goes ahead to claim that while it is clear that many ANE prophets exhibited some form of ecstatic behaviour, for example the Egyptian story of Wen-Amon in which the very symbol translated as 'prophets' seems to be the image of a person in violent motion, and the use of the title *muhhum* at Mari which literally means 'trancer or ecstatic,' there has been a greater reluctance in the Old Testament circles to associate such activity with the prophets of Yahweh.²⁰³ But, the evidence is clear that for some of Israel's prophets, especially the early ones, ecstasy was a genuine part of their experience. Examples include Moses and the seventy elders;²⁰⁴ Saul's frenzy;²⁰⁵ and Elisha.²⁰⁶ On a number of occasions music seems to have played a key role in stimulating such experiences.²⁰⁷ Chalmers cites Elisha's experience has the best example, where he calls for a musician before the 'hand of the Lord' comes upon him and he delivers the prophecy.²⁰⁸

¹⁹⁹ R. B. Y. Scott, Robert, Balmage Young Scott, *Anchor Bible Proverbs and Ecclesiastes*, Doubleday: London. 1965:104.

²⁰⁰ R. B. Y. Scott, Robert, Balmage Young Scott, *Anchor Bible Proverbs and Ecclesiastes*, 1965: 104.

²⁰¹ R. B. Y. Scott, Robert, Balmage Young Scott, *Anchor Bible Proverbs and Ecclesiastes*, 1965: 104.

²⁰² Aaron Chalmers, *Exploring the Religion of Ancient Israel: Prophet, Priest, Sage and People*, Inter Varsity Press: London. 2012:60.

²⁰³ Aaron Chalmers, *Exploring the Religion of Ancient Israel: Prophet, Priest, Sage and People*: 60.

²⁰⁴ Numbers 11: 16-30.

²⁰⁵ 1Sam. 10: 5-13; and 19: 20-24.

²⁰⁶ 2Kings 3: 14-19.

²⁰⁷ 1Sam10: 5-6, 10-13.

²⁰⁸ 2Kings 3: 15.

Authors²⁰⁹ who wrote on the similarities between the Ugaritic Pantheon and the Hebrew Bible agree on the fact that the Canaanite religion, from which the Religion of Israel emerged had priests, priestesses and prophets. At Ugarit, like Israelite religion, the universe is viewed as having three levels.²¹⁰ The highest celestial realm was the realm of El, the earth was the realm of Baal and other gods; and the depth was the realm of Mot (death), Resheph (pestilence) and Horon (perhaps meaning ‘depth’). Canaanite religion concentrated on the middle realm. In Bronze Age Ugarit many gods were worshiped.²¹¹ However, the pattern in Iron Age Phoenicia, and probably in the territories of Israel and Judah, usually was composed of a triad consisting of a protective god of the place, a goddess, often his wife or companion who symbolizes the fertile earth; and a young god somehow connected with the goddess whose resurrection expresses the annual cycle of vegetation²¹²

Furthermore concerning the Ugaritic pantheon, El seems to have been pushed into the background, in most areas, by other deities through most of Canaan by Baal-Haddad the god of the weather, fertility and war; in northern Arabia by astral deities (e.g. Şalam (moon god) Ilat (feminine form of ‘ilah i.e. El the goddess Venus), Athar (Morning Star); and in Mesopotamia the Sumerian religion largely displaced earlier Semitic forms leading to a pantheon peopled by nature and astral deities with an increasing role being played by national gods such as Ashur and Marduk.²¹³ This is probably a pointer to the fact that the people preferred to worship the god they could rely upon for their day to day lives’ support, especially in areas where they depended on agriculture for survival. They will prefer gods that are not far away from communion with humans.

This is factored in upon by the second, third and fourth feature of primal religion proffered by Turner: which he puts as ‘the deep sense that man is finite, weak, and impure or sinful and stands in need of a power

²⁰⁹ William G Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From*, Eerdmans Publishing: London, 2003: 128; Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*: Oxford: New York. 2001: 42-55.

²¹⁰ William G Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From*, 2003: 128; Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*, 2001: 42-55.

²¹¹ William G Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From*, 2003: 128; Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*, 2001: 42-55.

²¹² William G Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From*, 2003: 128; Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*, 2001: 42-55.

²¹³ Robert Karl Gnuse, *No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel*, Sheffield Academic Press: Sheffield. 1997: 193.

not his own.²¹⁴ This sense or awareness of his/her weakness causes the person to take the step of empowering him/herself; such step can lead him/her to enquire into the unknown which causes him/her insecurity. The third feature is described as ‘the conviction that man is not alone in the universe, for there is a spiritual world of powers or beings more powerful and ultimate than himself.’ This is an idea which came as a result of human’s awareness of his/her weakness, thereby making him/her depend on transcendent powers. And the fourth he described as ‘the belief that man can enter into relationship with the benevolent spirit-world and share in its powers and blessings and receive protection from evil forces by these transcendent helpers.’²¹⁵ If the supernatural power is remote as El was described to be, then the people will settle for approachable gods.

Nevertheless twice, at least, El was lifted out of the dust of obscurity to be used as the name of the eternal, exclusive, unique, all-powerful God of monotheistic religions. This required that El be shorn of his consorts, children, peers, sexuality and many unedifying characteristics. The first occasion, was when the Israelites identified him with their God YHWH, appropriating a number of Canaanite El’s titles or epithets, as part of the process of developing the monotheism of the Torah.²¹⁶

Then, much later, under Jewish and Christian influence, Muhammad declared El, under his Arabic designation, Allah, to be the one true God thus founding Islam.²¹⁷ In the Ugaritic literature El is the greatest of all the gods with full ultimate authority though he tends to sit back and let other gods, especially Baal, take the spotlight. He is the creator of all things. He sexually fathered the other gods who participate, under El’s headship in the Divine Assembly. El’s epithets or descriptions include: Bull, Father of Men, Holy, Ancient, Merciful, Supreme Judge, guardian of the cosmic order, Kindly One and Compassionate. Ugaritic El can be drunk and, though he copulates freely with numerous females, his consort is Asherah.²¹⁸ He is represented as an aged man. El wore bull’s horns, the symbol of strength, and was usually depicted as seated. In Carthage, a Phoenician-Canaanite colony near present-day Tunis, he and his consort were the main or only gods to which child sacrifices, which took place on a massive scale, were dedicated. Baal is a

²¹⁴ Harold W. Turner, ‘The Primal Religions of the World and their Study,’ in Victor Hayes (ed.), *Australian Essays in World Religions, Australian Association for the Study of Religions*: Bedford Park. 1977: 27-37.

²¹⁵ Harold Turner, ‘New Religious Movements in Primal Societies,’ in *Australian Essays in World Religions*: 27-37.

²¹⁶ Tilde Binger, *Asherah: Goddesses in Ugarit, Israel & the Old Testament*, Sheffield Academic: Sheffield. 1997: 110-118.

²¹⁷ Tilde Binger, *Asherah: Goddesses in Ugarit, Israel & the Old Testament*: 110-118.

²¹⁸ Tilde Binger, *Asherah: Goddesses in Ugarit, Israel & the Old Testament*: 110-118.

son of El.²¹⁹ His name (meaning – lord, owner, husband) is the normal Ugaritic-Canaanite epithet for the Canaanite rain god Haddu or Haddad (probably meaning “thunderer”) and hence, is the god of rain and fertility as well as being a war god. Baal is not a creator, like El, but is the preserver and giver of fertility. Baal is almost El’s prime minister. He is the executive of the divine assembly. Baal is the champion of divine order against chaos. Lightning is his weapon, and he can be found in storms and thunder. When Baal falls into the hands of Mot, the god of death, there is drought and sterility, growth ceases. With his rescue, by his consort, rains return and vegetation is returned to the earth.²²⁰ All these details are not analogous to the Old Testament, but as it shall be pointed out below, the Israelite Yahweh will later assume some certain characteristics with are similar to El and Baal together.

In the beginning of all things, Baal-Haddad warred with and conquered Yamm (Sea), and so brought the unruly waters of Chaos under divine authority and control. Baal was the main god worshiped at Ugarit and, apparently, in many areas of Canaan.²²¹ Baal is always paired with a female sister-wife whose name varied with place and time – Anat (at Ugarit), Ashtart (paired with the vowels of *boshet*=shame to make the artificial name Ashtoreth in the Bible) or Asherah (in the Bible the Asherah is either the consort of Baal or a cult pole which may stand for the goddess or fertility).²²² Baal’s consort, whatever her name, had three characteristics: Sexual lust; Fecundity; and being a bloody goddess of war e.g. Anat, at Ugarit, wading up to her thighs in the blood of her enemies. Baal’s epithets include Mighty and Rider of the Clouds.²²³ 'Baal's land', that is to say, land where cultivation depends on the activity of the god, manifests in the autumn and winter rains. The term Baal-land as distinct from irrigated land was used in Mishnaic Hebrew (2nd century CE) and has survived down to the present day in Muslim.²²⁴

²¹⁹ Tilde Binger, *Asherah: Goddesses in Ugarit, Israel & the Old Testament*: 110-118.

²²⁰ Diana Vikander Edelman, (ed.), ‘Proving Yahweh killed his wife (Zechariah 5:5-11),’ in *The triumph of Elohim: from Yahwisms to Judaisms*, Eerdmans: Kampen. 1996: 1-33.

²²¹ Diana Vikander Edelman, (ed.), ‘Proving Yahweh killed his wife (Zechariah 5:5-11),’ in *The triumph of Elohim: from Yahwisms to Judaisms*: 1-33.

²²² Diana Vikander Edelman, (ed.), ‘Proving Yahweh killed his wife (Zechariah 5:5-11),’ in *The triumph of Elohim: from Yahwisms to Judaisms*: 1-33.

²²³ Diana Vikander Edelman, (ed.), ‘Proving Yahweh killed his wife (Zechariah 5:5-11),’ in *The triumph of Elohim: from Yahwisms to Judaisms*: 1-33.

²²⁴ Diana Vikander Edelman, (ed.), ‘Proving Yahweh killed his wife (Zechariah 5:5-11),’ in *The triumph of Elohim: from Yahwisms to Judaisms*: 1-33.

About Anat, Tikva Frymer-Kensky²²⁵ presents the goddess of love and war as the sister/wife of Baal. Anat often aids Baal in his battles and takes his part in defeat. Another deity of the pantheon was Mot (Death). Baal is killed by Mot (in the autumn) and he remains dead until the spring. His victory over death was celebrated as his enthronement over the other gods. It depicts the prevailing order of things as the result of struggles among the gods--successive bids for power in which Yamm and Mot are confined to their present bounds and Baal and Anat (associated with fertility and military prowess, respectively) prevail. Having descended into the underworld and survived Death, Baal embodies the assertiveness and continuity of life. Yam (m) (Sea) was the god of primordial chaos and Baal's enemy. Yam sent emissaries to the Assembly of the Gods demanding tribute to include his receiving Baal as a slave, before the great combat with Baal. Baal drove the emissaries from the assembly hall thus opening the war.²²⁶

According to these authors cited above, the common identity shared by El and Yahweh is impressive. In the various texts El and Yahweh were both portrayed as father figures, judges, compassionate and merciful, revealing themselves through dreams, capable of healing those who are sick, dwelling in a cosmic tent, dwelling over the great cosmic waters or at the source of the primordial rivers, which is also on top of a mountain, favourable to the widow, kings in the heavenly realm exercising authority over the other gods, who may be called 'sons of gods', warrior deities who led the other gods in battle, creator deities, aged and venerable in appearance, and most significantly, capable of guiding the destinies of people in the social arena.

Edelman²²⁷ again compares the Ugaritic and the Judean pantheon by revealing the place of hierarchy from deities to human in the ruling of the cosmos. The cosmos was seen to have been governed by a hierarchy that extended upward from human rulers into the divine realm, the human king being the point at which divine and human levels of administration met. This explains why rulers had so many divine qualities attributed to them and could be called the children of the gods. She asserts that during the period when

²²⁵ Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth*, Randon House. 1993: 32.

²²⁶ Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth*: 32, 33; Richard J.Petty, *Asherah: Goddess of Israel*, Peter Lang: New York. 1990; Leslie S Wilson, *The Serpent Symbol in the Ancient Near East: Nahash and Asherah: Death, Life, and Healing*, Studies in Judaism, University Press of America, 2001; Karel van der Toorn, (ed.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. 1999.

²²⁷ Diana Vikander Edelman, (ed.), 'Proving Yahweh killed his wife (Zechariah 5:5-11),' in *The triumph of Elohim: from Yahwisms to Judaisms*: 19-20, 36-43.

Judah existed as a state, from ca. 960-586 BCE, it seemed to have a national pantheon headed by the divine couple, Yahweh and Asherah.

As the title Yahweh Sabaot would suggest, Yahweh was king of a whole heavenly host that included lesser deities who did his bidding, having various degrees of autonomy depending on their status within the larger hierarchy. First, at the top, was the royal couple, what can be called “highest authority.” According to her, the Bible reflects knowledge of the Ugaritic four-tiered system and even provides examples of the divine hierarchy itself. At the lowest end of the pantheon, there is the notion of the king as a child of the divine world, a bridge between the heavenly and the human realms (Psalm 2, 89, and 110 provide examples of this relationship) she maintains that two of the four (Ugaritic) levels are retained even in the biblical record. The lowest level of deities is presented, not only in certain restricted passages that might have slipped past an editor, but throughout the biblical texts and into Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The "angels" of the Bible are the same characters as the messengers of the Ugaritic texts. They are the low level deities who have no volition, but who merely take orders from above. The word of the angel is understood to be the word of God; indeed, the presence of the angel is the presence of God. That is because the angel cannot do anything but what it is ordered.

As for the other two levels of divine populace, they also can be discerned in the biblical texts. The prophetic admonitions against priests, prophets, and rulers who preferred these deities to Yahweh, particularly those by Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Isaiah of Jerusalem, though there are others, also demonstrate that these deities were established in the official religion as it was practiced at the time and not some bizarre aberration easily discounted as irrelevant to the cult.

Those who are mentioned in the texts include Baal, Shemesh, Yareah, Mot, and, perhaps, Astarte Shemesh and Yareah, who are deities commonly found in the second level in the west Semitic world, are directly addressed in the poetic fragment quoted from the so-called *Sepher hayashar* in Josh. 10:12.²²⁸ The cult of the sun god (or goddess) finds representation in the temple in Jerusalem in Ezekiel 8 as well. The deity of death, Mot, appears to make his appearance in the prophecies of both Hosea and Jeremiah as an actual deity

²²⁸ Diana Vikander Edelman, (ed.), ‘Proving Yahweh killed his wife (Zechariah 5:5-11),’ in *The triumph of Elohim: from Yahwisms to Judaisms*: 19-20, 36-43.

to whom Yahweh could and would turn over the land of Judah as punishment for the populace's believing in, or, more accurately, worshipping, other deities.

The notion that these gods controlled sections of the cosmos under the jurisdiction of Yahweh is clearly spelled out in the prologue to Job and the Psalms. The lesser gods are answerable to the highest authority in the pantheon.²²⁹ There is a third-level deity that can be identified within the pantheon of Judah. The name of this god of snake-bite-cure is unknown because the text provides only a pun playing on its shape and the metal from which it was constructed, not the actual name. The level of specialist deities is, however, certainly represented by the god of snake-bite-cure, called by Hezekiah, we are told, Nehushtan.²³⁰

According to the story told in Num 21:8-9, Moses was ordered to make the symbol of this deity to cure people of venomous serpent bites that Yahweh himself had imposed upon them. This character has a number of parallels to the Ugaritic goddess Shatiquatu and needs to be understood as the same type of deity: highly specialized, created by the higher levels of the divine realm (in both of these cases the highest authority) for a particular emergency as a healing deity. This god was revered in the Judahite cult, where sacrifices were made to it until, according to the text, Hezekiah, for reasons unknown, removed it from the official pantheon.

Nonetheless, Nehushtan provides an example of the third and final level of the west Semitic pantheon hierarchy. The religious vision of the state of Judah was of a piece with that of her neighbours and must be understood as having had a hierarchical, bureaucratic vision of the divine realm.²³¹

Susan Ackerman even presents a more extreme possible situation in discussing the Judean pantheon she concludes that Asherah worship, fertility rites, child sacrifice, the cult of the dead and the worship of several gods were practiced commonly as a normal part of Yahweh religion, and furthermore that necromancy, child sacrifice and fertility rites survived Josiah's reform and endured into the post-exilic period.²³²

²²⁹ Diana Vikander Edelman, (ed.), 'Proving Yahweh killed his wife (Zechariah 5:5-11),' in *The triumph of Elohim: from Yahwisms to Judaisms*: 19-20, 36-43.

²³⁰ 2 Kings 18: 4.

²³¹ Diana Vikander Edelman, (ed.), 'Proving Yahweh killed his wife (Zechariah 5:5-11),' in *The Triumph of Elohim: from Yahwisms to Judaisms*: 19-20, 36-43.

²³² Ackerman, Susan, 'Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth Century Judah,' *Harvard Semitic Monographs* - HSM 46.

Furthermore, Ziony Zevit²³³ submits that the evidence from toponyms bearing on Israelite religion indicates that some sites, founded and settled by Israelites during Iron Age I period, were named after *baal*. He writes ‘In accord with my understanding of Israelite social structure, these names attest that large extended families within some clans and perhaps some clans, as a whole, worshipped these deities during this period. These names do not necessarily attest to any exclusive monaltristic loyalty to a particular deity, but rather to or that deity as the favourite or as the patron of a certain place. These toponyms, therefore, reflect religion of the city, settlement’ Furthermore, he claims that *baal* toponyms appear to be paired with *baalwith/balit/balah* within the tribal territories of Simeon, Judah, and Ephraim. In Benjamin, *baal* was possibly paired with *anat*; in Asher, *dgn* paired with *baalwith*.²³⁴ These pairings, if not accidental could be taken to indicate a design of sorts within very large clans where each deity of a patron couple, one male and one female, was worshipped at separate places within a designated territory.

The significance of the personal names is that many with non-Yahwistic names were named by parents with Yahwistic ones and vice versa. Assuming that each naming constituted a testament, such names indicate that, within Israelite society of the Iron Age, identification with a non-Yahwistic patron was a random, personal choice that an individual who may have been raised as a Yahwist was capable of making. It indicates easy access to a fund of lore about such deities, their mythologies and cults, and very likely attests to the general lack of censure associated with these names.²³⁵

Most important, however, it indicates that the cultic choices of children did not necessarily have to be those of their parents. Theoretically, a person named Malkiyahu (My King is Yahweh- YHWH) residing in a town whose patron deity was Mot (Death, god of the underworld) could name his son Mepibaal (from the mouth of Baal, god of fresh water and fertility). In order words, the names parents at such places name their children did not reflect the belief of such parents, but the belief and ideologies of the patron deity of the place. This is an indication of how the general Near Eastern ideologies of the Iron Age coalesced easily within the ethnic ensemble of the epoch of which Israel I believe was one.

²³³ Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches*, Continuum: London. 2001: 648-654; 664-667.

²³⁴ Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches*: 648-654; 664-667.

²³⁵ Ziony Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches*: 648-654; 664-667.

The illustration of the trait of the ‘primalness’ of the Israelite religion as evident in the Old Testament is to examine the attitude of the early Israelites to physical objects like trees, streams and springs, Stones, rocks, and hills. Scholars like Helmer Ringgren²³⁶ had argued that these objects which were the subject matter of the animistic beliefs of the patriarchs might have been parallel to the religious practices of the Israelites’ neighbours at that period. Furthermore, he argued that the phenomenon in question might have been read back anachronistically into the patriarchal period. For example he analyzed that three times in the course of the patriarchal narrative we read that Jacob sets up a stone at a place where God revealed himself or that he wants to mark particularly.

First describing a funerary monument in Genesis 35:20, the second of two traditions woven together: the one speaking of a pillar, the other of a heap of stones Genesis 31:45ff; but both presume a ceremony in which a covenant is concluded, and the third was an occasion of the well-known Bethel story in Genesis 28:10-22, where Jacob sees God and his angels; in the morning he takes the stones he had put under his head and sets it up as a pillar, pours oil on its top, and calls the name of the place Bethel, because it is “God’s house” or dwelling place.

There is a similar account in another story at Genesis 35:14 “And Jacob set up a pillar...and he poured out a drink offering on it, and poured oil on it.” Ringgren claimed that such pillars or massebahs (Hebrew *masseba*) were in use especially in the Canaanite religion, from which they were borrowed.²³⁷ He also referred to Edouard Dhorme, who claimed that the Asherah, which represented the Canaanite female divinity was always put beside the massebah which served as a symbol of the presence of the male god.²³⁸ These stones were smeared with blood or fat, moistened with drink offerings, or kissed by the worshipper.

Excavations have unearthed several such massebahs. The Greeks saw them in Phoenicia and Syria and gave them the name *baitulos* or *baitulion*, a word that retains a reminiscence of the term *betel*, “house of God”. It was probable that the massebah of Bethel had another representing Asherah, but most importantly, even if Jacob did not bow to the Asherah, the practice was adopted for Yahweh, and this is a proof that the Israelite religion was primal during the epoch of the patriarchs.

²³⁶ Helmer Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, Fortress Press: London. 1966: 24 - 157.

²³⁷ Helmer Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*: 24 -157.

²³⁸ Edouard Dhorme cited in Helmer Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*: 24 -157.

Frank Moore Cross wrote, ‘In Akkadian and Amorite religion as also in Canaanite, El frequently plays the role of “god of the father,” the social deity who governs the tribe or league, often bound to the league with kinship or covenant ties.’²³⁹ This concept I believe can be linked with the ANE idea of personalizing a god which is an interesting totemic characteristic which can be traced to the ancient Israelites. Albrecht Alt²⁴⁰ is another who had written much on the issue. He analyzes some names in the Pentateuch to be indicators to the fact that there is an appearance of likeness between the totemic beliefs of the Israelites’ patriarchs and the Near Eastern religions and practices.

The name *el*, “god” and the various names compounded with it: *el elyon*, “God Most High” (Gen14:18ff), *el bet’el*, “God of Bethel” (Gen31:13; 35:37), *el sadday*, “God Almighty” (Gen17:1), *el olam* “The Everlasting God” (Gen21:33), *el roi* “God of seeing” (Gen 16:13) are frequently encountered in the Pentateuch.

Also are the frequent designation of this God as the “God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exo.3:6) or as “the God of my [or your, etc] father” Gen. 31:5, 29; 43:23). Occasionally he is also called *pahad yishaq*, “Fear of Isaac” or “Kinsman of Isaac”, and *abir ya’aqob*, “The Mighty One of Jacob”.

Albrecht Alt²⁴¹ writes that there is precedence elsewhere in the Ancient Near East for an individual to speak of a god as his own personal god. Thus the Sumerian king often calls the tutelary deity who watches over him and his family “my god.” In the old Assyrian text from Cappodacia an individual god is either referred to by name e.g. *il-abrat*, or called your god *ilka* or the god of your father *il abika*.

Albrecht, further showed that the Semitic and Greek inscriptions of the Nabataeans from the Hellenistic period frequently speak of the god of a particular individual, also that the proper names from the Old Akkadian period (25th-23rd centuries) and the Old Assyrian period (20th-19th centuries) very frequently designate the divinities as “father”, “brothers” or “kinsman” of the individual so named.

²³⁹ Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic; Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*, Cambridge. 1973:43.

²⁴⁰ Albrecht Alt, "The Origins of Israelite Law" in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*. Doubleday, 1968 : 103-223.

²⁴¹ Albrecht Alt, "The Origins of Israelite Law" in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*: 103- 223 .

Proper names of this type were also popular among the Amorites in the period between 2100 and 1600. This seems to indicate that a god was looked upon as a kinsman of the tribe that worshipped him. Now such proper names are also found among the Israelites of the earliest period: *Eli-ab*, my “god is father” (Num.1:9), *Ammi-el*, “my kinsman is *El*” (Num 13:12), *Ahi-ezer*, “my brother (god) is help” (Num1:12), etc. Albrecht therefore claimed that we may assume that the pre-Mosaic Hebrews shared this same conception. He on the basis of this fact even claimed that these deities were originally regarded as separate entities but they were subsequently fused into the concept of Yahweh, the God of Israel.²⁴²

Finally in this part, I would also make a review of Julius Wellhausen and Abraham Kuenen, who presented their extreme perception of Israelites’ religion having a primal beginning in the study of their interpretation of the Israelite religious history. First they claim that the Hebrew religion was not a special religion, which as it claims, Yahweh had chosen among all other religions of the world. They presented the Israelite religion as a national one, with a god serving national interests and furnishing the rationale for national existence and coherence, just like any of the gods in the ANE. Thirdly they revealed how through changing circumstances, the eighth century influence of prophets during the emergence of the world powers like Assyria and Babylonia (and subsequently of Persia, Greece, and Rome) the Israelite religion evolved from the religion of the Patriarchs into a moral religion.²⁴³

I am mooted on the other hand that Wellhausen and Kuenen’s view about the unoriginality and derivative nature of Israelites’ religion is too extreme. No matter the evolution of thoughts that had metamorphosed the Hebrew religion from the Patriarchal age, as for me, the uniqueness and primary nature of the Hebrew religion is still apparent.

The crucial point of the research is that religions are practiced in certain social contexts, and the inalienable fact is that such contexts pull immense impact upon ancillary or secondary aspects, but never changes the core concept of the religion. I believe that the religion of Israelites was original to the Israelites, but certain concepts identifiable in the ANE religious outlook can be traced in it. I also believe that this do not in any way affect the core belief in the Yahweh who through their history revealed Himself to them as the God

²⁴² Albrecht Alt, "The Origins of Israelite Law" in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*: 103- 223 .

²⁴³ Gillian M. Bediako, *Primal Religion and The Bible: William Robertson Smith and his Heritage*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 246,(eds.) David J.A.Cline, Philip R. Davies, Sheffield. 1997: 94-101.

who had dealings with their fathers and would continue in that covenant with them. Elements of their contexts in history and locale I believe will always produce influence on the *practice* of their faith, and not on their faith, and this is a pattern observable in the practice of Christianity among the Yoruba.

2.8 The Use of the Word ‘Primal’ and Western Pejorative Attitudes to African Primal Religions

Before I showcase thoughts that attempt to delineate in general the characteristics of the African primal religion, I want to delineate the reason for using the term ‘primal’ in referring to the African traditional religion. Kwame Bediako explains that the African traditional religions are called in current religious scholarship ‘primal religion’ because in the history and phenomenology of religion they are generally recognized to be the religious traditions which enshrine the basal forms of human spiritual and religious experience, as well as manifesting fundamental elements in the religious perception of life, and therefore constitute unique contributors to all other religions.²⁴⁴

But the essential argument in all these is Turner’s work that draws attention to the relationship that primal religions have with Christianity, which arises from the fact that in history of the spread of Christianity, its major extensions have been mainly into the societies with primal religious systems. This meant that the form of religion that might seem so extraneous to the Christian belief has in fact had closer relationship with it than any other. ‘Therefore it came as no surprise that it is the people of the primal religions who have made the greatest response to the Christian faith.’²⁴⁵

In agreement with Turner and Bediako, the word ‘basal’ is not intended to denote ‘at the bottom,’ but ‘at the foundation.’ Primal religions are truly functioning as foundations to the secondary religions, especially Christianity in various contexts, because as the foundation is a part of a building, usually below the ground, that transfers and distributes the weight of the building onto the ground so is the significance of primal religions to Christianity.

The major extensions and growth of Christianity have been solely into the societies with primal religious systems, and this is a proof that it is an important framework that supports Christianity in Africa. It usually is not visible, in the sense that the practitioners of Christianity themselves may not know that their relations

²⁴⁴ Kwame Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*, Maryknoll: New York. 2004:35.

²⁴⁵ Kwame Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*, Maryknoll: 36.

with all forms of Christian activities like the Bible, theology, liturgy and others are influenced copiously by their primal religion, and that is why this thesis believes that its nature is intrinsic. This it shall seek to prove by analyzing the sermons of the said Christian preachers. Therefore the use of the word ‘primal’ in this research is not in any way derogative, quite to the contrary, referring to its essential foundational role.

In my survey of literature on African primal religion, I found that some authors have criticized the Western attitudes on African primal religion. One of the most critical evaluations of Western scholarship in the discourse of African primal religion is done by Okot p’Bitek.²⁴⁶ He starts with the use of derogative use of language to describe African peoples. He believes that since meaning is encoded within discourse, Westerners’ predisposition to use negative words to describe Africans points to their perception of themselves and their society as superior. He claims that ‘Western scholarship sees the world as divided into types of human society: one, their own, civilized, great, developed; the other, the non-Western peoples, uncivilized, simple, under developed.’²⁴⁷

He furthermore writes that the lens through which academia views African religions and its people on the continent and in the Diasporas has not changed since the colonial era. He calls this view the West’s traditional view of Africa. He further classified the approaches which are still being used in varying degrees throughout the academia in the study of the African primal religion into three: 1. Christian apologists; 2. African priest-scholars; and 3. Ecumenical dialogue.²⁴⁸ He explained that the Christian apologists, who are the most dominant, still silently discourage those who stray too far from the politically correct religious mainstream and encourage their students to conduct studies that show how the Christian view can assist whatever religion in under investigation.²⁴⁹ The third category also has a large following throughout academia and according to him may appear to have a genuine interest in all religious faiths. But he doubts whether North American institutions will award a doctoral degree in African religion.

I probably fall into the second category because I am an Anglican making research into how the African primal religion affects the Christian religion. This group he critically views as unfriendly in the furthering of the study of African religion. He cited examples like Pritchard, Parrinder, Mbiti, and many other Christian

²⁴⁶ Okot p’Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship*, Kenya Literature Bureau: Nairobi. 1980: 10 – 16.

²⁴⁷ Okot p’Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship*: 14.

²⁴⁸ Okot p’Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship*: 40.

²⁴⁹ Douglas E. Thomas, *African Traditional Religion in the Modern World*, McFarland & Company: London. 2005: 48.

missionaries and clergy scholars. He claims that they were not truly concerned with furthering the faith or making converts to African religion. He argues that they used African cultures and deities to reveal to the world that Africans indeed possess, even though under developed or misguided, a slight knowledge of the Christian God.²⁵⁰

Douglas also asserts that since p'Bitek's critical analysis, many students are reviewing the works of Tempels, Mbiti, and Pritchard. Couched within their main objective is not to propagate African religion as an ideal religio-cultural faith to be embraced, instead, after carefully scrutinizing their work, one finds their lightly venerated preference for Christianity.

But I wish to state here that this research does not in any way perceive the African primal religion in any retrograde manner. Instead the thesis is attempting to prove that the African primal religion is not a dead religion. This is to be seen in its practical way of creating a form of African Christianity among the Yoruba people, just as the Ancient Near Eastern religious elements could be said to have had considerable amount of effect in the religion of the Israelites as revealed in the Old Testament. This effect is observable twice in the history of African Christianity among the Yoruba: during the nineteenth century colonial rule, and during the post-modern Pentecostal era in African Christianity. These shall be presented in the next chapter.

Furthermore, in response to p'Bitek's and Douglas' claim that scholars should concern themselves with furthering the African religion or making converts to it, firstly, I also do not think that the academia is the platform on which to propagate faiths. Secondly, I do not think in order to study African primal religion one has to be or become an adherent and proponent. And thirdly, I do not think it is extraneous for scholars who are Christians to study other faiths than theirs. According to the view of this research, religion, which has significant influence on people especially in Africa, should be studied with a view of advocating how it can improve the world view and value system of the citizenry of a particular society, for the betterment of the communal life.

Douglas Thomas further declared that even many Christian African scholars, who undoubtedly have good intentions of reporting on their religio-culture, have erred immensely, in that they put upon African deity European garb. In other words, when scholars attempt to explicate African religio-culture by employing

²⁵⁰ Okot p'Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship*: 99 – 130.

European tools and schema, a methodological problem is created that has no remedy. Such writers like Jomo Kenyatta, J.B. Danquish, K.A. Busia, W. Abraham, E.B. Idowu and others were mentioned to be guilty of this.²⁵¹

My own research is not really delineating what African primal religion is. This had been done by myriads of scholars. It is what they have presented about the African primal religion through their research that serves as the premise upon which I am building my own thesis. This is to answer the question how what scholars are have identified as African primal religion is working in Christianity in the post-modern world, and how this can be of good value to the society at large? The presentation of this kind of thesis will employ therefore the existing schematics.

The nub of the research is to juxtapose two survey results (the relationship between the Israelites' primal concepts and the Old Testament, and the relationship between the African primal concepts and his Christianity), with a view to showing that the features of primal beliefs are inducements in the interpretation of the Bible in a given context (the Yoruba as case study in this research). Therefore it will be built on the construct on which most African biblical scholarship is structured, which is the African contextual hermeneutic model of biblical interpretation, called tri-polar theory of interpretation, and the African biblical scholarship comparative paradigm. The latter is an already existing construct available for this kind of research. Even though it was originated from the Western principle of comparative study, it had been adopted and adapted in African biblical scholarship over the years.

Moreover on the methodological problems of researchers into African primal religion, David Westerlund,²⁵² compares the different study perspectives that characterize works by scholars of religion and by anthropologists, and discusses the interests and outlooks on life that form the background of their works. He claims that the following three groups of scholars, among others, have carried out research on African religions: 1. Western anthropologists; 2. Western scholars of religion; and 3. African scholars of religion. He questions whether Western scholars should be taken more seriously than African scholars, regardless of methodological approach, or whether Western and African academics (Christian, Muslim, or secular) should

²⁵¹ Douglas E. Thomas, *African Traditional Religion in the Modern World*: 49.

²⁵² David Westerlund, 'Insiders and Outsiders in the Study of African Religions,' in *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*, Jacob K. Olupona (ed.), Paragon House, New York. 1991: 18 – 19.

be regarded as outsiders when compared with the actual practitioners of the African primal religion. For example, according to Westerlund, most of those who study religion by investigating it philosophically, without reference to its reality in the existence of its functions in human life, usually react against those who attempt to do a reductionist approach to the study of religion.²⁵³

The approach of this research may seem to be reductionist (oversimplifying the study of religion), but it is an attempt to present the reality of the primal religion of the ANE in the OT concepts and the African primal religion in the biblical interpretations of certain African preachers, in the context of Africa (Yorubaland). I believe this approach best illustrates the significance and influence of religion in the affairs of humans. Studying religion from a distance may not do enough justice to understanding it and its significance in the society. Comprehending the effects of religion among its practitioners will further illuminate its very nature. Therefore, I believe that the reductionist approach to the study of religion is not oversimplifying the concept, but the removal of complications that may arise when the study approach is phenomenological.

Furthermore, Westerlund asserts that it can be seen in books on African religions written by African scholars of religion that the authors are influenced by their African background of belief. This is because concepts of religion as well as presentations of religions (including African religions) are influenced by the scholar's basic view of human existence, worldview and interests.²⁵⁴ For example, in addition to the more general belief in God and various spirits, some of them apparently believe in phenomena like witchcraft and sorcery. This prepares the African scholars better than their Western colleagues to see the inside view of the African primal religion.

Nevertheless the fact that the great majority of African scholars who have studied African religions are Christians has also influenced their presentations of these religions. Hence, they have tended to Christianize these religions in certain respects. I, as a Christian, attempting a study in the Yoruba primal religion, do not deny believing the possibility of and the reality of the influence of the primal religion on Christianity, like

²⁵³ David Westerlund, 'Insiders and Outsiders in the Study of African Religions,' in *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*: 18.

²⁵⁴ David Westerlund, 'Insiders and Outsiders in the Study of African Religions,' in *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*: 19.

K. W. Bolle²⁵⁵ who is primarily interested in the beliefs and practises of the religious believers themselves and the meaning these beliefs and practices have for them.

This research does not react against the personalization of the theories of the researcher in the African primal religion. In other words, there is an element of empathizing with the subjects of this research; even though I do not belong to the category of African preacher under investigation here, yet I can say that I do understand (and partially share) their world.

Some scholars of religion who carry out comparative research on African religions and also believe that it is essential to apply the method of source criticism, that is, to study not only books but also the authors and their biases are J.G. Platvoet,²⁵⁶ E.T. Lawson²⁵⁷ and N.Q. King.²⁵⁸

I believe that academics should study religion, African primal religions inclusive, irrespective of their orientations. And more importantly, their works should be related to without suspecting any bias against or for, in so much as their works are empirically presented, with data from the field. It should not be a problem in the academia if a Muslim conducts research into Christianity, or vice-versa, or an adherent of the African primal religion conducting research into Christianity or Islam.

2.9 General Nature of African Primal Religions

Richard J. Gehman in his *African Traditional Religion in the Light of the Bible*, attempts to help Christians in developing a correct understanding of African primal religion. The book begins with the illustration of a conflict in the Kenyan judicial system about a Luo man in Kenya (Mr. S.M. Otieno) who married a Gikuyu woman. Though he honoured the traditions of his ancestors, he had moved away from the customs of his rural community, which heart was the Luo primal religion. After his death, his wife wanted to bury him in his farm near Nairobi according to his husband's wish, but his clan would not listen to Mr. Otieno's wish. This became a matter of litigation in the courts. At the end the Court of Appeals ruled that when there is

²⁵⁵ K.W. Bolle, 'The History of Religions and Anthropology: A Theological Crisis,' *Epoche, Journal of the History of Religion at UCLA* 7 (1-2), 1979: 4.

²⁵⁶ J.G. Platvoet, *Comparing Religions: A Limitative Approach*, Religion and Reason 24, Mouton Publishers: The Hague, Paris and New York. 1982:12.

²⁵⁷ E.T. Lawson, *Religions of Africa: Traditions in Transformation*, Harper & Row: San Fransisco. 1984:16.

²⁵⁸ N.Q. King, *African Cosmos: An Introduction to Religion in Africa*, The Religious Life of Man series, Wadsworth Publishing Company: Belmont. 1986:19.

conflict between common law and customary law, customary law should be followed. They said that the courts of Kenya are guided by African customary law as long as those laws are not offensive to justice and morality. The judges decided that Mrs Otieno had failed to show that Luo burial customs were opposed to justice or morality. In the light of this illustration, one cannot help but think of how the African primal religion had been painted in a bad light from the past, but yet wield so much influence in the society, and even in the church, as this thesis is all out to present.

Richard J. Gehman gave five reasons why even African Christians should study the primal religion of Africans. In the first place, the African primal religion should be studied for its own sake just as men climb mountains to explore the unknown, because it is there to be explored. The African primal religion is one of the 'world religions of a great people with a great past.'²⁵⁹ Secondly, it is the religious background of African peoples whom the Christians seek to evangelize today. The failure of the early missionaries to understand the primal religion of Africans they came to evangelize during the colonial period gave way to the sprouting up of the African Independent Churches. This shall be examined in a more detailed way in the thesis. Thirdly, many Christians turn to the African primal religion in times of crisis. This is a reality in Africa today, especially among the Christians in the more rural areas.

Nevertheless this research is not focussing on syncretism of African Christians. It is only proving that African primal religion is a factor in the way they read and interpret the Bible. Fourthly, the Christian Church in Africa needs to develop her faith so that it becomes truly rooted in the life of the peoples. In other words since the manner of expression and communication of the gospel: worship and music for example, varies from race to race the presentation of the Christian faith therefore should take on the local flavour. This also shall be examined in the error of early Christian missionaries in the next chapter. In the fifth place, Richard J. Gehman claims that most African nations have received their freedom from colonial rule, and are therefore now seeking African identity, while rejecting much that is Western. Therefore the revival of the African Primal religion brings a sense of urgency.

In his study of the African primal religion, he divided it into three major parts: mystical powers (witchcraft, sorcery, and magic); the spirit world; and God (the Supreme Being). In my research I seek to focus on how the African preachers among the Yoruba are drawing out concepts of mysticism and the spirit world out of

²⁵⁹ Richard J. Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in the Light of the Bible*, African Christian Textbooks: Bukuru. 2001: 5.

their interpretation of the Bible. In other words, the elements of African primal religions that are often presented in the sermons of the Yoruba preachers are found most in his first two categories.

John Mbiti in his *African Religions and Philosophy* asserts that African religion cannot be divorced from the African culture. One could not point to any concept in the latter and say it is not religious, for every aspect of life was religious and related to the spiritual. Therefore life of an African is totally religious: his/her origin, nature, life-style, and future, even after life. Therefore according to Mbiti, African primal religion focuses on human's interests and needs. There is emphasis on how he/she will gain power needed to live a good life. African peoples see everything else in its relation to this central position of man.

Moreover, according to him, God is the explanation of man's origin and sustenance. It means the philosophy of the African primal religions therefore is that God exists for the sake of man. To the African religion describes or explains the destiny of human beings, even in afterlife. Furthermore, animals, plants, land, rain, and other natural objects and phenomena describe man's environment, and African peoples incorporate this environment into this deeply religious perception of the universe.²⁶⁰

Igwegbe also claim that in Africa, there is an inextricable relationship existing between religion and culture, and exerting an enormous influence on human beings and at the same time animating both his/her personal and communal activities in the society.²⁶¹ To the African then, as said above, God exists for the sake of man. His worship of God is targeted on his general well-being.

To locate my thesis within this school of thought I shall establish that the Yoruba primal religion is intrinsically active in the preachers, hence the constant focus on the well-being of the Christian in their interpretation of the Bible. This has dubbed them the name 'prosperity preachers' among the Christians worshipping in the mainline churches. Such preachers are located mainly among the Pentecostal Churches.

This thesis argues that because the latter are not guided by any official procedure of composing and delivering sermons, like the lectionary e.t.c., they are free to preach as they are 'led by the Holy Spirit.' This thesis is presenting the 'leading' as factored, in part, by the intrinsic primal religion in them. The

²⁶⁰ John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, SPCK: London. 1969:92.

²⁶¹ O.I. Igwegbe, *Sacramental Theological Thinking in the African Symbolic Universe*, Frankfurt am Main. 1995:40.

Yoruba preacher preaches or reads into the Biblical texts the concept of prosperity mainly because he is a Yoruba. The concept of the Yoruba depending always and completely on the powers of the unseen world about them to help in their desire for a happy and prosperous life is evident in their reading of the Bible. Therefore it is no wonder that the sermons of the Yoruba preachers always seem to focus on humans and their well-being. This shall be amplified later in the thesis.

Furthermore, Douglas E. Thomas in his discourse of anthropocentric harmony in Africa also asserts that among the peoples of primal religion in Africa the notion of cosmic harmony is intertwined with culture and religion. There are no dividing lines between religion and society. When we speak of African culture, it should be acknowledged that it is synonymous with religion, because the latter overruns all areas of life.²⁶²

He furthermore claimed that this is where African primal religion is different to the world religions: Islam and Christianity. Islam is a faith claimed to be guided by tenets based on actions; while Christianity also is said to be a faith-based religion, mainly conducted by action based doctrines, but African primal religion in comparison with these two is definite in its ability to nurture and build a communal unity upon the foundation of values and traditions. One of the instruments of accomplishing this is the transmission of such values and traditions through rituals and ceremonies to each succeeding generation.

In as much as I agree that African primal religion shapes the whole community into the structure whereby every human in the society feels belonging to a family which is his root, and refuge in difficult times, I also believe that with the influence of the primal religion among the African Christians, the modern society in Africa could also be shaped into a more whole world with the commitment of the influential Pentecostal preachers in Africa. This also shall be expatiated upon the concluding chapter of the research.

Furthermore, African primal religion is replete with varied sacred religious systems, and to ignore such key issues would tantamount to misunderstanding it. According to Mbiti, 'To ignore these traditional beliefs, attitudes, practices and symbolic values can only lead to a lack of understanding of African behaviour and problems.'²⁶³ African primal religion could well be comprehended within the context of the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, and religious officials. This is why in this thesis the specific religious beliefs and

²⁶² Douglas E. Thomas, *African Traditional Religion in the Modern World*: 21.

²⁶³ John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*: 92.

systems of the Yoruba as would be presented as they had been showcased by some authors in the area of study. It is these Yoruba religious ideologies that will serve as template to the certain primal elements that shall be traceable in the Yoruba Christian preachers.

Onwumere A. Ikwuagwu²⁶⁴ in differentiating between the natures of the African primal religion from the world religion says African primal religions tend to have a precise, one-to-one association with a particular form of social group unlike the world religions like Islam and Christianity in their relation to human society. The latter have the tendency of submerging many forms of social structure.

He furthermore states that in primal religions, God and spirits are real beings and they exert strong influence on humans. There is no line of division between the secular and the sacred. The adherent of the African primal religion is more conscious (than the Christian for example) that his actions can be either in accordance with the norms of his religion or not, since his actions have all some moral bearing. Religion provides a system of values relevant to the fundamental requirements of individual society. Thus in this thesis, a presentation of certain anthropological phenomena like taboos and rites that defines this characteristic of primal religion shall be done. Interestingly, these elements are traceable also in the four subjects of research: the Ancient Near East, the Ancient Israel (Old Testament), the Yoruba, and the Yoruba Christian preachers.

Also pertinent to my research is the work of Andrew F. Walls in defining primal religious traditions in the contemporary times. In content and structure, primal religions do not reflect a single view of the universe or a common religious practice. They also do possess their own history or development that goes way beyond, before contact with the West. This history is hard to trace not because of its deficiency, but because of the quantity and its complexity.²⁶⁵ Despite the difficulty in defining the quantity and history, there are four important facts about primal religions which are discernible.

In the first place Andrew Walls iterated the six distinct types of religion as distinguished by Aylward Shorter: strict theism (the Supreme Being is experienced directly in life and worshipped directly in prayer);

²⁶⁴ Onwumere A. Ikwuagwu, *Initiation in African Traditional Religion*, Echter, Wurzburg. 2007:19.

²⁶⁵ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, Orbis Books Maryknoll: New York. 1996: 119

relative theism (worship is rendered through a variety of beings conceived as modes of existence of the Supreme Being); ‘symmetrical meditation’ in which intermediary spirits (e.g. ancestral spirits) are the vehicle of communication in between the Supreme Being and the adherents; ‘asymmetrical meditation’ in which the mediators receive prayer, and there is acknowledgement of Supreme Being’s power and presence in life, but there is little or no formal worship to the latter; strict deism, where there is no clear indication of a Supreme Being underlying such cult as existing; and relative deism in which neither the concepts of the Supreme Being nor of mediation play prominent part in a religious life directed towards guardian divinities and spirits (ancestral inclusive), but where the experience and worship of the Supreme Being are not ruled out.²⁶⁶ The Yoruba primal religion, which this thesis is focussing upon, is an example of this last element. Primal religions share with all other religions any of or more of these six elements.²⁶⁷

Secondly, as it is with all religious traditions, levels of religious knowledge and experience are parts of features of all primal religions. There is skilled knowledge of esoteric values, which could be applied to every possible eventuality in the community and sought by many ordinary people in need. It comes as it were, from a deeper source in the divine world.²⁶⁸ The Ifa divinity is such an apt example of the feature of the Yoruba primal religion which shall also be discussed in full later in the thesis.

Thirdly, symbol system, religious ritual, and social system are interrelated.²⁶⁹ If a devastating change occurs in any of the three in a religious community for example, it will adversely affect the others, unless they can be adapted to take account of the new conditions. As it shall be discussed later in this research, some Yoruba of the nineteenth century colonial and missionary milieu had to adapt into a form of Christianity distinctive with Africans when their primal beliefs came into contact with Christianity, a universal faith.

Lastly in his description of primal religions, in comparison with others, he reiterated that all living religions are likely to relate intimately to the basis of livelihood within the community.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 122

²⁶⁷ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 123

²⁶⁸ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 123

²⁶⁹ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 124

²⁷⁰ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 124

Furthermore in his work, he asserts that primal religions underlie all other faiths, and often exists in mutual beneficial relationship with them.²⁷¹ This mutual beneficial relationship means that when primal religions are in contact with universal faiths, the process of giving and taking occurs. This translates to the fact that they undergo through changes, which had always been from time immemorial, and the pattern one can trace in the society and its religion over centuries. Andrew Walls attributes this change to exposure to universal faiths, political, and economic exposure.²⁷²

He offers that there are eight responses arising from the phenomenon of recurrent change in primal societies, which is as a result of contact with universal faiths: recession (disturbance of traditional values, and focus induced by the processes of modernization); absorption (assimilation of the features of primal religions into universal faiths like Christianity and Islam, therefore the former will continue life within the latter); restatement (taking on some of the features, for example language of the outside faith and relating to the themes emerging most strongly in the universal faiths); reduction (when a primal religion has become reduced or confined in its scope, either by the removal of major institutions from the complex of tradition that affects the whole of life); invention (bursting of new creative activity which transposes the primal religion into new settings, freely absorbing adopting elements from other cultures); adjustment (this is adjusting and expanding world views to take account of new phenomena); revitalization (gaining new energy and life as a result of assertion of cultural identity and the gaining of cultural assurance, with the rejection of European norms as the sole standard); and appropriation (the situation whereby primal religions are being adopted or recommended by those who historically belong to quite another tradition).²⁷³

When contact with Christianity occurred among the Yoruba, absorption and revitalization were inevitably the responses that were obvious, according to my thesis. This will be seen in the discussion of the emergence of the African Independent Churches. I do not doubt if there had been other researches into that context which had pinpointed or will pinpoint the other responses above in the historical presentation of the said context in Nigeria available for study.

²⁷¹ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 199

²⁷² Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 127

²⁷³ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 131 - 139

There is a very significant idea in my thesis about the inherency nature of the African primal religion in the preachers of the sermons analysed. It is found to be an echo of John B. Taylor's work where he examined Christian involvement in dialogue with traditional thought forms. In so far as primal world-views are foundational to all religious systems, and can even survive along with modern secular faiths and ideologies, the inevitable religious inheritance functions at different levels of degrees in us. This function is an inner dialogue that occurs in us with primal ideologies, which may lie buried within each individual person.²⁷⁴ Even within those who do not practise one of the primal faiths like the Pentecostal preachers, whose sermons are analysed in this research. Primal world views may continue to exist as unconscious values, outlooks, and pattern of thought.

2.10 African Biblical Scholarship

The books I have conferred with here include those that have examined the trend of the discussions in Biblical scholarship in Africa in the last three decades. They look in to the 'use of African contexts as resources for Biblical interpretation, of which inculturation-evaluative method and liberation hermeneutics (black theology) is prominent, and books examining the African contexts as the subjects of Biblical interpretation, dominated by liberation and inculturation methodologies.'²⁷⁵ These are books by scholarly authors describing the situations within Biblical studies over the years.²⁷⁶

2.11 Role of Primal Religion on African Christianity

²⁷⁴ John B. Taylor (ed.), *Primal World-Views: Christian Involvement in Dialogue with traditional Thought Forms*, Daystar: Ibadan. 1976: 2

²⁷⁵ The words of Justin S. Ukpong in G.O. West and Musa W. Dube (eds.), *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends*, Leiden. 2001.

²⁷⁶ Gillian M. Bediako, *Primal Religion and the Bible: William Robertson Smith and his Heritage*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 246, (eds) David J.A. Cline, Phillip R. Davies, Sheffield, 1999; G.O. West and Musa W. Dube (eds.), *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends*; D.T. Adamo (eds.), *Biblical Interpretation in African Perspective*, New York, 2006; Kwesi Dickson *Theology in Africa*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984; K. Holter, *Old Testament Research for Africa: A Critical Analysis and Annotated Bibliography of African Old Testament Dissertations 1967-2000*, New York, 2002; ²⁷⁶ Gerald O. West, *Exile and Suffering*, A Selection of Papers Read at the 50th Anniversary Meeting of the Old Testament Society of South Africa Pretoria August 2007, Leiden, 2009; Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole, *Triple Heritage: Gospel in Intercultural Meditations Pretoria, South Africa*, Sapientia Publishers 2005; J.A Draper, "Reading the Bible as Conversation: A theory and Methodology for Contextual Interpretation of the Bible in Africa". Grace and truth, a Journal of Catholic Reflection for Southern Africa Volume 19 No 2.2002; J.A Draper, "Old Scores and New Notes: Where and What is Contextual Exegesis in the New South Africa" in McGlory T. Speckman and Larry T. Kaufman (eds.), *Towards an Agenda for Contextual Theology: Essays in Honour of Albert Nolan*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster.2001; J.A. Draper, "For the Kingdom of God Is inside You and It is Outside of You': Contextual Exegesis in South Africa," in P.J. Hartin, J.H. Petzer (eds.), *Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament*, Leiden, 1991; McGlory T. Speckman and Larry T. Kaufmann (Eds.), *Towards an Agenda for Contextual Theology Essays in Honour of Albert Nolan*, Cluster Publications, 2001.

My research is in the purview of Old Testament scholarship, presenting a theoretical discussion on the use of the Bible. However, the research also focuses on the practical use, or the application, of the Bible and it is difficult to do so without touching on matters concerning the church. Therefore, the literature consulted deals with the history of the African engagement with the Bible of which the contemporary practice of African Christianity is the result. The literature presents the history of Christianity in Africa in the emergence of which Europeans played a major role. However, consequent upon the interaction of Africans with Christianity and, more specifically, with the Bible, a kind of metamorphosis occurred that permanently changed the functioning of the Christian religion in Africa. It is in this context that the literature describes the emergence of indigenous churches that practice Christianity 'in the African way'.

Andrew F. Walls's approach of comparing North and South Christianization processes will first be examined. Three historical examples of presentation of Christianity to the Greeks, to the peoples of the north and west (Romans), whom Hellenistic Christians perceived as the barbarian destroyers of Christian civilization, and to the southern continents are presented.²⁷⁷

He gave three differences between the old North Christianity birth processes and that of the new South. The first was that of language. In the North, Liturgy and Scriptures remained in Latin. Southern Christianity developed vernacular Christian literatures. The language of prayer is most properly the language of the home, and this was the evidence of strong cultural effect.²⁷⁸

Secondly, in the early Christian preaching, in the North, missionaries proclaimed God over against the gods. This was a continuation of the methods of preaching in the first great intake of Christian from the primal religions of the Hellenistic-Roman world. When Christianity got to the North, it found no shadow of itself in the faiths it displaced. When it got to the South, Christian preachers found God already there, known by a vernacular name, actively involved in the affairs of humans (in the sky, earth, and moral governor of humanity), though with no altars or priesthood. The evidence of this is that his name was used in Scripture translation, liturgy, and preaching as the name of the God of Israel and of the Church.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 69

²⁷⁸ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 69

²⁷⁹ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 70

In the third place, Andrew Walls asserts that the early conversion in the North did not last because Christianity did not find a parley with the primal religion. The North's primal religion and the universal religion, Christianity could not share the throne with each other.²⁸⁰

In this thesis, employing the Yoruba primal religion's contact with Christianity will serve as a case study for Andrew Wall's notion of the easier processes of integration between Christianity and the Southern primal religions (of which African primal religion is one).

Andrew Walls in another book²⁸¹ he authored perceives the history of African Christianity as a period in the history of African religion. This history runs from pre-Christian to Christian. This is because of the continuation of primal religious world view from pre-Christian to Christian period. On one hand, the world-views that have found themselves in the expression of Christianity and that are primal in nature started its journey from the pre-Christian to Christian.

In my thesis, the similarities of the experience of the two Christian milieux, one in the nineteenth century, the other in the twenty-first century, is a proof to the fact about primal religion that African Christianity owes its history to it. Furthermore, the encounters at that time resulted into the birth of the AICs, and a century later history was repeating itself with the Pentecostals. I also believe that the story that began in the African primal religion from the pre-Christian, to Christian, is still very much alive.

Among scholarly publications that reveal the importance of primal religions in relation to biblical, and to general religious, understanding, a major work consulted for the present research is by Gillian M. Bediako.²⁸² She uses the case of William Robertson Smith to illustrate difficulties experienced by Europeans in understanding the affinity between biblical and primal religion, basing her arguments on a developmental structure.

Bediako believes that, if late twentieth-century insights into the nature of primal religion and its persisting historical relationship with the Christian faith had been available to Smith, he might, arguably, have been

²⁸⁰ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 71

²⁸¹ Andrew F. Walls. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. 1996: 122

²⁸² Gillian M. Bediako, *Primal Religion and the Bible: William Robertson Smith and his Heritage*, Sheffield Academic Press: Sheffield. 1997:375.

able to deal with these difficulties better. She reasons that Smith was incapable of taking the relationship between primal and biblical religions - of which the former is crucial for the fulfilment of the latter in the society - seriously. It is on the basis of these thoughts of Bediako that I seek to build my own insight, depicting the Old Testament and African Christianity in Yorubaland as the fulfilment of the primal religions of the Israelites and the Yoruba respectively.

The effect of the marriage of primal and biblical religion on the societal appreciation of the latter cannot be overlooked. The present research will show in its conclusion that preachers who draw on Yoruba primal religious concepts in their interpretations of the Bible gain more followers in their communities. Bediako's work is based on the view that Smith's perceptions of primal and biblical religion were intimately linked with his European Christian identity and intellectual heritage. This cannot be fully appreciated without a consideration of the two influences that have shaped both Christendom and the image of 'primitive' peoples and religions that was prevalent in Europe during Smith's lifetime.²⁸³

The peripheral scope of my work in this respect aligns with that of Gillian Bediako. It is my ambition to pursue my research within the genre of biblical studies but an evaluation of the mindset of early European missionaries, and how it affected their views on African primal religion, cannot be omitted.. In my research I mean to present the primal ideas, not as 'primitive' which has an offensive connotation, but as 'original' in the sense that they came first, they were the beginning and they provided a basis. This is why I often use the word 'primal'. However, the present research aims primarily to appraise particular biblical interpretations presented by preachers in the Yoruba context, and not to do an anthropological study of African primal religions like the one that Robertson Smith produced.

Harold Turner's work on general outlook of new religious groups in the milieu of primal societies is an informative material on delineation of the new Churches that were off shoots of processes of mutability when universal faiths got in contact with primal religions. He approached the subject in a broader way by looking back over the world scene during the past five centuries. The processes of interaction had resulted into new religious movements that owe something both to their indigenous traditions and to the new invasive religions. There is usually tension between the new development and both the contributing faith.²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Bediako, *Primal Religion and the Bible: William Robertson Smith and his Heritage*. 1997:375.

²⁸⁴ Harold Turner, 'New Religious Movements in Primal Societies,' in *Australian Essays in World Religions*: 38

Basically, the structures of such movements, in this case, Christianity, are that they are post interaction of primal religious beliefs with the new, more universal religion. Furthermore they are new in relation to two factors: first, history of encounter and second, new in form and content when compared to the two contributing religions involved. In other words, such movements had become different from either of the two contributing religions in form and content.²⁸⁵

Among the scholars of history who have researched the emergence of African Christianity in Yoruba land and whose works I have consulted in relation to churches that originated the practice of African Christianity in Nigeria, are P.B. Clarke, J.F.A. Ajayi, E.A. Ayandele, Lamin Sanneh and J.D.Y. Peel.²⁸⁶ The works of these scholars are relevant to my research as they show how strongly the ‘Africanness’ of Africans can influence their Christianity. This is the nub of my thesis although its slant is slightly different from the consulted works. These generally focus on the intolerance of Europeans as regards the independent views of Africans and their ability to manage the affairs of Christianity according to their own cultural perceptions and way of life. This intolerance on the part of Europeans speeded up the secession of many African groups who formed independent churches of their own.

Some writers²⁸⁷ on the subject proffer reasons other than the ones suggested by the present study as the dynamic that led to the emergence of the AICs. For example, Turner claims four classes of causes for the rise of the independent churches. He denominates them as, firstly, ‘situational causes, the kind of encounter

²⁸⁵ Harold Turner, ‘New Religious Movements in Primal Societies,’ in *Australian Essays in World Religions*: 40

²⁸⁶ M.J.C. Echeruo. *Victorian Lagos*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan. 1977; E.A. Ayandele. *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842 – 1914*. London: Longmans. 1966; P. B. Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. London: Arnold. 1986; G.O.M. Tasié. ‘The Prophetic Calling: Garrick Sokari Braide of Bakana’ in E. Isichei (ed.) *Varieties of Christian Experience in Nigeria*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan. 1982:49; A. Osuntokun. *Nigeria in the First World War*. London: Longman. 1979; E.A.A. Adegbola. *Ifa and Christianity Among the Yoruba*. Ph. D. Thesis. University of Bristol. 1976; NAI Oyo Prof 1/662 Faith Healer Babalola and Aladurass. Operations in Oyo Province. Nov. 1931; H. Callaway. ‘Women in Yoruba tradition and in the Cherubim and Seraphim Society.’ in O.U. Kalu (ed) *The History of Christianity in West Africa*. London and New York: Longman. 1980:15 - 20; J. Akinyele Omoyajowo. *Cherubim and Seraphim: The History of an African Independent Church*. New York: NOK Publishers. 1982; J.D.Y. Peel. *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1968; H.J. Fisher, ‘Independency and Islam: The Nigerian Aladuras and some Muslim Comparisons. Review Article. *Journal of African History* XI (2), 1970:19; H.W. Turner. *History of an Independent Church*. Vols I. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1967.

²⁸⁷ Harold W. Turner. *Religious Innovation in Africa: Collected Essays on New Movements*. Boston: G.K. Hall. 1979. The essays start with an evaluation of origins, forms, typology and causes of the founding of African Independent Churches and veers into their historical formation in Nigeria and, next, presents a structural analysis, looking at patterns of ministry, spirituality, theology and liturgy.

and interaction situation wherein ...societies and their religious traditions meet, often in a conquest or colonial relationship.²⁸⁸

Turner however states that this on its own is not a sufficient cause because there are contexts of struggle against colonial powers where no such secession move has arisen.²⁸⁹ He suggests as that the ‘situational cause’ may gain in strength by contributing factors. These ‘may be of all kinds and in varying combinations of psychological stress, social and cultural disintegration under rapid social change, political domination or oppression especially in the harsher colonial forms, and economic deprivation.’²⁹⁰

Again, the rise of several secession movements may have been put into motion by any, or all, of these factors but it doesn’t provide us with a sufficient reason for the exhibition of African conceptual idiosyncrasies in Christianity. Thirdly, Turner claims, personal crises that were accidental and incidental in nature may have precipitated the rise of these churches. Such a scenario was found not only in West African cases but, according to Turner, also in Kenya after the sudden deaths of the two children of the young woman, Guadencia Aoko, who subsequently became the leader of the Legio Mario Independent Church.²⁹¹

Finally, he proposes as a fourth possible cause: ‘more intangible, enabling factors where features of two cultures concerned in the interaction that either predispose towards these new developments meet...’²⁹² For example, Turner states, if a Melanesian society has a mythology that promises the return of a golden age in the future, this can readily be reworked in the light of Christian teaching about the Second Advent and the hope of the world to come.²⁹³ Along the same lines, Turner might consider the primal elements in the African Independent Churches as a ready substitute of certain Christian concepts that appear similar to aspects of African ideologies. Nonetheless, the reasons proffered by Turner for the rise of AIC are pragmatic responses to the colonial repression of that time. They are matter-of-fact considerations that can be deduced from the historical events.

²⁸⁸ Turner. *Religious innovation in Africa: Collected Essays on New Movements*. 1979: 11.

²⁸⁹ Turner. *Religious innovation in Africa: Collected Essays on New Movements*. 1979:11.

²⁹⁰ Turner. *Religious innovation in Africa: Collected Essays on New Movements*. 1979:11.

²⁹¹ Turner. *Religious innovation in Africa: Collected Essays on New Movements*. 1979:11.

²⁹² Turner. *Religious innovation in Africa: Collected Essays on New Movements*. 1979:11.

²⁹³ Turner. *Religious innovation in Africa: Collected Essays on New Movements*. 1979:11.

But as the present research points out, a people whose history was defined by primal religion, has absorbed the value of religion and this inherent feature cannot but manifest itself when a new religion is embraced. Many practical factors contribute to the idiosyncratic character of the AIC but its main cause consists. I believe, in the intrinsic effect of the primal religion.

Today, neo-Pentecostal churches interpret the Bible in a way that reveals a similarity between them and the Independent Churches. The Independent Churches exhibit their Africanness especially in their liturgical practices whereas the Pentecostals do so more noticeably in their biblical interpretation. Perceptions expressed in the above mentioned scholarly works concur with my view that it is their intrinsic primal religious ideas that distinguish the African Bible users from their European counterparts.

Ogbu Kalu²⁹⁴ in his discussion on African Pentecostalism features its historical emergence from the revivals that resulted from indigenous contextualization of the gospel. Contrary to the prevailing Western view of African Pentecostalism as a means through which Western culture affects Africa, Ogbu Kalu presents it as a phenomenon that is well defined by its local distinctiveness and indigenous arrogation or appropriation, and that is on a par with other processes of global Pentecostalism. His reflection revisits the method of historical research of Pentecostalism by acknowledging the movement's general pneumatological emphasis, in addition to setting the stage for a reconstruction of African Pentecostalism from within the world-wide movement.²⁹⁵ This thesis presents the viewpoint that the pneumatological traits in African Pentecostalism are factored in by perceptions that are intrinsic to the nature of the African and that go back to Africa's primal religions. This is confirmed by traces found in the biblical interpretations of African preachers.

In the same vein, writers like William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer²⁹⁶ review Pentecostalism and Charismatic movements as more of a globally induced phenomenon. To them Pentecostalism's historiography shares the same nature with that of the European missionary enterprise. It was a movement that started in the twentieth century and spread through phases and landmarks despite twists and turns which vary from one country to another. The decades immediately following the Azuza Street revival there was planting and building. 'New Pentecostal movements in South America and South Africa (with John G. Lake) as well as in Norway (with

²⁹⁴ Ogbu Uke Kalu. *African Pentecostalism: Global Discourses, Migrations, Exchanges and Connections*. (eds) Wilhelmina J. Kalu, Nimi Wariboko, and Toyin Falola. Trento: Africa World Press. 2010:39.

²⁹⁵ Kalu. *African Pentecostalism: Global Discourses, Migrations, Exchanges and Connections*. 2010:27.

²⁹⁶ William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer (eds.), *Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies*, London: SCM Press. 2004.

T.B. Barratt), Britain (with Alexander Bobby), Germany and the Netherlands (with Geritt Polman) came into being.²⁹⁷ They claim that it was a movement that spread from one country to another, and once the first centre of teaching or revival had reached a country, institutional and denominational structures, however loosely, began to be formed.²⁹⁸ There was often a more or less serious dispute between the first to be established denominations in each country, but after a decade or so, the dust began to settle and the outlines of the new groupings could be clearly seen.²⁹⁹ According William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer, Pentecostalism experienced a period of consolidation and expansion which lasted many decades, at least until the 1940s. Global economic recession did not inhibit the growth of Pentecostalism and important evangelistic campaigns were held in many major Western cities.³⁰⁰ This growth reached a stage whereby it spread from clime to clime which effected a renewal movement within Pentecostalism like the Latter Rain movement of 1948. This approach of William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer consolidates the fact that when Pentecostalism gets to a particular context, just as the European missionary enterprises, the dynamics of the locale can effect strong influences on it with so much impact that it can adopt another mien entirely almost different from the original source.

J.D.Y. Peel discusses how, during the missionaries' adventure in South Western Nigeria, the Yoruba differentiated between Islam and Christianity by, firstly, determining whose religions they were and, secondly, by finding out what kind of religions they were. Christianity was defined as the religion of the *Oyinbo* (white man) and Islam was of the *Imale* (the Malians).

Subsequently, what they saw of Islam motivated the Yoruba to typify Christianity in two ways. It was still the 'religion of the white man', distinguishing it from Islam. It was also a scriptural monotheistic religion that the Yoruba assimilated. But more important is that Islam was more successful than Christianity because it met the social needs of the people in ways that reminded the Yoruba of their primal religion. There were two elements in Yoruba culture that the Christian missionaries had failed: to emulate, namely 'its magico-spiritual techniques and its social affability.'³⁰¹

²⁹⁷ William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer (eds.), *Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies* 2004: 10-20.

²⁹⁸ William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer (eds.), *Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies*. 2004: 17-18.

²⁹⁹ William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer (eds.), *Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies*. 2004: 20.

³⁰⁰ William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer (eds.), *Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies*. 2004: 64-73.

³⁰¹ Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:190.

It is these aspects that African converts to Christianity urged the church to take into account when they demanded that Christianity should be practiced in a way that engaged the African religio-cultural process. This development has left marks on Christianity as it has adapted to become a more African type of worship. According to Peel, Islam's incursion into Yorubaland predates the arrival of Christianity.³⁰² The former presented concepts analogous to those of the Yoruba traditional religion. However, the practices of Imams and Islamic scholars or teachers was by the Christian missionaries regarded as extraneous and the result was that Islam gained more converts in several areas in Yorubaland.

The significance of Christianity in African life, with the focus on Ghana, is discussed by Kwame Bediako who examines problems raised by Edward Wilmot Blyden, concerning the suitability of Christianity for Africa, as well as Blyden's arguments for the establishment of churches that are African in nature than European. This idea seems to point ahead to the rise of the African Independent Churches, the first of which was the United Native African Church in Lagos.³⁰³

In the second part of his book Bediako compares two men who did preach in different socio-economic and political situations. Philip Quaque (1741–1816) of Ghana was the first African ordained into the priesthood of the Anglican Communion in 1765 in Exeter, London and sent to Gold Coast as a missionary and catechist in 1766.³⁰⁴ He lived, worked, and died before Prophet Harris was born. William Wade Harris (1865–1929) of Liberia was a pioneer and a kind of religious celebrity in his time in West Africa. He was the first independent African Christian prophet.³⁰⁵ Can one, on the basis of the numbers of converts they made, conclude that Harris was more successful than Quaque because of the different times, or the different societies or economic situations in which they preached?

None of these factors could have fully explained the outcome of the two men's careers that was probable due to the fact that they did not preach the same gospel or, rather, they did not preach the gospel in the same way, or following the same method. As Kwame Bediako puts it, Prophet Harris was a 'paradigm of both non-Western and essentially primal apprehension of the Gospel and also of a settled self-consciousness as

³⁰² Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:190.

³⁰³ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh. 1995: 13-14.

³⁰⁴ Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. 1995:91.

³⁰⁵ Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. 1995: 91.

African Christian, which is uncluttered by Western missionary controls.’³⁰⁶ He preached from the basis of his African ideological orientation, unlike Quaque who, although an African, was trained and controlled by the Western missionary administration. My aim here is not a study of Harris’ or Quaque’s work, but to showcase Harris as a paradigmatic representative of a type of preachers who are influenced by elements of that on which the present research is focused, namely the primal religion. The primal religion is intrinsically operating in African preachers and is the basic cause of the rise of the African Independent Churches. One could argue that Quaque was also an African. Why did his ministry retain a European character if the African primal religion is so inherently powerful in Africans? A possible answer to this question is that their different orientation could be traced to differences between the ‘white man’s’ thinking and that of the African, not necessarily in respect to the religious aspect of life. Quaque who probably got his proclivity from the Europeans may not have known much about the cultural predisposition of the African.

2.12 Yoruba Primal Religion

Many of the books written on the Yoruba primal ideas were published between the two decades of the 60s and 70s.³⁰⁷ Most of the authors focussed on the Yoruba concept of God, but the ideas of Africans on some of these primal features are borne out of their belief in God. Thus the literatures serve as appropriate sources of information of these concepts, on one hand. Some other works done on the history of the Yoruba will also be examined with the aim of showing the background of these people which I think is expedient.

2.13 African Sermons

³⁰⁶ Bediako. *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. 1995:92.

³⁰⁷ E.B. Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, Ikeji, 1962; J.Omosade Awolalu, *Yoruba beliefs and sacrificial rites*, London, 1979; E. B. Idowu, *African tradition religion*, New York, 1975; G. Parrinder, *African traditional religion*. Westport, 1954; P. J. Niemark, *The Way of Orisha*. New York, 1993; J.O. Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, Lagos, 1948; K.O. Agyakwa, *The Problem of Evil According to Akan and Whiteheadian Metaphysical systems*, Imodoye, *A journal of African philosophy*, 1996, G. Parrinder, *African Mythology*, New York, 1967; W. Bascom, *The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria*, New York, 1969; Robert Ranulph Marett, *The Threshold of Religion*, London, 1909; Ram Narayan Das, *The Sterling Dictionary of Anthropology*, New Delhi, 1997; Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas. From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, Lagos, Reprinted 2009; Major Denham and Capt. Clapperton, *Narratives of Travels and Discoveries*, Appendix XII, Sec. IV, 1826; A.B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-Speaking People of the Slave Coast of Africa*, London, 1894; R.E. Dennett, *Nigerian Studies; or Religious and Political system of the Yoruba*, London 1910; P.A. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, Oxford, 1926 vol 2; E. Underhill, *Worship*, London, 1936; J. Alan Kay, *The Nature of Christian Worship*, London, 1953; H.B. Alexander, ‘Primitive Worship,’ *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburgh, 4th Edition 1959; E.B. Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief*, London, 1962; P. Morton Williams, ‘Ogboni cult,’ *Africa*, xx, 1960; M.A. Odukoya, ‘Okosi Festival at Epe Town’, *Odu*, 7, 1959; O. Ogunba, *Ritual Drama among the Ijebu*, Ph. D thesis, University of Ibadan, 1967; *Nigerian Tribune*, 6 July 1967; E.G. Parrinder, *West African Religion*, London, 1949; Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, Oxford; J.O. Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, Lagos, 1948; W.R. Bascom, *Ifa Divination*, London; J. Price, *Ifa Yoruba Divination*, New York, 1973; Wande Abimbola, *Ijinle Ohun Enu Ifa*; New York, 1973; Judith Gleason, *A Recitation of Ifa*, New York, 1973; Wande Abimbola, *Sixteen Great Poems of Ifa*, New York, 1975.

The final aspect of the literature review is the survey of sermons collected in Africa. The first one is a series of sermons preached in the Cathedral Church of St. Peters, Maritzburg, by Right Revd. John William Colenso, the Bishop of Natal.³⁰⁸ These were sermons preached to large and attentive congregations, composed from week to week upon subjects suggested by texts occurring in the services of the day. These sermons are not the focus of this research, in that they do not fall within the ambit of those preached having the background of features of primal religion. This is not because Bishop Colenso does not belong to the Yoruba social group, but because his sermons have not reflected the types of sermons I seek to collect.

Another collection of sermons worthy of interest is the one by Cleophus J. LaRue, a Professor of Homiletics at Princeton Theological Seminary. The book consists of thirteen African American women's stories of their calls and journeys to ministry. While some of these women are well-established in their ministerial careers, others are only beginning. Collectively, they represent a voice that needs to be heard in churches and seminaries across the United States of America. Individually, they give powerful testimonies and sermons to the role of faith, courage, and conviction in their lives. This collection is far-flung to the scope of this research. The sermons are showcasing a voice of black women in the ministry, in the United States of America creating a panorama of a change in the understanding of traditional clergy leadership role in the church. My collection would seek to produce a genre of sermons which probably have the tendency of been neoteric. They are not going to speak the language of agitation like the LaRue's collection. They rather are revealing a new genus of interpretation coming from the reservoir of diverse biblical interpretations emerging in Africa.

The final work to be reviewed here is Hilary B.P. Mijoga's book surveying preaching in African Instituted Churches in Southern Malawi.³⁰⁹ Mijoga analyzes how the Bible is read and interpreted in Malawi, by studying sermons preached in the African Independent Churches in Malawi. She establishes that there is no difference between the African Independent Churches and the mainstream preachers in reading and interpreting the Bible. She does not support the claim that African Independent Churches are vanguards of African culture. This work is very similar to my research in that we both explore into reading and interpretation of the Bible among African preachers. Like Mijoga, I will do a collection on African sermons

³⁰⁸ J.W. Colenso, *Natal Sermons*, London. 1867.

³⁰⁹ Hilary B.P. Mijoga, *Separate but Same Gospel: Preaching in African Instituted Churches in Southern Malawi*, Christian Literature Association in Malawi. 2000.

and analyze them. The only variance is that my research is seeking to pinpoint features of the African religious ideologies in the sermons of these African preachers. And of course my research would not compare the mainstream churches with the African Independent Churches. As a matter of fact, the scope of my research would be within the Churches that are distinguishable from the historical African Independent Churches; they are tagged the ‘Pentecostal Churches’ in Nigeria.

CHAPTER TWO
THE INTEREST IN AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PRIMAL RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS IN
AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION FOR AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY

3.1 Introduction

African Christianity has been an issue of momentous discussion among scholars. This discussion has bred numerous theories within the scope of church history, theology, biblical studies and even sociology. Many scholars have examined the significance of the role played by Africa in the practice of the Christian faith in its global transformation. Some have investigated the role of Christianity in the renewal of culture taking place around the world, including in Africa. Scholars have looked at the formation of certain types of Christian faith through the combination of specific characteristics of apostolic Christianity with contemporary African realities. Others have written general surveys of the variety and range of new religious movements across the world and including indigenous societies, especially in Africa. Among the publications devoted to the topic, are studies of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements of the 20th century. These are classified as part of the discourse on African Christianity because it is impossible to overlook the Pentecostal and charismatic characteristics defining some practitioners of African Christianity.

There has also been a re-examination of the way in which the story of Christianity is told. The role of Africa as its new hub is brought out, with the emphasis on the contemporary mission now being developed in African churches and on its possible influence in the future. The discourse on African Christianity is not only conducted by African scholars but Western scholars participate, acknowledging that Africa is playing a significant role in the contemporary praxis of Christianity.

The work of this chapter serves as an introduction to a discussion of the interest and importance of the primal elements in African traditional religion for African Christianity. The aim is to consider the ways in which people think about Christianity in Africa today and to locate my study on the role of African primal religions in relation to contemporary African Christianity within the array of scholarly works devoted to the subject. The focus is limited to African Christianity in Nigeria, particularly in Yoruba land.

3.2 Rise of African Christianity through the Indigenous Churches in Yoruba Land

In this section, the emergence of six churches is examined. These are divided into two groups: the Ethiopian Churches and the Aladura Churches. Scholars have classified African Indigenous Churches in various ways depending on what they wish to emphasize. The taxonomy in this research is related to factors that were played out at the origin of each church as adduced in the books consulted, hence the grouping into two. Each group will be delineated later in this section.

The numerous African Indigenous Churches have each their own characteristics. These differences have to do with the locale of their origin, the circumstances of their establishment, the doctrinal background of the Church from which they sprang, and their doctrinal and liturgical adaptations as initiated indigenous churches. One obvious thing they have in common is the native characteristic that informs their indigenous nomenclature.

The indigenous churches that are examined for the purpose of this research share the following characteristics. All have emerged in Yoruba land through the activities of missionaries in Nigeria. Their progenitors are Yoruba. In addition, a thorough examination of the historical data presented by scholars in the field teaches us that the churches' emergence was a result of the Africans adopting their own views of certain elements of Christianity (differing from those of Europeans), rather than of a separatist agenda that was more political in nature. For greater clarity I will identify the churches using the general nomenclature of certain AICs as presented by literatures consulted in the field. Many AICs share traditions with churches in Christian world at large. They may, for example, have beliefs and practices in common with Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal or Orthodox traditions. Some are Sabbatarian, others may be Zionist.³¹⁰

The first three churches to be examined in this section share some characteristics and are grouped as Ethiopian Churches. These churches generally retain the Christian doctrines of their mother church in an

³¹⁰ David B. Barret. *Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press. 1968: 23–30.

unreformed state. They teach that African Christian churches should be under the control of black people.³¹¹ This is especially evident in the story of the independence of the United Native African Church, the African Church, and the United African Methodist Church (*Eleja*). Their liturgy and doctrinal mien still resemble those of their parent churches from which they are, however, distinguished by the African social and cultural elements they have adopted.

3.3 The Beginning of the Ethiopian Churches among the Yoruba

The first group to be discussed consists of the United Native African Church, the African Church, and the United African Methodist Church (*Eleja*). In their initial beginnings a political element was at play. Their founders seceded because they wanted to escape White control in the church. A second factor however was cultural in nature: the secession was the result of failed attempts to accommodate the Christian belief within an African social world-view.

It appears to me that the Africans who founded the first three churches in the above mentioned group did not do so only because they were marginalised by the European church leadership, but rather because the primal religion inherent in them, significantly affected their relations with specific elements of Christianity and the Bible. The situation of colonialism acted as a catalyst, effecting the break up.

3.3.1 The United Native African Church

Mojola Agbebi, one of the most prominent members of the Anglican Church of his time, was the leader of a secession that occurred at a time of confusion among the Nigerian elite in Lagos concerning what names to adopt at baptism, what style of dress to wear and how many wives to marry. Many members of the elite were returnees and during the time they spent in Sierra Leone, Brazil or the Caribbean, missionaries had considered it necessary to eliminate from their minds all traces of their ‘pagan’ African past.³¹² After returning home, to a less artificial situation, many like Mojola Agbebi, baptised David Vincent, began to discover the meaning and the depth of African culture and expressed their pride in it by adopting African names and customs. Agbebi and others also wanted to change the ‘foreign’, elitist image of Christianity and adapt it to the social conceptions, the religious and political aspirations, and the style of Africans. It was his view that, ‘hymn books, harmonium music, dedications, pew constructions, surpliced choir, the white man’s

³¹¹ Barret. *Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements*. 1968: 23-30.

³¹² Echeruo. *Victorian Lagos*. 1977:92.

names, the white man's dress, are so many non-essentials, so many props and crutches affecting the religious manhood of the Christian Africans.³¹³ He insisted that Christianity in Africa should make itself relevant and indigenous, using whatever possible 'African style and fashion' in worship.

The United Native African Church fits into the profile of the indigenous churches that are the focus of this section of the thesis because the aim of making Christianity in Africa relevant as an indigenous church was the principal motivation for its establishment by ex-members of the CMS in Lagos in 1891. A majority of African clergy and lay Christians, along with foreign missionaries, were not in agreement with this approach. But the approach had, to some extent, been adopted to counter the success of Islam, which was by many people, including Agbebi, ascribed largely to the fact that it had adapted itself better to the African context.³¹⁴ Those who opposed the indigenization of Christianity and the emergence of independent churches saw all of this as basically a lowering of the moral standards of Christianity.³¹⁵

3.3.2 The African Church

The African Church was established in Nigeria in 1901,³¹⁶ after strong disagreements had arisen between the European leadership of the Anglican Church and the native African leadership. Following the installation of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther as the head of the Church of Nigeria, a number of African members of the clergy obtained a progressive education that did, however, not translate into advancement in the leadership of the Church. This brought about schisms that finally led to the formation of the indigenous African Church.³¹⁷

In 1901, the People's Warden of St. Paul's Church in Breadfruit, Lagos, the Elder Jacob Kehinde Coker, and some others left the church in protest against ill treatment of Africans in the white dominated church. These revolutionaries resisted the mode of worship that had no regard for African musical instruments as well as the fact that believers had to wear European clothes and sing only Western hymns. The newly founded church held its first service on October 17, 1901. Its leadership consisted in J.K Coker and a group of

³¹³ Echeruo. *Victorian Lagos*. 1977:93.

³¹⁴ Echeruo. *Victorian Lagos*. 1977:93.

³¹⁵ Echeruo. *Victorian Lagos*. 1977:94.

³¹⁶ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:161.

³¹⁷ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:161.

ministers that disagreed with the Anglican Church European leadership that was at the time led by Bishop Turgwell. The Church met at the Rose Cottage, Marina for its first service.³¹⁸

Apparently, the only changes made by the African Church at its inception concerned the introduction of services in the Yoruba language and of a new hymn book that provided more opportunities for African chants. The initial reasons for the secession were not theological or moral, nor were polygamy an issue at the time. Later, this church, basing itself on such scriptural passages as 1 Timothy 3:2, 3:12, considered the question of polygamy and decided that, while the clergy should remain monogamous, Christian laymen were permitted to take more than one wife.³¹⁹ Although it kept close to Anglican teaching and liturgy, the African Church felt itself to be very much a part of the struggle for African independence. This point was emphasized during the inauguration of the church when it was stated: 'This day we lay the foundations of the Church of the Black race.'³²⁰

Clarke³²¹ believes that there were some African clergy like Rev. Johnson³²² who thought that more could be done to further the cause of respect for the Africanness of Africans in the Anglican Church by remaining inside rather than seceding from the Church. He differed from other opponents of foreign missionaries such as Agbebi, and even from others who were in favour of establishing African churches that followed Johnson's understanding of the nature of Christianity as well as his attitude in regard to certain African traditions. While Agbebi and others were not only convinced that Christianity could be adapted and made more relevant to African society, Johnson appears to have viewed Christianity more as a necessary alternative to existing African religious systems, ideas and practices. Ardently conservative and well meaning, he sought to establish the Anglican model of Christianity in Africa, a task for which Europeans were for many reasons unsuited. Today, the type of Anglican Church that Johnson had in mind is a reality in

³¹⁸ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:161.

³¹⁹ Ayandele. *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842 – 1914*. 1966: chs 7 and 8.

³²⁰ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:162.

³²¹ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:162.

³²² Johnson was born in Sierra Leone in 1836 to liberated African parents of Yoruba origin. He got his elementary education in a Church Mission Society (CMS) and went on to Fourah Bay Institution in Freetown, graduating in 1858. He was a school teacher, but in 1863 he entered the Anglican (CMS) ministry. The CMS was impressed with Johnson's potential and sent him to its Yoruba mission in Nigeria, first in Lagos and then in Abeokuta. He was unsuccessful as a missionary, perhaps because of his rigid morality, and in 1880 he was instead appointed as pastor of the Breadfruit Church in Lagos. In 1890, Johnson became assistant Bishop of the Niger Delta and Benin territories, a post he held until his death in 1917. He believed in a puritan, evangelistic Christianity but he was hostile to certain aspects of European culture which he felt were not suitable for Africa.

Nigeria. It is a church that grapples with the challenges posed by the upsurge of the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. Many members of the Anglican Church find the liturgy and biblical interpretation of the Pentecostals fascinating and a mass exodus is taking place by the day. And it is now that the Anglican Church in Yorubaland is trying to adapt to those perceptions that draw its members to the Pentecostals.

3.3.3 United African Methodist Church (Eleja)

Another indigenous church that fits the picture painted above of churches that emerged in Yorubaland during the missionary enterprise in Nigeria, is the United African Methodist Church (UMAC) also known as the UAM *Eleja* (fish) Church. As in the case of other churches in this group, its progenitors were Yorubas who were motivated by a wariness of certain European perceptions of elements of Christianity and the Bible. The United African Methodist Church seceded from the Methodist Church in Lagos in 1917. It was aliased *Eleja* because it first met in a location close to the fish market. This was a wealthy church and one that emphasized that polygamy should be permitted, even if the missionaries disapproved, since it was a basic social and economic institution in Africa whereby a man could marry as many wives as his financial status allowed.

All the Nigerian independent churches mentioned so far began in Lagos and were, basically, founded in a quest for, firstly, an adaptation of the liturgy - including the use of African musical instruments, the singing of other than Western hymns and the freedom to dress in African styles - and, secondly, the equal treatment of white and indigenous clergy that was denied to them in the white dominated church. One should not be surprised that it was the Christian churches themselves, based in England or North America, that were in style and attitude so close to the colonial governments and riddled with divisions, that contributed to the separatism and independency.

Apart from the fact that these particular African independent churches belonged to the forerunners of the independence movements and were part of the struggle against colonialism, and that they were a response to the missionaries' refusal to let Africans manage their own affairs, implying a negative view of their competence, they also aimed at making Christianity relevant to the totality of the African experience of life. White mission Christianity at the time and for some time thereafter, remained incapable of understanding, or even contemplating, that in its present form or structure it was of only limited relevance to Africans' lives. Africans saw matters in a somewhat different light and demanded that certain of their views at least were

respected and that the contributions they could make at all levels to the building of a Christian society in Africa were acknowledged. The independent churches, discussed above, as well as the second group discussed below, form a part of that debate that continues to this day.

The indigenous Ethiopian churches in Yoruba land came into being when they rejected certain European elements in the practice of Christianity, although, arguably, they were also acting under the influence of their allurements to African culture and African religion. Culture and religion share the same derivation. Many anthropologists³²³ define religion as a cultural system, and religion could then be described as a collection of cultural systems, belief systems, and worldviews that relate humanity to spirituality and, sometimes, to moral values. If the Africans who established the above mentioned independent churches saw issues like polygamy and dress (clothes to wear during worship) as a concern of religion, then considering religion as a cultural system is a workable enough definition in the context of the establishment of the three churches discussed above. Thus, social issues in the African worldview can be regarded as religious and, by extension, as linked to the primal religion.

From an analysis of the events that gave birth to African Christianity among the Yoruba one may conclude that the missionary gave little or no consideration to the relationship between religion and society in the African context at the time. We don't have to look far for reasons. The Christianity brought from Europe had been influenced, and even transformed, by industrialization, capitalism, and the process of secularization all of which not only diminished its impact on the wider society in Europe but also made for a clearer distinction between the religious sphere and the political, economic and other spheres.³²⁴ As a consequence, the purpose and functions of religion came to be seen in a different light, removed from the African perception of religion as representative of the values of African societies and of religious beliefs and rites as an expression of sharing a common heritage and destiny. The European character read into Christianity was made even more explicit by the fact that, on occasion, religion was used by the colonial powers for its own purposes. Worse, the missionaries themselves were seen to actively seek the support of

³²³ Clifford Geertz. 'Religion as a Cultural System,' in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, (ed.) Michael Banton. Tavistock Publications: London. 2004:pp1-46; 'Religion as a Cultural System': *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. Fontana Press: London. 1973:87-125; Emily Durkheim. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. George Allen & Unwin: London. 1915:37-41; Wilfred Cantwell Smith. *The Meaning and End of Religion*. Fortress Press: London. 1963, cited by Talal Asad in 'Reading a Modern Classic: pp205-222.

³²⁴ Donald M. Lewis (ed.). *Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*. Eerdsman: Grand Rapids. 2004:52-85; P. B. Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*: 160-178.

the colonial power for the purpose of extending European civilization which was regarded as a necessary foundation for the spread of Christianity.³²⁵ Of course Christianity was for the colonial administration in many respects far more than a mere accessory, far more than just a European religion and, when sometimes its autonomous and universalistic character did manifest itself, there would be tension and even hostility between church and state. Such tensions would also occur in the relations between prophet movements and praying churches on the one and the government on the other hand, as the history of these churches shows.

Among Africans however, traditional religion and society were well integrated which made for less tension between religious and common values. Religion was an integrative force that emphasized common values and that motivated people to abide by the norms of the society. Christianity on the other hand often bore the appearance in Africa of a religion that had for its primary object the undoing of social norms.³²⁶ It was presented as a religion in conflict with African society and its values while upholding many of the values of European society. It was through negative perceptions of by Europeans imported Christianity that Churches like the United Native African church, the African Church, and the United African Methodist Church came into being.

Another category of African independent churches consists of churches whose practices reveal conspicuous similarities with African traditional religion such as the Christ Apostolic Church, the Cherubim and Seraphim Church and the Church of the Lord Church (*Aladura*). They are collectively referred to as *Aladura* churches and societies. Their practices include features that are analogous to elements traceable in African traditional religion, for example divination, medicine, incantation, rites, and many more that will be listed and discussed in subsequent chapters of this thesis. Thereby the focus will be on features that go back to Yoruba practices of African primal religion. The three churches that were classified as Ethiopian churches are distinguished from the *Aladura* churches by their origins that are based on factors of a social nature such as politics and culture, whereas the latter originated in spiritually inclined factors. In so much as it is hardly possible to detach social issues from spiritual concerns in Africa; chapter four of this research will demonstrate the outspoken relevance of the first group, the Ethiopian churches, for a consideration of the significance of the primal religion in relation to African Christianity.

³²⁵Lewis (ed.). 2004:52-85; Clarke, *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:160-178.

³²⁶ Donald M. Lewis (ed.). *Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 2004: 52-85; Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:160-178.

3.4 Beginning of the *Aladura* Churches among the Yoruba

The second group is made up of the *Aladura* churches and societies, namely the Christ Apostolic Church, the Cherubim and Seraphim Society, the Church of the Lord (*Aladura*). They are collectively called *Aladura* churches; from the Yoruba word *Adura*, meaning Prayer. *Adura* churches rely on the power of prayer and the effects of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Thus, their reasons for seceding had more to do with spiritual factors than with reasons of any other kind.

In 1918, the *Aladura* movement first emerged in Western Nigeria. This would become the first of many *Aladura* churches and societies to be established in Nigeria. They started in Ijebu-Ode in the present-day Ogun State. As with many of these churches, dreams and visions played an important part in its early days. Joseph Shadare, known popularly as Daddy Ali, a member of St Saviour's Anglican Church in Ijebu-Ode, saw in a dream a church divided into a larger, dark section and a smaller section that was ablaze with light. The darkness was attributed to the neglect of prayer by the majority while the brilliant light was explained by the fact that the minority of people in the church practiced constant prayer.³²⁷

This dream came to Shadare at a time when Nigeria, and much of the world, was ravaged by an influenza epidemic. Shadare, together with the young teacher Sophia Adefobe Odunlami who had recovered from the influenza, formed a prayer association for the purpose of combating the epidemic. Describing the encounter between Shadare and Odunlami the former's son explained: 'God showed her in a vision to go and meet someone at No. 2 Idere Lane... to go and meet one Shadare there. And God showed my father here that a lady is coming to him to help him establish a church... She was to help him to deliver a prophecy... As a woman she was a special sign from God.'³²⁸ A woman prophet was an unusual occurrence, Sophia Odunlami who claimed to be the recipient of a personal revelation from the Holy Spirit, insisted, supported by Shadare, that people should rely entirely on prayer and not have recourse to medical treatment for their sicknesses. The emphasis on healing through prayer and the use of consecrated water only, is at the very heart of the *Aladura* movement.³²⁹

³²⁷ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:170-173.

³²⁸ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:170-173.

³²⁹ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986{170-173.

To Yoruba Christians and to the Yoruba in general, there was not a great deal that was new or original in this approach to healing. There existed in the Yoruba a strong belief in the intrinsic power of certain words, prayers and incantations. An *Ifa* priest, for example, would pronounce certain words over water to infuse it with medicinal or healing properties.³³⁰ Or he might direct a person to pray over water in the following way: ‘May this water be charged with medicinal power, charged for stomach ache and for dysentery... may this water become medicine.’³³¹

It was the traditional priest, the *babalawo*, who diagnosed the cause of illnesses and prescribed the appropriate treatments. Illness was seen as part of the problem of evil in the world or of the power of spiritual darkness in the world (*aye*). *Illness* therefore was associated with the religious or the non-material.³³² There would be an incantation for a difficult pregnancy or for various other types of illnesses. If the correct words and, especially, the correct names were used, it was believed, that the desired effect in the overall scheme of things would come about.³³³ The names of God in particular were believed to have considerable intrinsic power. When these names were used in the form of a prayer, the prayer was regarded, as were prayers in general, as much more than a simple request or a petition but rather as ‘the invocation of a law which carries with it its own fulfilment.’³³⁴

When a person, or a group of persons, said the prayer and pronounced the words ‘Amen (*ase*) in the name of the Lord,’ people believed in a very real sense that the prayer had effected some change, whether visible or not. Early Yoruba Christians, known as *Onigbagbo* which literally means ‘a person, who has faith,’ claimed that, because of their faith in Jesus who had overcome all things, they were in possession of ‘word power’ which was an indispensable part of healing.³³⁵

Pastor Shadare and Sophia Odunlami, therefore, in emphasizing the miraculous healing power of consecrated water and prayer, were not really breaking new ground. But their initiative could be seen as adding significance to a long established belief in the power, efficacy and indispensable role of prayer in the healing process. This in part explains the widespread response to praying bands, associations, societies and

³³⁰ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986{166-167.

³³¹ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986{166-167.

³³² Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:166-167.

³³³ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986{166-167.

³³⁴ Adegbola. *Ifa and Christianity among the Yoruba*. 1976}236.

³³⁵ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986.”166-167.

churches In Yorubaland as well as in Nigeria ant large. This aspect will be fully discussed at a later stage in this research, but we have thus far already seen clear indications that Toruba Christians of the last century were influenced by their primal religion. The thesis argues that, as the primal religion was an intrinsic part of the Yoruba being, traces of it would surface in contemporary neo-Pentecostal preaching of sermons as well.

3.4.1 The Christ Apostolic Church (CAC)

One of the Aladura churches is the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC). In 1940 Akinyele, a long-time friend of Shadare, decided with a number of others, including Joseph Babalola, to sever his ties with the British church. He went on to establish the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) as an independent body. This church also renounced the use of Western medicine and relied for healing on prayer and faith. It forbade smoking and the use of alcohol and Akinyele himself is said to have abstained from sexual relations, even within marriage.³³⁶

The Christ Apostolic Church under Akinyele established a number of its own faith healing homes, opened numerous churches and schools, particularly in Ibadan, and organized frequent revivalist campaigns. Its essential aim was to reform society by first reforming the individual and by the 1950s the CAC had become one of the three largest and most active churches in Western Nigeria.³³⁷

According to a colonial government report dated November 1931 many people, in particular women, went to Ilesha to hear Babalola. The report reads: ‘Ijebu women flock in great numbers to Ilesha to Babalola to get blessed water. The roads to Ilesha and the market are chock-a-block with lorries which have brought passengers in from a distance.’³³⁸ Various attempts have been made to explain the widespread interest among women in the Aladura movement. According to one writer, the special health problems of women, centering in the main on pregnancy and childbirth, ‘which send many women to traditional doctors or Aladura healers.’³³⁹ Clearly, there were similarities between the practices of traditional doctors and *Aladura* healers that informed the nature of Yoruba Christianity. In *Aladura* movements, for example the Cherubim

³³⁶ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:166-167.

³³⁷ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:166-167.

³³⁸ NAI Oyo Prof 1/662 Faith Healer Babalola and Aladurass. Operations in Oyo Province, Nov. 1931, as cited by Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. Arnold: London 1986:168.

³³⁹ H. Callaway. ‘Women in Yoruba tradition and in the Cherubim and Seraphim Society.’ In O.U. Kalu (ed). *The History of Christianity in West Africa*. Longman: London and New York. 1980:329.

and Seraphim Society, women are given ‘continued and unhurried attention; illness is not considered as physical only but as manifestation of a total social and spiritual condition.’³⁴⁰ The same care and attention was simply not possible in Nigerian Western-style hospitals. According to statistics for example, there were in 1919 eleven principal hospitals in what was then called the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. The one in Ibadan admitted 480 patients in 1918-19. Of these, 32 were Europeans, all of them men. Of the remaining 448, all Nigerians, only 18 were women.³⁴¹ There was one day nurse and one night nurse to take care of the patients and thirty-two of the Nigerians died. The medical statistics for the period 1918 to 1930 report a large number of deaths in hospital due to influenza, tuberculosis, bronchitis, meningitis, malaria and so on.³⁴²

It makes sense that the care and attention, offered by the *Aladura* churches at this time, was a major attraction. The familiarity with, and confidence in, the approach to healing found in these churches compared to the treatment offered by Western hospitals was also important. People believed that there were certain diseases that European doctors could not cure. They sometimes begged from members of the colonial medical service to be allowed to go for treatment in the ‘traditional’ way like their relatives and friends who were suffering from diseases. According to Clarke, one father wrote to the District Officer of Ijebu-Ode asking for the return of his son who had been taken to an asylum for the mentally ill. He pleaded:

Will you please for God’s sake set the said Taiye free and give him to me so that I may hand him over to a native doctor who will cure him. I have made investigations and it is understood that such disease cannot be cured by English doctors... My son’s brain was not puzzled before, it was caused when my son was dancing and singing at the native games. The native doctor whom I am handing him over to is a licensed native doctor and has cured so many people of such disease.³⁴³

The boy was handed over, and the colonial medical service some time later declared him completely cured.³⁴⁴

³⁴⁰ Callaway. *Women in Yoruba tradition and in the Cherubim and Seraphim Society*, In O.U. Kalu (ed). *The History of Christianity in West Africa*. 1980:329.

³⁴¹ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:168.

³⁴² Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:168.

³⁴³ NAI *Yoruba News* 16 – 23 Sept. 1930 as cited by Clarke in *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:168.

³⁴⁴ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:169.

If the *Aladura* approach to healing was a draw card for the Aladura churches, women probably also soon realized that the *Aladura* movement allowed them to participate much more fully in the life of the Christian community. Coming from a tradition in which women performed the roles of priestess and mediator, many women may have welcomed the fact that in movements such as the Cherubim and Seraphim Society they could become ‘prophets’, a role that brought with it considerable political as well as spiritual power.’³⁴⁵

Power in one sense or another, and not necessarily in a negative sense, was at the heart of the *Aladura* movement. Babalola, Orekoya and other *Aladura* prophets were seen by Christians as clear proof ‘of the Gospels’ power’, a power that must not be simply talked about but ‘that must be seen to exist’, according to Clarke.³⁴⁶ Commenting on the preaching of Babalola and his healing [powers, the *Yoruba News* states that Babalola’s life ‘proves that the Gospel has lost none of its power, especially the gifts of the Spirit as recorded in 1 Corinthians Ch. 12.’³⁴⁷

In another edition of the same newspaper, more than 1,000 cases of recovery attributed to the healing work of Daniel Orekoya are hailed as ‘A fulfilment of a Biblical Prophecy...as far as we Africans are concerned.’³⁴⁸ The prophecy in question is to be found in the Book of Joel, 2 vv. 28—29, part of which reads as follows: ‘I will pour out my spirit on all mankind. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men see visions.’ The issue of power will be discussed in more detail below. It is also a phenomenon known by the Pentecostals who emerged on the Yoruba scene in more recent years. It is the common ground linking both churches. That the methods of the indigenous churches are similar to those of traditional religious practitioners supports the perception that the African practice of Christianity is, at least in part, a continuation of the primal religion. The endurance of this influence is also apparent in the relationship between, for example, the Aladura churches and the Pentecostals of whom the significance for the shaping of Christianity among the Yoruba cannot be overemphasized.

³⁴⁵ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:168.

³⁴⁶ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:170.

³⁴⁷ NAI *Yoruba News* 16 – 23 Sept. 1930 as cited by Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:170.

³⁴⁸ NAI *Yoruba News* 2 -9 September 1930 as cited by Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. 1986:170.

3.4.2 The Cherubim and Seraphim Society

The Cherubim and Seraphim, another branch of the *Aladura* movement owes its origins to Moses Orimolade Tunolase from Ikare in Ondo State and to Christianah Abiodun Akinsowon from Lagos.³⁴⁹ Again, dreams and visions inspired the beginnings of this movement. Moses Orimolade, who had been an itinerant evangelist since 1916, decided in 1924 to settle in Lagos. A firm believer in faith healing, he claimed to have been told in 1925 in a vision that he should establish a society and give it the name of Cherub and Seraph.³⁵⁰

In the same year Orimolade, who became known as *Baba Aladura*, met Christianah Abiodun Akinsowon, a member of the Anglican Church Lagos who was also a recipient of dreams and visions. Believing that Moses Orimolade had cured her of an illness, Christianah joined him in starting the Cherubim and Seraphim Society prayer group in 1925. A praying band was set up within the society. Its main task was to assist the founder in praying for all who needed spiritual help. In addition to the praying band, a committee of patriarchs was organized that was mainly concerned with administration and with the ‘Army of Salvation’, a youth section that was involved with outdoor activities such as processions.

Until 1928, when Christianah Abiodun known as Captain Abiodun, left the Anglican Church, those who joined the society remained members of their own churches. And even after 1927, many continued to belong both to the society and to another church.³⁵¹ In some of its teachings and liturgical practices, the society remained very close to the mainstream Christian churches, in particular the Anglican Church. As Omoyajowo states: ‘Services and rituals which the C & S has adopted from “orthodox” Churches include Sunday worship, forms of the special services of Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation, Solemnization of Matrimony, Burial, Ordination and some of the important anniversaries and Saints’ days.’³⁵² . Many prayers and services were taken directly from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer and used with very little modification. However, some of its doctrines, its many festivals, style of worship, dress, taboos and organization distinguished the society from the Anglican and other older Christian churches.³⁵³

³⁴⁹ Omoyajowo. *Cherubim and Seraphim. The History of an African Independent Church*. Lagos: NOK Publishers. 1982:143.

³⁵⁰ Omoyajowo. *Cherubim and Seraphim. The History of an African Independent Church*. 1982:143.

³⁵¹ Omoyajowo. *Cherubim and Seraphim. The History of an African Independent Church*. 1982:143.

³⁵² Omoyajowo. *Cherubim and Seraphim. The History of an African Independent Church*. 1982:143-144.

³⁵³ Omoyajowo. *Cherubim and Seraphim. The History of an African Independent Church*. 1982:143-144.

In Clarke's research, one participant, an archbishop of the Cherubim and Seraphim Society explained the differences between his present and his former, Anglican Church: 'In the Aladura Church we fast, we depend solely on prayer. This did not obtain in the Anglican Church. But there is only one God and therefore no real differences between us. Of course when I took a second wife I was no longer a full member of the Anglican Church, just a friend of the Church'³⁵⁴ The archbishop had no doctrinal differences with the Anglican Church, but only objected against aspects of approach, emphasis and interpretation due, in his view, to cultural factors.

In addition to demonstrating their faith in the absolute efficacy of prayers and in the intrinsic power of sacred words such as Halleluiah, Iye (life), and Hosannah 'shouted' three or seven times depending on the occasion, the Cherubim and Seraphim, like other Aladura churches, make great use in their services of drums, singing, clapping, dancing and stamping. These practices, although they get people excited and keep their attention, making Christianity appear more relevant, have a different purpose and offer, it is believed, a means of obtaining spiritual blessings and benefits.³⁵⁵ Stamping on the ground, for example, is thought to give spiritual power, well being, prosperity and peace. These beliefs and practices are just as strong today as they were in the early years of the Cherubim and Seraphim.³⁵⁶ Among the Yoruba, the idea of ritual dance in worship of a deity is as important as the worship itself. As Bolaji puts it:

Most of the dances, except where they are only expressions of religious conviviality, are of fixed patterns and must be done correctly – which foot goes forward first, which movements of the hands and body accompany it, which turns are taken next, and how many times each component of the pattern is to be repeated – all these must be carefully observed.³⁵⁷

These Christians, who were members of mainline churches such as the Anglican and other missionary churches, where there was no question of dancing during worship, were drawn to participate in such practices under the influence, as the present thesis argues, of their primal religion.

³⁵⁴ Clarke. *West Africa and Christianity*. Arnold: London. 1986:173.

³⁵⁵ Omoyajowo. *Cherubim and Seraphim. The History of an African Independent Church*. 1982:145.

³⁵⁶ Omoyajowo. *Cherubim and Seraphim. The History of an African Independent Church*. 1982:146.

³⁵⁷ E.B. Idowu. *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief*. London. 1962:115.

The Cherubim and Seraphim Society is also characterized by a strong sense of the sacredness of certain places, in particular of mountain and hill tops such as Olorunkole Hill near Ibadan, and of seashores such as Bar Beach, Lagos.³⁵⁸ Members go there for special prayers. This practice may not be unconnected with the Yoruba concept of the existence of a number of spirits associated with natural phenomena like the earth, rivers, mountains, etc.³⁵⁹ It is natural that Yoruba Christians would be more conscious of the presence of God in places of natural beauty.

Women who have just delivered a child or who are menstruating are considered 'unclean'. Furthermore, someone who has not washed after sexual intercourse is 'unclean'. 'Unclean' persons are not allowed to enter a church or a holy place on the grounds that they would defile it.³⁶⁰ This perception is also based on an African (and Yoruba) 'traditional' belief, although it also occurs in the Old Testament. Awolalu describes sacred grooves that consist of narrow pathways leading to one or more clearings that contain different apartments or graded court-yards. The first one is the least secluded and sacred. It is open to women and to the general public. The second apartment is accessible only to the initiated and the third is entered only by the chief priests or the otherwise highly qualified.³⁶¹ As pointed out above, the concept of the segregation of women in sacred places of worship also occurs in the Old Testament. It is thus possible that the Old Testament too has roots in primal religions as this thesis will attempt to convincingly argue. The practice of excluding certain persons from sacred places that is followed in the Cherubim and Seraphim Church may well go back to ancient times.

Of note is the issue of prayer in this church. Prayer was a very important element in the Yoruba primal religion. It is the means by which he/she makes a devout supplication to, and enters into communion with, the object of worship.³⁶² The Yoruba believe in the efficacy of prayer uttered from time to time by an individual person in private worship or by the priest in corporate worship.³⁶³ Prayer is personal and conditioned by the circumstances that induce prayer – economic distress, sorrow and anguish, failure and success, pain and joy. Hence Yoruba prayers are mainly petitionary.³⁶⁴ Bolaji Idowu writes that 'most of the

³⁵⁸ Peel. Aladura: *A Religious Movement among the Yoruba*. 1968:48.

³⁵⁹ J. Omosade Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. London: Longman. 1979:45.

³⁶⁰ Peel. Aladura: *A Religious Movement among the Yoruba*. 1968:48.

³⁶¹ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:116.

³⁶² Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:102.

³⁶³ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:102.

³⁶⁴ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:103.

people's requests stress their yearning for life. They consist usually of asking for protection from sickness and death, gifts of longevity, children, prosperity in enterprises, victory over enemies, protection from evil spirits...rectification of unhappy destinies, and abundant provision of material things...'³⁶⁵ This is not the place to engage in a systematic discussion of Yoruba primal belief, but it is important to emphasize that there are striking similarities between the practices of Aladura churches and primal Yoruba religion. .

3.4.3 The Church of the Lord (Aladura)

The Church of the Lord is another example of contemporary Yoruba Christian churches that appear to be characterized by elements that originate in Yoruba primal religion and culture. The Church of the Lord for example accommodates the Yoruba wariness of venturing into the future without trying to find out what awaits them there. This aspect will be discussed extensively in chapter four. The church as well as the Precious Stone Society was founded by another former Anglican from Ijebuland, Josiah Olunowo Oshitelu. In 1925, when Oshitelu was still a member of the Anglican Church, he claimed that he had a vision in which God commanded him to renounce all those aspects of traditional religion to which he had until that moment adhered. Over the next ten years he continued to hear voices, some 10,000 of them, one of which said: 'I will anoint you as my prophet, even as Elijah anointed Elisha with oil in the olden days, so it shall be unto you'. Another said: 'I will build a new Jerusalem in You. You are the one whom Jesus Christ has sent like the last Elijah to repair the Lord's road and make his way straight.'³⁶⁶

Dismissed by the Anglican Church in 1926 as an eccentric, Oshitelu found himself in conflict with the colonial administration in the early 1930s, principally because of the so-called 'dangerous prophecies' contained in his booklet *Awon Asotele* (Prophecies). By this time Oshitelu had produced a sacred script bearing some resemblance to Arabic and based on what had allegedly been revealed to him in a vision. In another vision in 1927 his own sacred name, *Arrabablahhubab*, and his personal seal which became the seal of his church, were revealed to him. In 1929 he announced his 'gospel of joy' in ten points.³⁶⁷ The first three points consisted of an attack on Christians, Muslims and traditionalists for their failures, the next three promised judgement through locusts, famine and war, and the last four condemned superstition, promised divine healing and the cure of all ailments through the Water of life given to all who have faith in God.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁵ Idowu. *Olodumare, God, in Yoruba Belief*. 1962:116.

³⁶⁶ Turner. *History of an Independent Church. Vol. I*. 1967:46ff.

³⁶⁷ Turner. *History of an Independent Church. Vol. I*. 1967:47.

³⁶⁸ Turner. *History of an Independent Church. Vol. I*. 1967:47.

People from all walks of life sought advice and guidance from Oshitelu. Some wrote requesting help in examinations and were usually advised to read Psalms 19 and 134. Others who had travelled outside Nigeria for study or other purposes asked for advice regarding marrying non-Africans or wished to know whether they would be promoted on returning to Nigeria. Women wrote to ask if they had any hope of giving birth to children.³⁶⁹

Oshitelu refers repeatedly to the need to have *faith* in the power of prayer and in the healing properties of holy water and in this respect he stands squarely in the *Aladura* tradition.³⁷⁰ He also often mentions the ‘snares of enemies’ who work to thwart the health and the progress of Oshitelu’s clients. Here again, Oshitelu uses traditional Yoruba notions of cause and effect as does the *babalawo* or the traditional priest-healer.

This is in accordance with the Yoruba’s general approach to the deity or the issues of life. The Yoruba traditionally tend to look for an external rather than an internal explanation for ill health or misfortune. ‘The cause of the problem is usually considered to be some outside agency... and the practice of the traditional healer is in keeping with these ideas.’³⁷¹ The link between traditional healer and leaders or prophets of many independent churches, especially those of the *Aladura* type, is obvious. The healing procedure in the churches does only require the person to perceive his/her relationship to God. Having come for prayers the person is a sinner and he/she prays for forgiveness. As a result his/her faith is enhanced and it is this faith that heals.

The power of the Holy Spirit is the force that overcomes illness caused by the devil and evil spirits. The procedure involved is in keeping with the traditional concepts of causation. For example, the medicine man, before performing an act of healing examines the cause of the ailment. The *babalawo* applies divination to discover the cause of his client’s ailment. It may be necessary to offer sacrifices to the gods, or to other powers that cause the problem. The Yoruba believe that sin causes misfortunes and should be understood as committing an act that is known to be taboo, for example the betrayal of covenant and engaging in what is anathema to the divinity. These are root causes of misfortune. These various characteristics are examined

³⁶⁹ Turner. *History of an Independent Church. Vol. I.* 1967:47.

³⁷⁰ Turner. *History of an Independent Church. Vol. I.* 1967:47.

³⁷¹ Turner. *History of an Independent Church. Vol. I.* 1967:48.

in greater detail in chapter five but, again, I argue that the prophet of the Aladura churches in Yorubaland and the *babalawo* or medicine man of Yoruba primal religion have a good deal in common.

These processes were not in tandem with the teaching and practices of the missionary churches so that the progenitors of the independent churches and the clergy of the mainline churches were working at cross-purposes, which translated to the fact that they could not engage in the practice of Christianity together. This confirms the view of this researcher that a major reason for the secession is the underlying phenomenon that Africans were capable of mutating Christianity into a religion that could be understood and practised by African converts. (However, the thesis does share the view that some independent churches can be ‘seen as a celebration and affirmation of black African identity in the face of ... official hostility’).³⁷²

That certain features of African Christianity as practised by the African Independent Churches are strongly reminiscent of African primal religion has to do with the fact that the primal religion is basic to, and inherent in, Africans and hence played a significant role in the emergence of the African Independent Churches. These primal elements are not merely living on in memory but are part of the very nature of the Yoruba and therefore displayed in the Yoruba practice of Christianity.

3.5 A Continuum Created by African Pentecostalism

A more recent offshoot of Christianity is the African version of Pentecostalism. Although its liturgy is apparently so Western and its theology so anti ‘syncretism’, it cannot hide its African character that is identifiable in the way they preach and interpret the Bible. The African version of Pentecostalism emerged more than a century after the African Independent Churches were established in Yorubaland, and in different political, economic and even social situations.

The argument that a more deep-seated factor, rather than events in the history of twentieth-century Christianity in Africa, is responsible for the birth of a specifically African Christianity, gains in weight by evidence found in the methods of Bible interpretation applied by the Pentecostals. Hence, they do not operate under colonial rule as the indigenous churches of the last century did, but their Africanness is evident in their theology. Much had been written about this movement and its activities in the global arena

³⁷² Alister E. McGrath. *The Future of Christianity*. Wiley. 2002:35.

as well as on African soil. For the following section literature³⁷³ that provides information relevant to perspectives, interpretation and evaluation of the Pentecostal experience globally and in the African continent has been consulted.

In this section I will illustrate, on the basis of practices of the African Pentecostals that the fusion of Christianity and African primal religion is the foundation on which African Christianity stands. Thereto I will prove that there is a continuum linking the primal religion via the type of Christianity that was initiated by the African Independent Churches in Yorubaland, to African Pentecostalism. Thereto, some earlier mentioned points will be reiterated and further elucidated.

The first of these points is that certain elements of African Christianity as practised by the African Independent Churches resemble features of African primal religion because the latter is basic to, and inherent in, Africans. This is also the reason why the Pentecostal practice of Christianity Yorubaland a century later, can serve as a case in point. Secondly, the enduring influence of the primal religion was operative in practitioners of the African Independent Churches when they appropriated elements of Christianity to absorb these into the spiritual processes of their traditional religious ideologies and cultural milieu.

In other words they translated Christian concepts so as to validate them in the spiritual ambiance of their primal religion and culture and through this same process the Yoruba Pentecostals are weaving the fabric of a distinctive Christianity. Thirdly, African Pentecostalism is distinct from the Pentecostal experience as it is globally perceived. Its distinctive character results from the culturally determined way in which Africans respond to certain aspects of Christianity. This thesis focuses on the instance of Yoruba Pentecostal Christians whose orientation in faith is co-defined by their primal religion resulting in in what may well be a rare type of fusion.

³⁷³ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu. *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana.*, Brill: Leiden, 2005. The author examines Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal in the context of Africa focusing on Ghana. He presents the Ghanaian version of Pentecostalism as a tangible manifestation of the indigenous Christian rebirth. He discusses the influence of the older African Independent Churches on Christianity in Ghana despite their present decline as a durable 'hallmark' on Ghanaian Christianity. He claims that this accounts for the rise of Ghanaian Pentecostalism and its proliferation across West Africa, starting in the 1970s. The course of Pentecostalism in Nigeria was similarly successful and will be focused on presently. Ogbu U Kalu (ed.). *Interpreting contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and local Identities.* Eerdsman: Grand Rapids, 2008. These essays emphasize the claim that African Pentecostalism is an indigenous appropriation of global Pentecostalism and that voices, coming from around the world are an indication that Christianity has shifted away from the global North as its heartland. The essays also chart a way forward concerning the form of Christianity that has now emerged.

3.5.1 Global Pentecostalism

As argued earlier when presenting the review of literature consulted for this research, modern day Pentecostalism has in the course of the twentieth century spread across the globe, and this is what facilitated the survival and flourishing of Pentecostalism worldwide is its introduction into existing differing contexts around the world. Christianity's growth followed a similar pattern. One can argue that the globalization of Christianity contributed to its survival in the sense that, when Christianity reached other continents, it was to a degree reshaped by other local contexts and cultures and as a result it experienced massive growth. In the same vein, the spread of Pentecostalism to embrace different peoples and their contexts enabled its expansion. In the case of Pentecostalism however, as it spread, the fusion with its new surroundings increasingly gained in strength as it was stimulated and fed by local contexts. This increase in strength is reflected in the spread and the growth of Christianity in Africa

3.5.2 Pentecostalism in Africa

As opposed to the prevailing Western view of African Pentecostalism as a means through which Western culture impacts on Africa, Ogbu Kalu presents it as a phenomenon that is defined by its local distinctiveness and by indigenous arrogation or appropriation, and that it is on a par with other processes of global Pentecostalism. Kalu acknowledges that contemporary expressions of African Pentecostalism have assimilated some global characteristics of the malleable movement, but he maintains that it is not rooted in Azusa Street and that it has lost no indigenous features.³⁷⁴

It is therefore apposite to claim that African Pentecostalism is an outcome of the antiphon generated by African Christians when they engaged in a fusion with African cultures and religious beliefs. Nigerian Pentecostal preachers today accept in their Bible interpretations the influence of their intrinsic primal religion which context thus serves as a catalyst in the formation of a type of Pentecostalism, and by extension of Christianity, distinctive of the Yoruba in Nigeria. This will be shown by identifying the specific features of Yoruba primal religion in preachers' sermons. Like the Independent Churches, also Pentecostalism should be understood in relation to indigenous worldviews in Africa.

³⁷⁴ Kalu. *African Pentecostalism: Global Discourses, Migrations, Exchanges and Connections*. 2010: liv.

A few examples of African indigenous elements that are evident in the fusion of Pentecostalism with African primal religion are briefly mentioned here and will be examined fully in chapter seven where the sermons of indigenous Pentecostal preachers are analyzed.

Firstly, among the Yoruba Pentecostals, Bible interpretation is always in the understanding that there is supernatural power in elemental forces. The Bible passages that are commonly quoted, and the way preachers explain them, echo this understanding. They usually declare that, at hearing the name of Jesus, “every knee shall bow” whether the knee belongs to a being existing in the heavenly realm, on earth (land and water), or in the earth-beneath (the ancestral world). This is an allusion to Philip 2:10. Preachers also affirm that “things which are seen are made of things which are not seen” (Heb. 11:3b) and that conflicts in the manifest world are first decided upon in the spirit world. Therefore, “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal” (2 Corinth 10:4). The biblical worldview of the preachers is that life is just as precarious as the traditional African imagines: the enemy is ranged in a military formation of principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and wickedness in high places. The Pentecostal goes through life, as keenly aware of the presence of evil forces as the African does. He believes there are human beings who are given false powers by evil forces in order to exercise control over individuals, families and communities. Satan even promised Jesus some of powers if he complied. Thus, Pentecostals consider dictatorial and corrupt rulers as being “possessed,” while witchcraft and sorcery are perceived as real, soul-to-soul attacks. The born again Christian responds to deliverance ministries, because witchcraft and demonic oppression as well as prosperity preaching are taken seriously by Pentecostal preachers.³⁷⁵ It is interesting that some Yoruba attend Pentecostal churches for the same reasons as they visit the native doctor or the indigenous Christian *Aladura* prophet.

A second example concerns the kind of relationship that the Yoruba maintain with the deities of their primal religion and that reveals the existence of a link with the way in which the Yoruba Christian, especially in the Pentecostal circle, conceives of the idea of worship and the practice of Christianity. It is pertinent to comment here that people’s requests flow forth from their yearnings for life. They pray usually for protection from sickness and death, for gifts of longevity, children, prosperity in enterprises, victory over enemies, protection from evil spirits, the rectification of unhappy destinies and abundant provision of

³⁷⁵ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: Global Discourses, Migrations, Exchanges and Connections*. 2010:43.

material things.³⁷⁶ Among the Yoruba normal greeting and prayer go together.³⁷⁷ As their prayers are often concerned with well-being and victory over enemies, their concept of divinities and their relation with spirits seem to have to do more with how to obtain their petitions and prayer requests than with an unquestioning love, admiration, and respect for, and awe of, a deity as is characteristic of worship. For example, *Obatala (Orisa-nla)* was among the earliest divinities brought into being by the Supreme Being.³⁷⁸ He has an important place in the Yoruba creation epic. As the arch-divinity of the Yoruba he was responsible for moulding human forms which makes him the sculptor divinity and it is common place to hear people greet a pregnant woman as follows: ‘*K’orisa y’ana ire ko ni o.*’ (‘May the *Orisa* fashion for us a good work of art’).³⁷⁹ It also explains how people come to be ugly or deformed. The Yoruba believe that albinos, dwarfs, hunch-backs, the cripples, the deaf and the dumb are created that way by *Orisa* and that they are sacred to him. They are called *Eni Orisa* (those set apart for *orisa*).³⁸⁰ Seeing one of the *Eni Orisa*, one has cause to thank the sculptor divinity for being whole and healthy. *Obatala* is by worshippers also seen as the power that can make them great and prosperous by making them multiply and by conferring material blessings upon them.³⁸¹ Another divinity held in esteem is *Orunmila* who accompanied and guided *Obatala* when the latter came into the world to equip the earth.³⁸² The tradition adds that, after the world had been created, *Orunmila* decided to move freely between heaven and earth to act as a counsellor, hence the appellation *Gb’aye gb’orun* (he who lives both in heaven and earth).³⁸³ *Orunmila* was believed to be specially gifted with knowledge and wisdom. He knows the plights suffered by human beings because he was present at their creation when their destinies were sealed. Therefore he can direct them in rectifying their situations. He is also called: *Eleri ipin* – one who bears witness to fate.³⁸⁴ The Yoruba believe that men’s fate has been sealed by *Olodumare*, God, or the Supreme Being, before they come into the world. People themselves do not always remember what their allotted fate is on earth. But *Orunmila* was present when the fate was sealed and, knowing the circumstances, he can therefore to improve on fate, where ever possible. He also knows the tastes of the divinities and the taboos associated with them so that he is capable to mediate: he speaks for the divinities, communicating with human beings through divination. He is

³⁷⁶ Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief*. 1962:116.

³⁷⁷ J. Omosade Awolalu, *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:104.

³⁷⁸ Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief*. 1962:74.

³⁷⁹ Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief*. 1962:74.

³⁸⁰ Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief*. 1962:74.

³⁸¹ Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief*. 1962:74.

³⁸² Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:22.

³⁸³ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:23.

³⁸⁴ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:23.

consulted on all important occasions and his directives cannot be ignored³⁸⁵ another divinity by the name of *Esu* is reputed to have taught *Orunmila* wisdom. *Esu* could be seen as a special relations official dealing with heaven and earth. He maintains relationships with the super sensible world as well as with humanity on earth. As regards the super sensible world, he maintains a close relationship with *Orunmila* who is not only wise but who knows the wishes of the supreme deity and of other divinities and conveys these to the human realm through the oracle, *Ifa*.³⁸⁶ Whenever the oracle speaks, humans have to offer sacrifice if they want the gods to favour them. A part of each sacrifice goes to *Esu* following a contract he has made with *Orunmila*.³⁸⁷ *Esu* carries the message to the spiritual world. However, *Esu* makes life very uncomfortable for a human being who refuses to do the bidding of the divine beings. .³⁸⁸

It is clear that the Yoruba relationship with the gods hinges mostly on questions of comfort, prosperity and the peace they may derive from the association. Their worship is based on what goodwill they may derive from the divine beings and they hardly offer them the unconditional honour and worship that is their due. It is not surprising then that more and more Yoruba Christians flock to the Pentecostal churches where, as Kalu suggests, a Christianity is practiced that ‘takes seriously the fears and hopes emanating from the interior of their primal worldview; a religion that serves better the goals of traditional African religion,’³⁸⁹ and which is providing hope for a troubled generation in terms of financial, socio-economic security, etc. On the other hand as pointed out above, some people argue that prosperity and faith-claim theology gives rise to dependency and weakness because people, instead of working hard, become lazy while waiting for miracles to happen. In the meantime it is evident where the concept of well-being as the result of a right relationship with the spiritual is coming from.

Interestingly, Pentecostal evangelization targets especially urban dwellers, whether they are rich or poor.³⁹⁰ One might be quick to conclude that the people who would be more readily affected by African traditional religion are those who live in rural areas. In as much as Pentecostalism is thriving among city dwellers, it is evidently a basic factor within their beings as Africans that causes them to engage with the traditional religious world-view as it survives in their practice of Christianity. It is not the result of a failed

³⁸⁵ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:23.

³⁸⁶ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:28.

³⁸⁷ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:29.

³⁸⁸ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:29.

³⁸⁹ Kalu. *African Pentecostalism: Global Discourses, Migrations, Exchanges and Connections*. 2010:42.

³⁹⁰ Kalu. *African Pentecostalism: Global Discourses, Migrations, Exchanges and Connections*. 2010:43.

acquaintanceship with modernity. Pentecostal communities serve today as beacons of hope for a troubled generation in terms of financial, socio-economic security, etc. In the case study of this research, concerning Yorubaland, it is clear that people have come to hope for and expect miracles. They consequently become attached to the Pentecostal churches where a context is offered of Pentecostal Christianity fused with the traditional religion in which the deities are mostly worshipped for the sake of deriving from them a maximum of goodwill. The worship of adherents is narrowly linked to issues that border on their needs and that, invariably, concern matters of financial and socio-economic security and of life aspirations. This distinctive characteristic of the relation between the Yoruba and their worship of the divine will in the course of the research be put further in perspective. However, the appeal of the Pentecostal churches does not consist only in the prosperity theology and the hope it gives to a lot of youths, but it also results from the influence of the intrinsic primal religion on both the preacher and the worshipper. It is this influence that determines the Yoruba perception of religion as related to the general well-being of human beings.

A third example to be discussed in this section is the need for an examination into how locales affect the religious and cultural world-views of their inhabitants. Harold Turner³⁹¹ proposes that followers of primal religions have a sense of kinship with nature whereby plants, animals and humans share a 'spiritual existence and a place in the universe' in a spiritual symbiosis whereby they depend on each other. Correspondingly, 'any object of the natural environment may enter into a totemic spiritual relationship with human beings or become tutelary and guardian spirits'. In such cases there is no question of one of the partners exploiting the other.

Again, the practitioners of African Christianity, both the indigenous and the Pentecostal churches in Africa, exhibit in their liturgy, prayers and sermons traits of this broad-spectrum assessment of primal religions. Turner portrays a most basic concept of the awareness of the spiritual and, according to him; it is present in all religions at their earliest stage. The African, or the Yoruba, displays the same awareness in his/her traditional religion. We will return to this issue later in this research. For the moment the following has to suffice. Since most of the Yoruba depend on agriculture for their sustenance, and as crops are grown in soil, *Ile* (the earth) receives special sacrifices at the times of planting and harvesting.³⁹² As powerful spirits are dwelling in the earth and the ancestors are buried there, the Yoruba have the habit of pouring a drop of any

³⁹¹ Harold Turner, 'New Religious Movements in Primal Societies,' in *Australian Essays in World Religions*: 30

³⁹² Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:45.

drink and to throw a morsel of food on the ground before they drink and eat in order that the spirits may drink and eat first.³⁹³ Correspondingly, it is commonplace in certain Pentecostal and indigenous churches to hear Yoruba Christians say:³⁹⁴ *'Ile gb'oro Oluwa, mo so lori re loni, ma a gbori re maa seun rere'* ('Earth hear the word of the Lord, I speak it upon you today, I will stand upon you and prosper'). There is an understanding here that, whatever one speaks to the earth as an entity, especially if it is the word of God, the earth will listen and probably obey. The concept appeals to a Yoruba Christian because, even if he/she has never been a devotee of any of the shrines of divinities, certain religious traditions which Kalu describes as 'cultural contents' (as cited above) that are similar to specific 'cultural content' in Christianity, are by him/her not experienced as inimical to his/her faith.

A fourth example can be found in the sermons, analyzed in chapter seven of which a small segment follows below. It concerns part of a preacher's interpretation of the scriptures presented when he was teaching on prayers:

Everything has its own principles of operation whether physical or spiritual. The same applies to prophetic prayer. It works by faith. When prophetic prayer is released by faith, it is as potent as if God Himself had spoken. All things were made by the word and the voice of the Lord and they must respond to His command directly or indirectly. Psalms 33:6-9; Colossians I: 16, Hebrews 11:3; John 1:3. All created things have ears at their own level of existence. This includes both living and non-living matters. For example, these non-living materials were addressed in prayer: (i) Earth:- Jeremiah 22:29, Numbers 17: 29-14, (ii) Altar:- I Kings 13: 1-5, (iii) The sun and the Moon:- Joshua 10: 12-14, (iv) Lazarus: John 11: 11. Some of the living things addressed in prayers of command include: (i) The fig tree Matthew 21: 18-20, (ii) Lazarus: - John 11:43-44, (iii) Jairus' daughter: - Luke 8:41, 49-56. These objects were made by the word of the Lord; therefore they must obey the same word. This is the mystery of creation. The occultists and spiritualists understand this very well. If all things have ears, therefore the material elements from which they were made can hear and respond to the word and voice of God. Prophetic praying releases the forces and mysteries of life into action.³⁹⁵

³⁹³ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:45.

³⁹⁴ These are some of the prayers said at prayer meetings I attended in Ikenne-Remo, Ogun State, organized by the Christ Apostolic Church in the town. It is an example of the kind of concept that is found among the independent churches and the Pentecostals. The sermons of selected Pentecostal preachers have been collected and analyzed in subsequent parts of this thesis.

³⁹⁵ Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola. *Advanced Level Prayers*. Lagos. 2004:134-135.

Among the Yoruba Christians, the Bible and its particular contexts are standing in one corner. Their experience of their own contexts - involving social, or economic, or any other real and tangible part of their reality - is standing in another corner. And then there is a third corner where their primal religion stands as an element that is innate in them and that is present as a sort of spiritual paradigm or pattern seeking for a place in their interpretation of the Bible. However, I hurry to add that these considerations hardly create any distantiation that would inspire a critical judging of the text, because in the minds of these Yoruba the biblical context is similar to theirs. Thus, there is little or no engagement with the exegesis of the text. This is the reality of most Yoruba Pentecostal preachers/Christians today. I have come to think that this approach enables the Yoruba Pentecostal preacher/hearer to appropriate the biblical texts and make them his/her own.

As the Yoruba are affected by their harsh economic and social challenges (i.e. their context) they revert back to their innate tendency of approaching the deity not necessarily for worship but for the succour the deity can offer. As pointed out above, in Yoruba primal religion even sacrifice is made to appease or curry favour with the deity, but often not to worship as the early European missionaries conceived of it. This Yoruba Christian mind-set can be traced to their primal religious background. In the traditional setting, the Yoruba approached the deity to empower, protect, or fortify him/herself against 'enemies' that could consist in a difficult situation, in phenomena such as witches and wizards or even the god that he wishes to appease. Yoruba Christians may have this perception of worship at the back of their minds when they go to church. Every situation of whatever nature is viewed against the backdrop of the spiritual and it is on this basis that they engage with scripture passages.

3.6 Circumstances of Religious Integration in Yorubaland

In conclusion of this chapter I will take a brief look at how the integration of Islam into the cultural milieu of the Yoruba may serve as a standard for a comparison with the development of African Christianity among the Yoruba.

It is clear that the traditional religion was not the only 'baseline,'³⁹⁶ for Christianity in Yorubaland. There is an adage among the Yoruba that says: '*Aye l'a ba 'fa, aye l'a ba 'male, osan gangan ni 'gbagbo wole de.*'³⁹⁷

³⁹⁶ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

³⁹⁷ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

The literal translation goes: ‘We met Ifa in the world, we met Islam in the world, but it was high noon before Christianity arrived.’ This very common adage sums up two essential features of the religious situation in nineteenth-century Yorubaland. Firstly, there was a triangular encounter of religions. Secondly, while Christianity was entirely new to the Yoruba when it arrived in the 1840s, Islam and the traditional religion had already been active side by side for a long time. The relationship between Islam and Yoruba primal religion created a critical factor for the shaping of the Christianity of early converts, eventually producing a typical Yoruba Christianity that endures today. This issue is also pertinent for a more detailed discussion of elements that link the primal religion and Yoruba Christianity.

Islam and Christianity have a shared history in the world outside Yorubaland. The former, for example, overran Christianized lands and, pressurizing the populations, Islam made most of its early converts in the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean regions.³⁹⁸ When Christianity and Islam met in West Africa - at the time a frontier zone for them - their encounter was deeply coloured by their prior understanding of each other.³⁹⁹ Islam represented heresy to Christianity, subversion of its central doctrine and of scriptures that had to be pushed back.⁴⁰⁰ In the nineteenth century these perceptions were still in existence, although they would be affected by Christianity’s later intimate association with the empowerment of Western Europe through science and capitalism and its rise to world supremacy.⁴⁰¹ Christian missionaries to Yorubaland meant to reverse the earlier pattern of Islam overrunning Christianity as it had for example in North Africa, by converting the Yoruba and by elevating them from ‘idolatry and backwardness.’⁴⁰² However, as Christianity lacked Islam’s adaptability to the African milieu, the missionaries turned out to have sown the seeds for a new, African Christianity.

Islam had, within a few years of Mohammed’s death, graduated to an imperialist ideology by fusing the secular and the religious realm on the basis of the language of its revelation, Arabic.¹⁴⁹ Christianity on the other hand had long since known separation of state and church and the Christian missionary could thus, at least in theory, not rely on support of the colonial administration. Instead it depended on the translation of its scriptures into the vernacular languages. The necessity to translate the Bible is the feature that most

³⁹⁸ Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, 2000:187-197.

³⁹⁹ Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, 2000:187-197.

⁴⁰⁰ Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, 2000:187-197.

⁴⁰¹ Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, 2000, pp. 187-197.

⁴⁰² Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, 2000, pp. 187-197.

distinguishes the cultural path of Christianity in West Africa from that of Islam.⁴⁰³ The availability of scriptures in modern European languages was thus to the advantage of the Christian mission.

In the case of Islam however, there was an integral bond between religion and language. Koranic schools trained their pupils in memorizing the Quran texts whereby an actual understanding of the Arabic was expected to come to the diligent ones among them later.⁴⁰⁴ The practice that existed before the introduction of Christianity in Yorubaland involved a complex mix of Islamic and cultural traits. The arrival of the Christian missionary was followed by the establishment of mission schools where pupils were taught reading, using the Yoruba Primer (*Iwe ABD*), and where they progressed to eventually reading the Bible in their mother tongue.⁴⁰⁵ While Islam mostly identified its religious concepts using terms derived from Arabic, Christianity's inclination was to seek out names in the vernacular for its concepts. The missionaries thus ended up using Yoruba terms, often derived from Arabic that had earlier been fashioned by the Muslims.⁴⁰⁶ For example, the Songhai loan-words in Yoruba are probably coined from the Malian language.⁴⁰⁷ Thirty-two words are identified from among the basic terms in the Yoruba Muslim lexicon most of which derive from Arabic. Their form suggests that they passed through Songhai rather than Hausa before becoming part of Yoruba⁴⁰⁸. Among these words are: : *Imale* for the Muslim, *alufa* or *alfa* (Muslim cleric), *kewu* (read Arabic), *hantu* (Arabic writing), *walaa* (writing board), *tira* (amulet), *saraa* (alms), *girigiri* or *jingiri* (praying enclosure), *aawe* (the Ramadan fast), *iwaasu* (preaching, sermon).

By the 1810s a considerable amount of Yoruba had converted to Islam which is evidenced by the substantial number that joined the revolt in Ilorin in 1817 which led to the establishment of Fulani Muslim rule there. Ilorin links Yorubaland with the states of the Sokoto Caliphate in the North. Islam was well established among the Oyo of Yoruba.⁴⁰⁹ It was carried south through the forest belt by Muslim slaves of Northern origin, sometimes repatriates from Sierra-Leone and Brazil, who had been converted there. There was also substantial growth of Islam along the trade route that runs from Old Oyo to the coast, from Oke-Ogun past Abeokuta into Egbado. Migrants from Oyo also moved southeast with the aim of finding greater security in

⁴⁰³ Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, 2000, p. 187-197.

⁴⁰⁴ Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, 2000, p. 187-197.

⁴⁰⁵ Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, 2000, p. 187-197.

⁴⁰⁶ Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, 2000, p. 187-197.

⁴⁰⁷ This proves that Islam came to the Yoruba from the Malians at the North West rather than from the Hausas from the North.

⁴⁰⁸ Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, 2000, p. 187-197.

⁴⁰⁹ Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

the forest towns, thereby radically affecting their ethnic balance and eventually their religious character. Iwo, for example, was swamped by refugees and had by 1858 a Muslim *Oluwo* (king).⁴¹⁰

Islam at first advanced more slowly in Ibadan than in some of its subordinate towns. For example, Basorun Oluyole, Ibadan's first paramount ruler (c. 1836–1850), was remembered for his demolition of the first central mosque at Oja'ba. However, under his short-lived successor, the *Baale* Opeagbe (1850 – 1851), the Muslim body began to receive recognition.⁴¹¹ On his exploratory visit in 1851, Hinderer met the *Baale* in the company of a large number of *alfa*. 'He seems to countenance them much and engages them to pray for him; he and his fellow chiefs (few of them yet Muslims) replying 'Amin' to their Arabic prayers.' But when Hinderer returned in 1853, he found the Muslims so advanced in number and influence that they had persuaded many chiefs that their lives would be cut short if the white man was allowed into Ibadan. It did not come to that although there were other signs of conflict and suspicion as the Muslims grew in influence in the late 1850s.⁴¹²

In Egba, on his arrival in 1846, Townsend was struck by the presence of many Muslims which he took as a sign of religious tolerance of the Egba, although Islam was here, as well as in Ibadan contested by Ifa priests.⁴¹³

Of the two agents of Islam – displaced Oyo and traders and/or slaves from the non-Yoruba Muslim North (Hausa, Fulani, Nupe, and Kanuri) – it was the latter, coupled with the Muslim returnees from Sierra-Leone and Brazil, who had the greatest impact in Lagos. The increase of Islam in Lagos took place practically simultaneously with the operations of Christian missions. The religious developments were also profoundly linked to the dynastic politics of Lagos.⁴¹⁴

Virtually wherever the Christian missionaries went in northern, central, and Western Yorubaland, they encountered Muslims. Eastern Yorubaland was different. The first Muslims at Ilesha had been ex-slaves from Lagos or the Oyo areas who returned in the 1860s, the same time that the first Ijesha Christians did. As

⁴¹⁰ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴¹¹ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴¹² Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴¹³ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴¹⁴ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

late as 1875, the only Muslims in Ondo were two or three slaves of the *Lisa*'s (the second in rank to the king).⁴¹⁵

Having come to Yorubaland almost as a precursor of Christianity, how did Islam impact on Christianity brought by European missionaries? Midcentury Muslims, though highly visible, mostly represented a small minority of local populations but their *alufa* had a respected position in the system of religious provision. By the 1850s some were rising to positions of secular power from where Islam's influence could be further extended.⁴¹⁶ Apart from this, Islam put its mark on the expression and practice of Yoruba life at large while it in turn adopted many features of local cultures.⁴¹⁷ Several examples will showcase how Islam impacted on Christianity by proxy, through its interaction with the Yoruba culture. Among the most significant early borrowings was Ifa divination itself. It is ironical that its Islamic source had been forgotten so that, as in the adage quoted above, Ifa could be regarded as the very flagship of traditional primal religion.⁴¹⁸ Ifa is the type of divination that Yoruba has got to know well and mastered, as mentioned above.

Some adopted elements had come directly from Islam itself. Other items were brought along by people who had borne the religion into Yorubaland and these mostly concerned items, terms or concepts of a cultural nature. They had lost the Islamic trademark that probably distinguished them in the past and they were now part and parcel of the religiously unspecific habits of Yoruba society. Involved were terminologies relating to horse equipment and various trade goods that came from Songhai with the early *Imale* as well as borrowings from Arabic through Hausa.⁴¹⁹ Among these are: *alubosa* (onion), *asiri* (secret) and *anfani* (benefit, advantage). As a consequence of its earlier arrival in Yorubaland and its religious, ethical, and cosmological influence on the Yoruba⁴²⁰, Islam offered a conceptual stepping stone for Christianity¹⁷⁰.

Christianity took full advantage of the ground prepared by Islam while at the same time preserving the Yoruba rendition, as far as suitable and distinctive, of its own system of concepts. Examples of concepts

⁴¹⁵ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴¹⁶ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴¹⁷ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴¹⁸ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴¹⁹ S. Reichmuth. 'Songhay-Lehnwörter im Yoruba und ihr historischer Kontext,' *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 9 1988, as cited by Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴²⁰ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

introduced by Islam that had entirely become a part of Yoruba culture and that were essential to, and widely used in, Christian discourse are *alaafia* (peace, well-being) and *aanu* (mercy, regret).⁴²¹

When it came to more specifically religious concepts, the choice of useful terms was more complex for Christianity. One could decide, either to choose an existing Yoruba term which would mean adopting a Muslim, or a primal religious, or a religiously neutral term, or one could coin a European term or make a new word from Yoruba elements. The missionaries' choice was to adopt an existing Yoruba term where possible and, if there was a choice of terms, to recognize the common stance of the monotheisms against idolatry and therefore to prefer Muslim terms over to those of the primal religion.⁴²² For example, Crowther adopted the term *alufa* (Muslim cleric) for priest throughout his translation of the Bible and he applied it, in addition, to a Christian clergyman or a pastor. Remarkably, he also uses it in the discussion of Christ's priesthood in Hebrews chapter 7.⁴²³ This was in preference to *aworo* that refers to a priest of an *orisa* who is, while in function, always possessed. *Aworo* was not even used to identify a prophet or the medium of a god in places where it would have been quite suitable such as for the prophets of Baal in I Kings chapter 18 who cut themselves with knives and called down fire and who might well remind one of the traditional Yoruba god Sango and his devotees. Another Muslim name for 'prophet' was *woli* meaning 'saint.' This became eventually the name most commonly used to refer to Christian Aladura prophets.⁴²⁴

Furthermore, the two basic categories of Christian religious actions - prayer and preaching - were also identified using Muslim terms. In his 1843 *Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language*, derived from Yoruba speakers in Freetown, Crowther had translated 'prayer' as *irong* (*irun*), the Muslim term for communal prayer. But by 1850, in his translation of *The Book of Common Prayer*, he had decided that its specific connotations could not be transferred to Christian practice and he settled for another Muslim term, *adura*, which denotes individual petitionary prayer.⁴²⁵ The word for 'preaching, sermon' (*iwaasu*) was one of the early Songhai loan-words, and it is still the term used by Christians. The modern Muslim word for preaching is *waasi*, also derived from the Arabic *wa'z*, but through Hausa. The inference has to be that

⁴²¹ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴²² Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴²³ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴²⁴ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴²⁵ S. Crowther. *Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language*. London, 1843. Cited by Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

during the past century, Yoruba Muslim usage has adapted to Hausa influence, while the old Islamic term has been preserved in Christianity.⁴²⁶

Both European and African missionaries avoided any association of their enterprise with the primal religion and this tendency continued as they translated their literatures for the use of the early converts. Islam offered a way to escape the use of the religious terminology of the traditional religion. Crowther, in translating 'power', preferred *agbara* (the more secular notion of strength or force), to *ase* which is to indicate the efficacy of the *orisa*.⁴²⁷ For the petition of the Lord's Prayer, 'but deliver us from evil,' Crowther could find no indigenous noun that was both sufficiently general and absolute to render the full meaning of 'evil.' One might have expected him to adopt *l'owo Esu* (from the hand of Esu), since Esu was used by the missionaries. Esu, in traditional Yoruba belief, is the deity that foments trouble and the name was adopted by the missionaries to – inaccurately - indicate Satan or the Devil.⁴²⁸ Crowther did not use Esu in the Lord's Prayer but decided instead on *tulasi*, a Hausa loan-word meaning 'trouble'. He changed *tulasi* in a later edition to *bilisi*, Hausa for Satan, which is *iblis* in Arabic and *diabolos* in Greek, thus getting to the same semantic outcome by a more acceptable route.⁴²⁹

Apart from these loan words which Christianity adapted for its own use, there were many Muslim conceptions that had been used by non-Muslims to cover concepts of primal religion and that, one way or another, found their way into Christianity. The most important of these were concerned with God as a Creator, distinct from all other beings, and with the separate heavens for the good and the bad (*orun rere* and *orun apaadi*).⁴³⁰ An Islamic source of these ideas is implied, both by their inconsistency in relation to so much else in Yoruba religious thought and by their absence from those parts of Eastern Yorubaland, especially Ondo, where it is known that there was no Muslim presence when the missionary arrived.⁴³¹

⁴²⁶ Crowther. *Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language*. Cited by Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴²⁷ Crowther. *Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language*. Cited by Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴²⁸ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴²⁹ Crowther. *Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language*. Cited by Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴³⁰ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴³¹ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

The influence of Islam on the Yoruba cannot be overestimated especially in view of the political situation during the period when Islamic *alufa* made inroads into Yoruba society. The *alufa* tried to establish links with local authorities and offered powerful spiritual techniques that could benefit the state, especially in regard to its military needs.⁴³² The people were induced to share in Muslim religious practice. There was no coercion, yet the perceived power of the charms used by the *alufa* made them feared and allowed them to dominate the relationship forged between Islam and the Yoruba.⁴³³ Community leaders came to regard the purchase of the spiritual powers of the *alufa* as an inevitable item of public expenditure. They might be invited to call off excessive rain,⁴³⁴ to protect against fires, or to stop epidemics. The *alufa* were engaged in a very similar spirit as *babalawo* and other religious specialists were. Indeed, both might be employed for the same project, as when a minor Egba war-chief consulted both Ifa and an *alufa* before going off to raid the Ijebu farms for slaves.⁴³⁵

The three principal means of the *alufa*'s spiritual power were prayer, charms, and a kind of offering called *saraa* and these formed a series, hanging together rather than functioning as wholly discrete entities. Charms or amulets were in essence materializations of prayer as they typically consisted of pieces of paper on which prayers and invocations were written in Arabic, sometimes accompanied by symbolic substances sewn into a small leather packet.⁴³⁶ As discussed in the following chapter, these packets were exhibited by African converts who expected Christianity to be a practical religion that might serve as protection against misfortune and evil. Being disappointed in this expectation, Yoruba established their own indigenous churches and became the practitioners of a distinctly African Christianity.

3.7 The Future of African Christianity

The future of African Christianity has been the subject of many scholarly writings. On the basis of a framework used by Sanneh in his book, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, one can develop an insight into what the future holds for Christianity among the Yoruba. The book examines the impact of the missionary on culture in general and it identifies the historical process of translation of

⁴³² Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴³³ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴³⁴ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴³⁵ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

⁴³⁶ Peel. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. 2000:187-197.

Christianity of the Aramaic and Hebrew culture into the Gentile culture. Sanneh is of the opinion that Christianity applied two modes in this process of translation. On one hand it made itself akin to its Judaic roots and, as a result, advanced significant aspects of those roots. On the other hand it removed the negative brand on the Gentile culture by embracing it as its own natural wing.⁴³⁷ According to him, the action of destigmatizing the Gentile culture complemented the other action of relativizing with its Judaic roots.⁴³⁸ Sanneh calls the translation a difficult one, due to the multi-cultural nature of the Gentile world into which the gospel was introduced by the early apostles. He sees in the Greek culture a synthesis that was remarkable, due to the intellectual model that the Hellenistic culture provided for Christianity on the basis of which a ‘dogmatic cultural attitude’ of Christianity could be developed.⁴³⁹ After accepting the Hellenistic world, Christianity obtained from it the obscurantist paradigm that enabled the early church to retain its teaching from generation to generation.

In the same vein, Christianity went through an inevitable mutation when it got to Yorubaland in the nineteenth century. The subsequent events that led to the rise of the African Indigenous Churches became the very bedrock of its blossoming in the present generation. The agent of this change was a phenomenon similar to that at play in the time when the apostles preached among the Greeks. The Hellenistic culture, as observed by Sanneh, had been seemingly extraneous to the gospel; hence there had been a reluctance to evangelize beyond the Jewish world. Similarly, also the missionary, when spreading the gospel in Africa, was reluctant to allow the native culture to adulterate, as they would have seen it, Christianity. The very same elements - analogous concepts in Yoruba primal religion on the one, and Christianity on the other hand -, have apparently served as a catalyst of development of Christianity, considering the number of worshippers that throng the particular churches where these elements are present in the theology and liturgy. When the West begins to appreciate the considerable growth of African Christianity taking into account its enigmatic cultural environment, it may investigate the cause of this phenomenon and possibly discover the connection between Christianity and the Africanness of its practitioners leading to a fuller awareness and appreciation of the particular characteristics of African culture that indubitably instigates Africa’s genre of Christianity.

⁴³⁷ Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, Maryknoll: New York 2009, p. 1.

⁴³⁸ Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, 2009, p. 1.

⁴³⁹ Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, 2009, p. 1.

3.8 Conclusion

After examining the influence wielded by primal religion in Africa on Christianity, using the Yoruba Christians in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as a case study, it is pertinent to move on to the investigation of the four subjects focused on by this thesis. These subjects are the Ancient Near East, some Old Testament texts, the Yoruba religious ideologies, and the sermon texts of some Yoruba Pentecostal preachers. The four topics are chosen because the aim of the thesis is to juxtapose as parallels the influences of the Ancient Near Eastern religious outlook on the Old Testament, (presenting the former as the primal religious base for the Old Testament that is the record of the religion of the ancient Israelites), and the influences of Yoruba primal religion on the Yoruba Pentecostal preachers' sermons that are the textual records of their relation with the Bible.

As a theoretical framework for the above mentioned investigation, the six point analysis of Harold Turner of the delineation of primal religions is proposed. The framework is presented in chapter three and will, in the course of the thesis, be adapted for the sake of tagging certain features of primal religions that will be identified as occurring in the four subjects of research.

CHAPTER THREE

HAROLD TURNER'S SIX-POINT ANALYSIS OF PRIMAL RELIGIONS

4.1 Introduction

The main focus of the thesis is on the argument that there is an analogy between the influence of primal elements in the ANE on the religion of ancient Israel on the one hand and the influence of elements in African traditional religion on African Christianity on the other hand. Hence, the four subjects of examination are the Ancient Near Eastern religious outlook, selected texts from the Old Testament in which near Eastern religious ideas are traceable, aspects of the Yoruba traditional religion, and sermon texts of Yoruba Christian preachers. Harold Turner's approach to elements of primal religions will be used as an analytical tool. For the six notions to become analytical tools, they need to be tagged. Certain anthropological terms are used to enhance the understanding of primal religions.

Turner's six-point analysis of primal religions, adopted to identify the elements of primal religions in the four fields that are the focus of this research, is presented in a volume edited by Victor Hayes. Turner has been described as one of the notable scholars who have helped to frame the major debates in religious studies in sub-Saharan Africa.⁴⁴⁰ W. John Roxborough describes Turner's work as helping to avoid any premature condemnation of religious movements whose rituals and symbols are misunderstood by other cultures, including other regional cultures.⁴⁴¹ According to Kwame Bediako, Turner's work enables researchers to get a new understanding of primal religions, thus adding to the history and phenomenology of religion. His summary of Turner's work is important for the main part of this thesis. His delineation theory of primal religions is pertinent as the structure upon which my presentation of features of primal religion is based.

Bediako explains that religions such as the African traditional belief systems are called in current religious scholarship 'primal religion' because in the history and phenomenology of religion they are generally recognized as the religious traditions that enshrine the basal forms of human spiritual and religious experience. They also manifest fundamental elements in religious perceptions of life and therefore constitute

⁴⁴⁰ Gregory D. Alles (ed.), *Religious Studies: A Global View*. Routledge: Abingdon. 2008:113.

⁴⁴¹ W. John Roxborough. 'Situating Southeast Asian Christian Movements in the History of World Christianity.' In Michael Nai-Chiu Poon (ed.), *Christian Movements in Southeast Asia: A Theological Exploration*. Genesis Books & Trinity Theological College: Singapore. 2010:27.

unique contributors to other religions.⁴⁴² Turner's work draws attention to the relationship of primal religions with Christianity, arising from the fact that, in the history of the spread of Christianity, its major extensions have been into societies with primal religious systems. This implies that the type of religion that is often perceived as entirely extraneous to the Christian faith has actually a closer relationship with it than any other. Therefore it is not surprising that the followers of primal religions made the strongest response to the Christian faith.⁴⁴³

As Turner and Bediako point out, the word 'basal' is not intended to denote 'at the bottom' but 'at the foundation.' Primal religions are truly functioning as foundations for secondary religions, especially Christianity in its various contexts because, as the foundation of a building, usually below the ground, distributes the weight of the building over its area, so is the function of primal religions in relation to Christianity. That the major growth of Christianity has taken place in societies with primal religious systems indicates that these provide a strong basis and, similarly, it may be suspected that African traditional religion is a sturdy framework that supported Christianity on its arrival in Africa and that today continues to support it. This framework is usually not visible, in the sense that the practitioners of Christianity may not be aware that expressions of Christianity such as the Bible, theology, liturgy and others, are richly influenced by primal religions. This is why the present thesis argues that the traditional religions are intrinsic in Africans. It will attempt to prove this by analyzing selected sermons of certain Yoruba Christian preachers.

First, characteristic features of primal religions as proffered by Turner will be discussed as they form the framework for the core categories of typologies to be identified in relation to the four fields of research. My analysis will require some adaptations of the framework to suit the goal of the research. These adaptations do not affect the principles of Turner's analysis, but attempt to identify and label his different elements using anthropological terms to indicate specific elements relevant to my research.

After each of the characteristic features of primal religion as presented by Turner has been briefly delineated, the description will be tagged, employing anthropological terms that will enhance an understanding of the general concepts of primal religions. The headings used to label Turner's descriptions will also be employed to tag the features of primal religion that are identifiable in the four fields of the

⁴⁴² Kwame Bediako. *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*. Maryknoll : New York. 2004:35.

⁴⁴³ Bediako. *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*. 2004:36.

research. The headings are: Animism, Animatism, Divination, Magic, Medicine, Incantation, Taboo, Totemism, Rites, and Initiation.

4.2 Harold Turner's Six Points on Primal Religion: Analytical Tools of the Thesis

Of the characteristic features of primal religions proposed by Harold Turner, the first one is a sense of kinship with nature whereby plants, animals and humans share 'spiritual existence and a place in the universe' in a spiritual symbiosis that makes each depend on the others. Correspondingly, 'any object of the natural environment may enter into a totemic spiritual relationship with human beings or become tutelary and guardian spirits'⁴⁴⁴ to such an extent that the nature itself is used without one part exploiting another. This 'ecological aspect of primal religions'⁴⁴⁵ is by Turner considered as 'a profoundly religious attitude to man's natural setting in the world.'⁴⁴⁶

The second feature is by Turner described as 'the deep sense that man is finite, weak, and impure or sinful and stands in need of a power not his own.'⁴⁴⁷

He defines the third feature rightly as 'complementary to the second.' It is 'the conviction that man is not alone in the universe, for there is a spiritual world of powers or beings more powerful and ultimate than himself.' This idea results from human beings' awareness of their weakness that makes them dependant on transcendent powers. 'Not only is there the hierarchy of benevolent ancestors, and of spirits, divinities and high gods, but there is also the range of evil spirits, of demons and malevolent divinities and the lesser, more earth-born occult powers of wizards and witches.'⁴⁴⁸

The fourth characteristic complements the third. He describes it as 'the belief that man can enter into relationship with the benevolent spirit-world and share in its powers and blessings and receive protection from evil forces by these transcendent helpers.'⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁴ Harold W. Turner. 'The Primal Religions of the World and their Study.' In *Australian Essays in World Religions*, Bedford Park: Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1977:27-37.

⁴⁴⁵ Harold Turner, 'New Religious Movements in Primal Societies,' in *Australian Essays in World Religions*: 30.

⁴⁴⁶ Harold Turner, 'New Religious Movements in Primal Societies,' in *Australian Essays in World Religions*: 30.

⁴⁴⁷ Harold Turner, 'New Religious Movements in Primal Societies,' in *Australian Essays in World Religions*: 31.

⁴⁴⁸ Harold Turner, 'New Religious Movements in Primal Societies,' in *Australian Essays in World Religions*: 31.

⁴⁴⁹ Harold Turner, 'New Religious Movements in Primal Societies,' in *Australian Essays in World Religions*: 31 - 32.

Turner regards the fifth feature as augmenting the fourth. He calls it: an intense perception of the reality of life after death, which explains the significance of ancestors in many primal religions. He explains that ‘In majority of these religions, the ancestors, the “living dead,” remain united in affection and in mutual obligations with the “living living.” Indeed, the ancestors figure so prominently in the first level or region of the spirit world that they seem to create an ancestor cult and to obscure the spirit beings before whom they otherwise serve as mediators between the transcendent and the human.’⁴⁵⁰

The sixth feature identified by Turner is the belief that the human being lives ‘in a sacramental universe where there is no sharp dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual.’ Consequently, ‘the physical realm is held to be patterned on the model of the spiritual world...’ Even if there is the issue of ethical dualism with regard to good and evil, he/she still believes that ‘one set of powers, principles, and patterns runs through all things on earth and in the heavens and welds them into a unified cosmic system.’⁴⁵¹ This last feature is, in my view, the synopsis of the other five. The practitioners of primal religions believe that the spiritual holds sway in the affairs of the physical world. For example, if one’s car refuses to start in the morning, it has little to do with mechanical faults; the spiritual realm knows the cause, and probably is the cause, using it to pass them a message.

4.3 Typology used for Tagging Turner’s Features of Primal Religion

The next step in this section is to present a brief description of the terms to be employed in tagging the six features of primal religion above. The definitions are condensations derived from various ideas contributed by scholars in the respective fields. The ten categories to be presented are the key categories of scholarship with respect to primal religion. Secondly, I will relate each of these ten categories to Turner’s categories in section 4.4.

4.3.1 Animism

Writers have long ago described the perception of sacredness in a place, a thing or in persons, and the accompanying sense of awe as animism. It was the renowned British anthropologist Sir Edward Tylor who first propounded what has since been called an evolutionary theory of magic and religion, claiming that both of these phenomena arose out of ‘primitive man’s ignorance of science and consequently fear of what was

⁴⁵⁰ Harold Turner, ‘New Religious Movements in Primal Societies,’ in *Australian Essays in World Religions*: 32.

⁴⁵¹ Harold Turner, ‘New Religious Movements in Primal Societies,’ in *Australian Essays in World Religions*: 32.

regarded as the supernatural.⁴⁵² Tylor's views were subsequently elaborated upon and modified by many other writers, including Herbert Spencer, M. Levy-Bruhl, R.R. Marett, and Bronislaw Malinowski, until they became the basis of the branch of anthropology known as comparative religion. Comparative religion is concerned with the study of man's attitude towards the supernatural as a part of the form thought substructure present in every culture.⁴⁵³

Tylor defines it broadly as virtually coextensive with religion, as 'the belief in spiritual beings.'⁴⁵⁴ Two types of animism may be identified. In some societies these spirit beings are believed to reside in trees, rivers, and stones. The term 'animatism' has been invented for such phenomena. Animatism will be discussed below as the first and most basic feature of primal religious beliefs.

There are however scholars who argue that animism is in first instance an explanation of phenomena rather than an attitude of mind towards what causes them, in other words it is a philosophy rather than a religion. This is a meeting point with my idea that animism is a feature that can be found in all primal religions and that it does not represent the religion itself. People tend to settle for the idea that animism is the religion instead of just a means in a religion. Simply because it is a chief characteristic of primal religions, the term animism is used to, incorrectly, describe them.

In many animistic world views, the human being is regarded as on a roughly equal footing with animals, plants, and natural forces. Therefore, it is morally imperative to treat these with respect.⁴⁵⁵ In such world views, humans are considered a part of, rather than superior to, or separate from, nature.⁴⁵⁶ In animistic beliefs, rituals is considered essential for survival as it wins the favour of the spirits that are associated with one's source of food and shelter, and that promotes fertility and ward off malevolent forces.

⁴⁵² Segal Robert. *Myth: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2004:14.

⁴⁵³ Robert. *Myth: A Very Short Introduction*. 2004:14.

⁴⁵⁴ Kent Mundhenk. *Common Thread in Animism*. New York. Vol. 22 (1). 2006:56.

⁴⁵⁵ Graham Harvey. *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. Wakefield: New York. 2005:10.

⁴⁵⁶ Ritual is an offshoot of animism because it answers the question 'how?' Animism is the assessment of the human position as it relates to the spiritual world. Acknowledging J.B. Noss in his *Man's Religion*, New York, 1966: 14 ritual, incantation, medicine, initiation etc, describe how humans deal with the spiritual world. These will be identified as part of features of primal religion as revealed in the sermons of Yoruba Christian preachers that have been analyzed.

4.3.2 Animatism

Animatism can be understood in two ways, either as a belief or as a theory to explain the historical origin of religion in the evolutionist sense.⁴⁵⁷ R.R. Marrett⁴⁵⁸ thinks that animatism preceded animism because it is considered as a ‘simpler’ form of religion. He argues that animistic conceptions are not the simplest elements in primal religions. Since I am not engaging in arguments on the evolution of religion, I will stick to discussing the term as indicating a concept in primal religion. As a belief, animatism presumes the existence of a supernatural force or power in certain persons, animals, and in inanimate objects like trees, streams and stones. This essential power is considered to be transferable from one person or object to another.⁴⁵⁹ It therefore implies the belief that all things, including those considered to be inanimate objects, possess consciousness. I will use the word animatism to tag the synopsis in each of the four fields of research that feature this concept of primal religion.

4.3.3 Divination

Divination describes how humans approach their deities. It is clear that the approach is characterized by a realization of one’s weakness as a human. D.H. Smith sees it this way: ‘Man plans for foreseen contingencies, but is aware that much of the future is menacingly unknown. He has sought to penetrate this unknown by different means. One of the most renowned of the means used is divination.’⁴⁶⁰ Divination is therefore the act of obtaining information about the unknown or about future events from supernatural sources by means of signs and ‘occult technique.’⁴⁶¹

But the etymology of the word presents a more probable case for the phenomenon. ‘Divination’, many agree, comes from the Latin *divinare* which means ‘to foresee’, to be inspired by a god.⁴⁶² It is the attempt to gain insight into a question or situation by way of a standardized process or ritual through a contact with a supernatural agency. It is commonly maintained that it can be seen as a method to organize what appear to be disjointed, random facets of existence in such a way that they provide insight into a problem at hand.⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁷ Mariasusai Dhavamony. *Phenomenology of Religion*. Rome. 1973:53.

⁴⁵⁸ R.R. Marrett. *The Threshold of Religion*. London.1914; *The Raw Material of Religion*. London. 1929. Cited by Mariasusai Dhavamony. *Phenomenology of Religion*. Imprimi Poteste: Romae. 1973:54.

⁴⁵⁹ Richard Clark. *The Multiple Natural Origins of Religion*. Switzerland. 2006:172.

⁴⁶⁰ D.H. Smith. ‘Divination’. In S.G.F, Brandon (eds.). *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*. Scribner. 1970:459.

⁴⁶¹ J. Omosade Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:120.

⁴⁶² Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:120.

⁴⁶³ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:121.

Divination is always used in a situation that, from the subject's perspective, calls for a decision on important plans or on actions needed to deal with some challenge.⁴⁶⁴ Typically, it is called for in cases of illness and death, for the confirmation of a marriage choice, when individual or collective moves are required involving a change in social alignment or economical status and in any situation that involves loss, calamity or unresolved conflict, whether on a personal or a much larger scale.⁴⁶⁵ Human beings want to get the best out of life and seek to avoid situations that limit their efforts to plan adequately for the future. They like to know the Divine will and be assured of longevity, prosperity, increase in life, and success in enterprises. Those who believe that the world is influenced by supernatural forces – witches, sorcerers, the ancestral and other spirits - will find it expedient to try and get these powers on their side. They expect the oracle to reveal what is in store for them and what they can do to forestall, propitiate and humour the spirits. Thus, divination is a means by which divine will and directives are ascertained. It also provides guidance in approaching the divine and dealing with the problems of life.

Human beings all over the world practise divination and devise methods for doing this. The Assyro-Babylonians had their Baru who employed hepatoscopy (divination by “reading” the liver of a sacrificial sheep).⁴⁶⁶ The Buddhists in India practise astrology and use lots and oracles as a means of divination while every layman is equipped with a pocket divination manual called mo-pe. The Greeks had their oracular shrines of Apollo at Delphi and of Jupiter at Dodona⁴⁶⁷. The Romans used the Sortes. The Japanese use omoplatoscopy or divining by flaying the shoulder blade of a deer and subjecting the bone to intense heating over fire.⁴⁶⁸

4.3.4 Magic

A précis of various definitions of religions shows that the relationship between humans and the transcendent goes beyond the basic concept whereby nature is regarded as possessing spiritual qualities worthy of veneration. Religion is essentially a matter of a reciprocal relationship in which a human being depends on the deity for the fulfilment of personal, basic needs which go beyond, but do not exclude, the material aspects of life, , believing the deity to be capable of fulfilling those needs. What is the place of magic in

⁴⁶⁴ G.K. Park. ‘Divination and its Social Contexts,’ *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. Vol. 93, part 2. July/Dec. 1963:195.

⁴⁶⁵ Park. ‘Divination and its Social Contexts.’ *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. July/Dec. 1963:195.

⁴⁶⁶ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:121.

⁴⁶⁷ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979.

⁴⁶⁸ L.W. King. ‘Divination among the Assyro-Babylonian.’ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. Vol. 4. 1911:784.

religion? Bolaji Idowu and some other scholars offer the following definition. Humanity recognizes that, behind phenomena, there is a power greater than itself. The approach of the power depends on one's conception of it and of the best way to obtain one's soul's sincere desire. There are two ways in which human beings have tried to avail themselves of divine resources for the fulfilment of their needs. According to Bolaji Idowu,⁴⁶⁹ 'where he recognizes the power as a divine being with whom man may have communion and communication, his approach has been one of submission and appeal; where he conceives of the power only as the reservoir of elemental forces, he has sought to tap and harness it and make it sub-serve his own end.' This last approach includes the use of techniques that seek to identify the means that give humanity control over the elemental forces. It implies an attempt to tap and control the supernatural resources of the universe for humanity's benefit. The definitions provided by E.O. James and S.F. Nadel reveal how religion by the use of magic becomes bereft of responsive love. James writes that it is a 'resort...to super causation by means of spell and rite.'⁴⁷⁰ There is an implication of inducement. A relationship determined by pay-off can hardly inspire responsive love. Nadel portrays magic as 'resting on the manipulation and enforcement of supernatural benefits...'⁴⁷¹ I readily agree with Bolaji Idowu who simply sees religion as the 'means by which the divine spirit and man's essential self communicate'.⁴⁷² This communication can be variegated. Sometimes humans experience a sense of awe, even trepidation, when communicating with the divine. At times they approach the divine with the aim of tapping into certain benefits by using knowledge of specific spiritual laws or principles. The human knows his/her limitations and realizes the need of a number of things that he/she cannot procure on his/her own. Humanity is confronted with many problems in the universe and seeks aid to cope with these. There are, many believe, supernatural resources in the universe for their benefit and these resources can be obtained by two means: by appealing to the transcendental Being to satisfy needs; by devising a means of tapping into the elemental forces that have already been created in the universe by the Supreme Being and that can be procured by those who know how. When a human being makes an appeal in order to get the required resources we say that he/she is practising religion; when he/she devises a means of getting the resources we say that he/she is practising magic.

⁴⁶⁹ E. Bolaji Idowu. *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. SCM Press: London. 1973:186.

⁴⁷⁰ Idowu, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. 1973:221.

⁴⁷¹ Idowu, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. 1973:221.

⁴⁷² Idowu, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. 1973: 190.

There is a question whether the Supreme Being is at times so weak that human beings can now play upon that weakness to obtain whatever they want. According to J.O. Awolalu⁴⁷³, no one can exert force on the Supreme Being. What magic does is to tap the resources that are already provided by the transcendental Being for the use of humankind – which resources can be employed only by those who have the necessary esoteric knowledge. In both religion and magic, there is power beyond man. Religion is exoteric, that is, open to all. But the tapping of the elemental forces of nature is esoteric in the sense that it is limited to those who have the knowledge. Magical practices are done by specialists and these constitute a separate class in the religious community.

4.3.5 Medicine

What is meant by medicine is any substance or substances that are used in treating or preventing disease or illness. According to Awolalu,⁴⁷⁴ among the primal religious adherents medicine is conceived as involving medicament as well as prophylactic. Thus the professional skill of a medicine man includes curing, alleviating and preventing disease as well as restoring and preserving health. In many cases, he/she is a diviner, a priest as well as a manufacturer of charms. He/she has the means of ascertaining the causes of ailments, misfortune and death. Medicine in this context involves more than the curing of ailments. It includes the belief that a medicinal substance may possess a mysterious power which can be used to harm an enemy. The medicine man employs different means including herbs, plants, leaves, roots, barks, animals, birds, skins, bones, rings, brooms, pieces of thread, needles and minerals, to do his/her business. In almost all cases, he/she has some magical words to go with the preparation. And so, unavoidably, magic, as discussed above, finds a place in the practice of medicine. Idowu⁴⁷⁵ in fact observes that the two can become so interlinked as to make it difficult to know where one ends and the other begins.

In point of fact, among the followers of primal religion, the work of the medicine man is not set apart from religion. In many cases, when he/she collects leaves or bark or roots of a tree for a medicinal preparation, he/she performs a ritual to invoke the spirits inhabiting the tree. He/she may have to utter incantations when digging for roots or picking leaves. On some occasions, he/she does not speak until he/she has taken roots and leaves back home. In this way, the collected material is treated as having undergone a change: ordinary

⁴⁷³ Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979: 75.

⁴⁷⁴ Awolalu, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979: 73.

⁴⁷⁵ Idowu. *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. 1973:199.

things have become sacred and carry a potency, a mysterious power. Medicine is indeed a matter of religion among adherents of primal religions and the medicine man makes for example offerings to the spirit of his/her medicines from time to time. Because of the powers believed to be inherent in these medicinal preparations, anyone who uses them has to observe certain taboos.

4.3.6 Incantation

Incantation involves the chanting or uttering of words purporting to have magical power.⁴⁷⁶ Sometimes, incantations accompany the preparation of medicine that is contained in objects such as rings, amulets, girdles, etc. All practitioners, described as for example diviners and medicine men, use incantation to help their mysterious powers take effect. These mystical, preternatural and esoteric powers are virtually inexplicable, but the belief that they can alter the course of nature is prevalent among the followers of traditional religions.

The difference between incantations and words of prayer is parallel to the difference between magic and religion described above. Prayer is an important element in worship. It is a means by which humankind makes a devout supplication to, and enters into communion with, the object of worship. Adoration, praise and thanksgiving are offered to the deity. The deity's attributes and acts of kindness are recalled and enumerated. It is practically impossible to worship without pouring out the mind before the divine being, who is seen as having the power to grant man's requests. Most requests of the followers of primal religions stress their yearning for life. They consist usually in asking for protection from sickness and death, for gifts of longevity, children, prosperity, victory over enemies, protection from evil spirits, rectification of unhappy situations, and for an abundant provision of material things.

As human beings are confronted with many problems and seeks aid to be able to cope with them they turn, whether to prayer, or they put their trust in a process of exploiting supernatural resources through techniques one of which is incantation. Incantations, like magic, involve esoteric knowledge of certain resources accessible only to those who have learnt the required words, usually by rote. When these words are uttered, they are believed to carry powers that can fulfil requests or commands.

⁴⁷⁶ Margaret J. Field. *Search for Security*. North-Western University Press: London. 1962:35.

4.3.7 Taboo

A taboo is a strong social prohibition or ban. It may occur in relation to any area of human activity and it often concerns a social custom that is sacred and has to be respected or it concerns an action that is absolutely forbidden on the ground of morality and sometimes on religious grounds. Breaking a taboo is usually considered objectionable and even abhorrent by society.⁴⁷⁷ How does a taboo function in primal religion? Humans can enter into a relationship with the benevolent spirit-world and share in its powers and blessings and receive protection from evil forces by these transcendent helpers. But this process has to take place, hedged by protective measures and with acknowledgement of certain dos and don'ts. In approaching the spiritual world, there are certain factors to be considered if the relationship between human and spirit is to bear fruits. The human needs to follow the specific conditions set by the spirit world before attempting to approach it. . The catalogue of these conditions is labelled as 'Taboo' in this section.

The term comes from the Tongan language and appears in many Polynesian cultures where a tabu (or *tapu* or *kapu*) often has specific religious associations.⁴⁷⁸ When an activity or a custom is taboo, interdictions are implemented in case the taboo is broken, such as a piece of ground that is set aside as a sanctuary for burial of criminals. Some activities or customs that are taboo are legally prohibited and transgressions may lead to severe penalties. The ignoring of other taboos may result in embarrassment, shame, and rudeness. Although critics and/or dissenters may oppose taboos, they are expected to avoid any disrespect for any given authority, be it a legal, moral and/or religious authority. n example: incest is taboo.

Further on the etymological background of taboo, the Tongan word *tapu* or the Fijian *tabu* means: 'under prohibition', 'not allowed', 'forbidden'. In its current use in Tonga the word also means 'sacred' or 'holy',⁴⁷⁹ often in the sense of being restricted or protected by custom or law. In the main island of the Kingdom of Tonga, where the greater portion of the population resides in the capital Nuku'alofa, the word is often appended to Tonga. The word '*Tongatapu*' is by locals used in the meaning of 'Sacred South' rather than 'forbidden South.'⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁷ Robert M.W. Dixon. *A Grammar of Boumaa Fijian*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. 2002:368.

⁴⁷⁸ Dixon. *A Grammar of Boumaa Fijian*. 2002:368.

⁴⁷⁹ Dixon. *A Grammar of Boumaa Fijian*. 2002:368.

⁴⁸⁰ Dixon. *A Grammar of Boumaa Fijian*. 2002:368.

The use of taboo in English dates back to 1777 when the English explorer, Captain James Cook, visited Tonga. Describing the cultural practices of the Tongans, he wrote: 'Not one of them would sit down, or eat a bit of anything.... On expressing my surprise at this, they were all taboo, as they said; which word has a very comprehensive meaning; but, in general, signifies that a thing is forbidden. When anything is forbidden to be eaten, or made use of, they say, that it is taboo.'⁴⁸¹

Taboos may include sex, death, dietary restrictions (halal and kosher diets, religious vegetarianism, and the prohibition of cannibalism), restrictions on sexual activities and relationships (sex outside of marriage, adultery, intermarriage, miscegenation, homosexuality, incest, animal-human sex, adult-child sex, sex with the dead), sexual fetishes, restrictions of bodily functions (burping, flatulence, defecation and urination), restrictions on the use of psychoactive drugs, restrictions on the state of genitalia (transsexual gender identity, circumcision or sex reassignment), exposure of body parts (ankles in the Victorian British Empire, women's hair in parts of the Middle East, nudity in the US), and restrictions on the use of offensive language. Foot binding, practiced in ancient China, would also be considered taboo in the context of modern cultural mores.⁴⁸²

No taboo is known to be universal, but some (such as cannibalism, exposing of intimate parts, intentional homicide and incest taboos) occur in the majority of societies and religions. Taboos may serve many functions, and often remain in effect after the original reason for them has expired. Some argue that this is the reason why taboos reveal the history of societies where other records are lacking.

4.3.8 Totemism

Totemism is a belief system that sees every human being as having a spiritual link or kinship with a specific physical being, be it an animal, or plant which are then called 'spirit-beings' or 'totems.' The totem is considered to interact with a given kin group or an individual and to serve as their emblem or symbol. The term *totem* is derived from the Ojibwa word *ototeman*, meaning "one's brother-sister kin." The word *ote* - ,the root of 'totem' - signifies a blood relationship between brothers and sisters who have the same mother

⁴⁸¹ James George Frazer. "Taboo and the Perils of the Souls." In *The Golden Bough* (3rd ed. Part II ed.). Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. 2010:9, 10.

⁴⁸² Don Kulick and Margaret Wilson. *Taboo: Sex, Identity, and Erotic Subjectivity in Anthropological Fieldwork*. Routledge: London. 1995:16.

and who may not marry each other.⁴⁸³ In English, the word 'totem' was introduced in 1791 by a British merchant who translated it incorrectly, thinking that it designated an individual's guardian spirit who took the form of an animal. The misunderstanding probably arose because the Ojibwa clans did wear animal skins and, as was reported at the end of the 18th century, they named their clans after animals who lived in their surroundings and who appeared to be either friendly or fearful.⁴⁸⁴ The first accurate report about totemism in North America was written by a Methodist missionary, Peter Jones, himself an Ojibwa, who died in 1856 and whose report was published posthumously. According to Jones, the Great Spirit had given *toodaims* (totems) to the Ojibwa clans and, hence, members of a clan are related to each other and, on this account, may not marry among themselves.⁴⁸⁵

With these varied elucidations of totemism, it is inevitably a complex concept. It is however safe to describe it as wide-ranging aspect of behaviour based on a worldview drawn from nature. It refers to an ideological, mystical, emotional, reverential, and genealogical relationship of social groups or of specific persons with animals or other elements in nature, the so-called totems.

Group and individual totemism share basic characteristics but occur with different emphases and in different specific forms. For instance, people generally view the totem as a companion, relative, protector, progenitor, or helper. They ascribe to it superhuman powers and abilities and offer it a combination of respect, veneration, awe, and fear. Most cultures use special names and emblems to refer to the totem. Clans and individuals engage in partial identification, or manifest a symbolic assimilation, with their totems.. There is usually a taboo on killing, eating, or touching the totem.

The totem represents above all an interrelation between the individual microcosm and the universal macrocosm. It is not knowledge-frozen-in-the-past, but a significant resource that is alive with energy the presence of which dictates not only the behaviour of individuals in relation to their environment and society but also, and firstly, human interrelationships in the society.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸³ Patrick Wolfe. *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology*. Cassell: London. 1999:106 – 115.

⁴⁸⁴ Wolfe. *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology*. 1999:108.

⁴⁸⁵ Wolfe. *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology*. 1999:113.

⁴⁸⁶ Doudou Diene (ed.). *From Chains to Bonds: The Slave Trade Revisited*. UNESCO and Bergham Books. 2001:373.

4.3.9 Rites

The adherents of primal religions believe that, if worship is given to the divine beings regularly and in the right manner, all will be well with human beings. On the other hand, failure to perform the customary rites and ceremonies, or the adoption of the wrong modes of worship, is regarded as fraught with serious consequences for the individual or for the community concerned.⁴⁸⁷ Worship, seen as a total response to the ultimate reality, is expressed in words as well as by deeds. The words and deeds that are part of rites and ceremonies may include prostration, praying, invoking and hailing the spirits of the objects of worship, making offerings, sounding bells or gongs, singing, drumming and dancing, as occasions may demand. Every act of worship has distinct elements – liturgy, which consists of its ritual form and content including prayer, music, and dancing; sacrifice, meaning offerings for different purposes; cultic functionaries who are the official attendants at worship; sacred places where worship is carried out like shrines, temples and altars. In the next section I will briefly examine each of these.

When we speak of liturgy, we think of a prescribed form of public worship. It may seem strange to discuss liturgy in relation to a religion that lacks written literature and that depends mainly on oral traditions.⁴⁸⁸ However, the lack of written resources is no barrier to an understanding of people's approach to worship as the order of worship has been preserved, almost undisturbed, from generation to generation. The people have always had cultic functionaries whose main concern was – and is - to preserve, among other things, the traditional conduct of worship. These functionaries approach their task with awe and seriousness, always conscious of the fact that any omission in the normal order of service, or any wrong word uttered, or a song not properly rendered during the service, could incur the displeasure of the deity and jeopardize the efficacy of worship.⁴⁸⁹ In consequence of this rigid observance of traditions, it is fairly certain that the order of worship followed must have remained more or less constant as far as this is possible in a situation where things depend on what is stored up in human memory.⁴⁹⁰

The divinities have their praise-names which priests and worshippers recite at the beginning of worship and certain songs, dedicated to the divinities, are sung in their honour, as the occasion demands. When praise-names are spoken or sung, the divinities will be moved to pay attention to the worshippers and heed their

⁴⁸⁷ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:95.

⁴⁸⁸ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:98.

⁴⁸⁹ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:102.

⁴⁹⁰ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:103.

requests and wishes. Hence, this aspect comes first in the order of public worship. It is only after this eulogy that people present their problems. This they do by stating why they have come before the divinity concerned. On joyful occasions they express gratitude to the divinities for protection, security and joy vouchsafed in time past. Requests are made for things desired.⁴⁹¹

Dancing is no less prominent than songs are. The dances take definite forms, depending on the divinities, to whom offerings are made. The dances are not mere emotional responses to the musical rhythm. They are symbolic and often sacred re-enactments.

4.3.10 Initiation

Among those people who are followers of primal religion, society belongs to every member of the community and each member contributes to its general well-being. Besides within the society, there exist other social groupings referred to as 'secret societies'. These are secret in the sense that membership is usually restricted and they often engage in mysterious activities. Consequent on this, no one, except those who are initiates, can tell with any degree of certainty what they stand for and practise.

Secret societies were originally instituted for the purpose of self-preservation and for preserving the community's traditions, customs and beliefs.⁴⁹² They determined ritual behaviour and regulated social attitudes. Thus, they held sway in the community where they functioned. Their members usually claimed to possess esoteric knowledge and mysterious powers, denied to other members of the community, to such an extent that non-members were compelled to seek admission to the societies so that they too might be protected against surrounding dangers.⁴⁹³

There are basically two types of secret societies. The one type has a religious background, while the other is connected with issues like puberty and adolescent rites.⁴⁹⁴ Since the focus of this thesis is on the aspect of religion, I will focus on the former. These are religiously inspired and commonly worship a specific divinity or spirit. They are also concerned with the cult of the dead and feature prominently at funerals and memorial

⁴⁹¹ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:105.

⁴⁹² J. Omosade Awolalu & P. Adelumo Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. Onibonoje Press & Book Industries (Nig.) Ltd: Ibadan. 1979:220.

⁴⁹³ Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:221.

⁴⁹⁴ Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:222.

ceremonies. They canalize and embody supernatural power. Their officials have specific functions and are graded. To rise to the highest rank, one needs to demonstrate a deep sense of responsibility, loyalty and great capability. One must be proficient in traditional healing and in the use of magic, as explained above.

Certain festivals are associated with secret societies and these too are religiously inspired. The festivals are occasions of general rejoicing when masked 'spirits' come out from their 'spiritual' domain and rituals and ceremonies are performed, lasting from only a day to periods of a week, or even a month.

I have described the particular concepts of religious beliefs mentioned above on the basis of information presented by anthropologists named earlier in the chapter. This information is in a significant measure analogous to the features characterizing primal religions as proffered by Harold Turner. Turner suggests six core points whereas I have referred to ten concepts. These ten concepts are the elements of primal religions that proved identifiable in the four subjects of the research, namely religion in the Ancient Near East, Old Testament texts, Yoruba religious ideologies and selected published interpretations of Bible texts by certain Yoruba preachers. My next task was to locate which of Turner's points best describe any of the ten primal religious concepts that have been delineated. While doing so, I found that each of Turner's proffered characteristic features of primal religions can serve as a pigeon hole for multiple of the religious concepts, thereby making the former into a pertinent framework for the latter. In other words, Turner's notions provide sets of ideas that function as a basis for the outcome of ten religious concepts.

4.4 Tagging Turner's Features of Primal Religions with the Anthropological Semantics

The next step is to label Harold Turner's six characteristics of primal religion with the terms briefly delineated above so that they can become analytical tools to be used in the four areas of focus in this thesis. The identification of elements of primal religions in the four areas will to some extent be facilitated by the tagging. What Turner refers to as humankind's sense of kinship with nature, or the awareness that plants, animals and humans share 'spiritual existence and a place in the universe,' in a spiritual symbiosis whereby each depends on the others, and the comparable situation in which 'any object of the natural environment may enter into a totemic spiritual relationship with human beings or become tutelary and guardian spirits' to such an extent that nature itself is used without one exploiting the other, I will tag as both Animatism and Totemism.

Turner writes about the ‘deep sense that human is finite, weak, and impure or sinful and stands in need of a power not his own,’⁴⁹⁵ causing human beings to take steps to empower themselves. Such steps can lead humanity to explore the unknown in order to effect security for itself. In the process of doing so, some of the elements briefly explained above could be employed. For example, in Medicine the medicine man makes from time to time offerings to the spirit of his/her medicine, because the powers believed to be inherent in the medicinal preparations are provided by the spirit of the substance used in preparing the medicine. The medicine man possesses the means of ascertaining the causes of ailments, misfortunes and death because he/she employs a power beyond his/her own, namely the power that he/she makes sacrifices to periodically. This will be discussed extensively in chapter five. I will tag this concept Medicine

The feature defined by Turner as ‘the conviction that man is not alone in the universe, for there is a spiritual world of powers or beings more powerful and ultimate than himself’, he considers to be complementary to the notion discussed under 2 above. This idea resulted of human beings’ awareness of their weakness that makes them depend on transcendent powers. ‘Not only is there the hierarchy of benevolent ancestors and of spirits, divinities and high gods, but there is also the range of evil spirits, of demons and malevolent divinities and the lesser, more earth-born occult powers of wizards and witches.’⁴⁹⁶ For example, in Magic the human being recognizes that behind phenomena there is a power greater than him/herself. The approach to this power depends on his/hers perception of the power and the way that, he/she expects, would lead to the fulfilment of his/her soul’s sincere desire. In Magic he/she conceives of the power only as the reservoir of elemental forces that he/she seeks to tap, harness and make sub-servient to his/her own end. I have identified Magic here, in one fashion.

However, the way magic works includes techniques as explained earlier. These techniques involve seeking to secure the proper means for establishing human control over the elemental forces. It is an attempt on the part of the human being to tap and get control of the supernatural resources of the universe for his/her own benefit. These techniques I have identified as Rites.

As far as this third characteristic feature of primal religions is concerned, anything that involves ritual must also include Taboo in the sense that there should be an acknowledgement of certain dos and don’ts in

⁴⁹⁵ Turner. In *Australian Essays in World Religions*, 1977:27-37.

⁴⁹⁶ Turner. In *Australian Essays in World Religions*, 1977:27-37.

approaching the spiritual world. These factors have to be considered, if the quest for a relationship between humans and spirit is to be successful. Therefore I have identified Rites as another role player in the third feature.

The fourth of Turner's six notions is complementary to the third and by him described as 'the belief that man can enter into relationship with the benevolent spirit-world and share in its powers and blessings and receive protection from evil forces by these transcendent helpers.'⁴⁹⁷ In a bid to contact this power - or these powers - that transcend humankind, to share in its powers and blessings and receive its protection from evil forces, the steps taken in primal religion involve usually seven of the delineated concepts above. All these are employed to establish a relationship with the spiritual in order to get what one wants. Therefore, I associate Turner's fourth notion with Rituals, Divination, Magic, Medicine, Taboo, Initiation, and even Incantation.

Turner regards the fifth feature as augmenting the fourth. He describes it as an intense perception of the reality of life after death, which explains the significance of ancestors in many primal religions. He explains that, 'In majority of these religions, the ancestors, the 'living dead', remain united in affection and in mutual obligations with the 'living living'. Indeed, the ancestors figure so prominently in the first level or region of the spirit world that they seem to create an ancestor cult and to obscure the spirit beings.'⁴⁹⁸ The tag I will give this feature is Totemism also.

Turner's sixth notion entails the belief that humanity lives 'in a sacramental universe where there is no sharp dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual.' Consequently 'the physical realm is held to be patterned on the model of the spiritual world...' Even if there is the issue of ethical dualism with regard to good and evil, the human being still believes that 'one set of powers, principles, and patterns runs through all things on earth and in the heavens and welds them into a unified cosmic system.'⁴⁹⁹ This last feature, I believe is the synopsis of the other five. This agrees with Kwame Bediako who first drew the attention to it as revealing the significance of the whole structure. The practitioners of primal religion believe that the spiritual still holds sway in the affairs of the physical world. This means that, if their car fails to start in the

⁴⁹⁷ Turner. In *Australian Essays in World Religions*, 1977:27-37.

⁴⁹⁸ Turner. In *Australian Essays in World Religions*, 1977:27-37.

⁴⁹⁹ Turner. In *Australian Essays in World Religions*, 1977:27-37.

morning, it has little to do with mechanical problems. The spiritual realm will know the true cause, and probably is itself the cause, and it is passing a message to them. This feature I will tag Animism.

Before I conclude this section, I want to focus once again on Andrew F. Walls' work, who categorizes the elements of primal religion different from Turner's approach. He claims that studies of African traditional religion have conventionally identified four component entities in the understanding of the transcendent. The first is God, then divinities. By divinities it is meant ruling powers, either of a locality or of a dimension of life. The third are ancestors, and the fourth objects of power. Traditional African religious systems vary as to which component is the dominating one, though not all systems in Africa have all four components.

The relationships between the components in the religious system change under the pressure of internal or external forces. They do also look different at different points of community life, or different section of the community. The conventional categorization by Western authors of religious study of primal religion into monotheism, polytheism, henotheism or pantheism is inadequate. Workers in the field like Parrinder had reordered African world-views into four components. There are God-dominated systems in Africa, divinity-dominated systems, ancestor-dominated systems and object of power-dominated systems. The most regular and most obvious feature is the God component, which in most traditional systems is the dominant concept. Among the Yoruba which are the focus of my research on the African primal religion, the four are identifiable, but its contact with Christianity had enabled the identification of the God of Christian preaching with the God component in it, in so much that it has led to virtual extinction of the divinities. The active recognition of the latter has become incompatible with the worship of God. They have become demonized and are now seen as the epitome of opposition to the God of church and Bible.

My use of the categories above is both anthropological and theological. The anthropological is necessary because this helps me to locate my work within the Ancient Near East studies. The theological is, to a large extent, a reinterpretation of the categorizations by scholars in religious studies as echoed by Andrew Wall above, which I value immensely, because they depict the characterizations of experts in the field of African traditional religious studies. Basically, I am using the categories adopted above as anthropological-theological tags, not implying the derogative concepts that the first European users for the model of elements of primal religion which I am identifying presented. The tags are primarily descriptive categories

that carry both anthropological and theological elements. In the thesis, ranking or rating of the features of primal religion has been principally avoided.

Finally, I need to explain why I did not simply use Turner's six categories. There is the analytical need to expand the categories because my work is not examining only the subject of African primal religions. The torch is being beamed also on the Ancient near Eastern religious concepts, which I am placing at the base of the religious concepts of the Israelites as the primal aspect of their religious framework. Scholars have done this already using the platform of the categories above. In order to simplify and balance the juxtaposition of the two scenarios being showcased in the thesis (ANE and OT on one side, Yoruba primal religious concepts and sermons of Pentecostal preachers on the other), the same categories should cut across board.

4.5 Conclusion

I acknowledge the limits of these terms in describing Turner's six classifications of the definitions of primal religion. But I also want to acknowledge that what I am doing is heuristic. Therefore I am seeking to expand Turner's six categories into ten with the view to determining how useful such categories might be for tagging sermons in order to detect the contribution and influence of primal religion. The tools employed to categorize the expanded Turner's six features of primal religion in the sermons shall also be used in categorizing the same elements identifiable in Ancient Near East, Old Testament, and Yoruba traditional religious ideologies.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PRIMAL ELEMENTS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND ANCIENT ISRAEL: A COMPARISON

5.1 Introduction

Thus far in this thesis, the significance has been discussed of primal elements in African traditional religion for African Christianity which, in my view, represents a major transmutation in the domain of Christianity. This was done by showing African Christianity in the light of the emergence of the African Indigenous Churches in Yorubaland in the colonial era of the nineteenth century. The missionaries little knew that the Christianity they brought to Africa would, almost from the moment of its arrival on African soil, develop into something entirely different from the church that they were familiar with. The change began with the establishment of the African Independent Churches which materialized on account of the primal religion of the Africans elements of which were written all over the practice of founders and members of the African Indigenous Churches. These same elements are evident in the practice of Christianity by the African Pentecostals who arrived on the scene a century later, proving the point that, over two centuries, the common factor in the African practice of Christianity has been the presence of primal religious concepts.

That primal elements from the African traditional religion play a significant role in the practising of Christianity in Africa, and more specifically among the Yoruba is evidenced by, firstly, the emergence of African Indigenous Churches in the colonial period, instigated by Africans who had embraced Christianity but who, under the influence of their primal religion, wished to include certain traditional elements of spirituality. Secondly, it is evidenced by the fact that the primal religion continues to play a role in the Pentecostal Churches in Africa (specifically among the Yoruba) as becomes clear from their sermons (as analyzed in this research work) and in spite of the context of post modernity. The primal religion thus remains a potent phenomenon in the shaping of *secondary* religions in Africa.

A main aspect of the thesis is on the presence of primal elements from the religion of the Ancient Near East in that of ancient Israel and to show similarities with the influence of primal religion on African Christianity. In order to do this four areas are explored, namely the religion of the Ancient Near East, some Old Testament texts, some Yoruba religious perceptions and sermons of Yoruba Pentecostals. Elements of primal religion are identified in each area, using typologies of primal religion tagged by scholars of

anthropology to link the findings in the different areas. In chapter three Harold Turner's six-point delineation of elements of primal religions is discussed. This device – modified as described above for the specific purpose of this thesis - will be used as a tool for analyzing the results in the four research areas.

Therefore in this chapter, an overview shall be given of the characteristics of religious elements in the Ancient Near East and parts of Old Testament texts with a view to tracing the primal elements in them in comparison. A later chapter will deal with elements of Yoruba primal religion and the analysed sermons following the same method. These will serve as the basis of a reflection on the importance of the context for the practice of religion: the Yoruba land as a case study.

It must be emphasized that, what in this chapter is presented as primal elements in the Ancient Near East and the Old Testament, is drawn from the published studies of scholars who base their insights on the reconstruction of excavated materials of the ANE⁵⁰⁰, including large, albeit variable, quantities of texts (clay tablets in Mesopotamia and Hittite Anatolia, and papyri in Egypt),⁵⁰¹ and works of scholars on the study of the Old Testament texts.

5.2 Animism

5.2.1 Ancient Near East

This section is tagged animism as all the scholarly representations below fit in with the earlier description of this particular feature of primal religion where it was explained that in feature of primal religion, the human being is regarded not as superior to animals, plants, and natural forces in kind. Therefore, it is morally imperative to treat the latter with respect.

Characteristically, the peoples of the Ancient Near East consider inanimate objects as possessing a consciousness that they can share spiritual experience with and from which they probably can enjoy spiritual benefits.

⁵⁰⁰ Amelie Kuhrt. *The Ancient Near East, c 300 – 330BC*. Vol 1. Routledge: London, 1995; James Bennett Pritchard & Daniel E. Fleming (eds.). *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. Princeton University Press, 2011; Stephen Bertman. *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005.

⁵⁰¹ Kuhrt. *The Ancient Near East, c 300 – 330BC*. Vol I, 1995.

According to scholars, the Ancient Near Eastern people believed that trees and above all evergreen trees were vehicles of the life-producing energy of spirits, and later of gods and goddesses.⁵⁰² Robertson Smith writes: ‘Prayers were addressed to them, particularly for help in sickness, but doubtless also for fertile seasons and the like, and they were hung with votive gifts, especially garments and ornaments, perhaps also anointed with unguents as if they had been real persons’.⁵⁰³ Even in Syria there are many trees which are believed to be possessed by spirits, to whom vows and sacrifices are made.⁵⁰⁴ It is also thought that the ancient Babylonians believed that trees were inhabited by spirits. This is indicated by the importance attached to sacred trees in their religion and the reverence with which they were treated.⁵⁰⁵ Oesterly and Robinson refer to Jastrow’s work where is pointed out that the Babylonians had numerous inscriptions in which trees, in more or less conventional style, are depicted. ‘Worshippers kneel before these; in some cases gifts are being offered. The text on inscriptions of this kind does not suggest that the tree itself is worshipped; it is either the symbol of a god or goddess, or else it is conceived of as a sanctuary of the deity or as marking the site of a sanctuary. Although the most frequently employed means of obtaining oracles (large numbers of which occur on Assyrian texts) was by the examination of an animal’s liver – hepatectomy - yet tree oracles were also well known and used’.⁵⁰⁶

Among farmers of the ANE gods were invoked for fertility of the soil, availability of water, and favourable weather. Religious festivals were associated with seeding, spring growth, harvest, and the transformation of grain in food preparation. The gods of shepherds and herders were concerned with the fertility and safety of sheep, goats, and cattle. Many herders were nomads who venerated the sun, moon, stars, and the planet Venus. In the marshlands of southern Babylonia, people saw their gods as fish and other creatures of the fertile and mysterious depths of the rivers.⁵⁰⁷

Phoenicians and the Canaanites, held beliefs that the plants of the earth were in ancient times esteemed as gods and honoured with libations and sacrifices because from them successive generations of humans drew

⁵⁰² Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:23.

⁵⁰³ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:23.

⁵⁰⁴ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:23.

⁵⁰⁵ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*, 1937:24.

Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*, 1937: 24.

⁵⁰⁷ Foster, *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*. 1995: 12-20.

their sustenance.⁵⁰⁸ Particularly among the Phoenicians, trees featured prominently in worship, especially in the cult of the goddess Astarte to whom the cypress was sacred. The myrtle and the palm were also associated with the worship of this goddess. In the Syrian festival of the Pyre or Lamp, tall trees were cut down and set up in the court. Goats, sheep and cattle were brought in and hung on the trees, alive.

Jack Sasson⁵⁰⁹ describes how, during excavations in Palestine on the site of the ancient Megiddo, a high-place (*bamah*) was laid bare with a stone altar and two standing stone pillars.⁵¹⁰ Similar pillars were found on the site of ancient *Taanach*. Two of these had been scooped out as receptacles for offerings of blood or oil.⁵¹¹ There is also a long socketed stone, clearly not an altar, in which, in all probability, the *Asherah* or wooden pole was placed. Its upper end has been worked almost to a point and its polished surface, quite absent from all the others, shows that it must have been kissed, or anointed, or otherwise handled by the worshippers.

5.2.2 Old Testament

In Gen. 12: 6-8 mention is made of ‘the Oak of Moreh’ (elon moreh), literally translated as, ‘the oak of the teacher,’ i.e. a tree at which divine teaching took place. What is meant by this is that an oracle could be consulted here and therefore one might as well speak of ‘the oracle oak’. The tree stood in Shechem, and was thought of as extremely ancient, growing there already before Abraham came to Canaan. It was on this spot that Yahweh appeared to the patriarch who thereupon built an altar dedicated to Yahweh. One cannot fail to recognize a connection between the mention of a specific obviously well known tree and the divine appearance there. The tree was regarded as sacred.⁵¹² Abraham pauses at it, expecting a divine manifestation and he is not disappointed. Why should the manifestation take place at the tree? I believe that Abraham was living in a world where certain places were designated as sacred and this oak was one of them. In the light of the above discussion on sacred trees, there is no reason to doubt that in the Oak of Moreh we have an instance of the belief that spirits chose to dwell in trees. In other words, this is an indication that there existed an earlier animistic belief that was by Abraham invoked in his dealing with Yahweh, especially in

⁵⁰⁸ Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, 1927, p. 178 cited by Oesterly, Robinson, *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*, 1937, p. 24.

⁵⁰⁹ Jack Sasson, John Baines, and Gary M. Beckman (eds.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Hendrickson Publishers: New York. 2006:40.

⁵¹⁰ Sasson, Baines, and Beckman (eds.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 2006:40.

⁵¹¹ Sasson, Baines, and Beckman (eds.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 2006:41.

⁵¹² Martin Noth, Victor I Gruhn (Trans.). *The Old Testament World*. Adam & Charles Black: London. 1966:282.

this particular incidence. It is true that Yahweh had not told Abraham to meet him at this oak. It seems clear from the statement ‘and the Canaanites were then in the land,’ that the inhabitants of the land called the tree ‘the oak of the teacher’ because oracles had been received there. So when Abraham wanted to commune with Yahweh, he believed that the right place to do so was by the same tree where the Canaanites received messages from their deities.

The same may be postulated concerning the ‘Oak of Mamre’ in Hebron⁵¹³ where Abraham built another altar devoted to Yahweh. The spot may have seemed a good choice for the altar but what made it a holy place was the presence of the oak. That the site was ancient is confirmed by the fact that Mamre is called "the Amorite" in Gen. 14:13, 24. Probably the oaks were owned by Mamre, or perhaps they were located at Mamre which belonged to the Amorites. The Amorites are in Amos 2:9, 10 spoken of as the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Canaan.⁵¹⁴ In later days the person’s name became a place name. It has been identified with Hebron.⁵¹⁵ In the case of the tamarisk tree in Beersheba which is said to have been planted by Abraham,⁵¹⁶ one may well ask, what was the point of planting the tree? But in all probability this is a later tradition devised to explain the presence of an ancient tree-sanctuary.⁵¹⁷ The verse concerned should be read together with Gen. 26:23-25 that describes a theophany in the same place, without however mentioning the tree

The Old Testament contains various references to patriarchs dealing with animism. In Gen. 35:4 occurs the curious episode of Jacob burying the ‘strange gods’ together with the earrings of his followers under the Shechem oak which, as we have seen, was known as the ‘oracle oak’.⁵¹⁸ This burying of idols takes place in the context of God's appearance to Jacob who is fleeing from Esau and Jacob's action must be understood as implying that, as he had accepted ‘Elohim’ as his God, thereby repudiating other gods, the ill-will of these gods has to be countered and there was no more efficacious way of doing this than by burying them under the tree-sanctuary of his God where they would be under the control of a more powerful spirit.⁵¹⁹ The passage is, as far as this research is concerned, an instructive one, because it clearly implies that the oak was

⁵¹³ Gen. 13:18.

⁵¹⁴ Noth, Gruhn (trans.). *The Old Testament World*. 1966:282.

⁵¹⁵ Gen. 23:19; 35:27.

⁵¹⁶ Gen. 21:33.

⁵¹⁷ Oesterly, Robinson.. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:23; John Nimmo. *Religions Called Druidical and Hebrew Demonstrated*. Wildhern Press: Middlesex. 2007:69,167.

⁵¹⁸ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:23; Nimmo. *Religions Called Druidical and Hebrew Demonstrated*. 2007:69,167.

⁵¹⁹ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:23; Nimmo. *Religions Called Druidical and Hebrew Demonstrated*. 2007:69,167.

an abode of the deity; and it thus represents a clear example of animatistic belief. There is an obvious connection between this passage and Joshua 24:26, 27, for it is under this same oak in Shechem that Joshua sets up a large stone as a witness lest people deny God. An interesting piece of evidence occurs in the isolated note in Gen. 35:8: 'Deborah, Rebecca's nurse died and she was buried below Bethel under the oak (alon), and the name of it was called "Allon-bakuth"' (i.e. the oak of weeping). Nothing is known about this Deborah, who is of course not the same Deborah as the prophetess of that same name; but she must have played an important role, for the tradition to have mentioned her.⁵²⁰ That the tree got this name must certainly imply that it was sacred but we venture to think that its name was not due to the fact that Deborah was buried beneath it. It is more likely that the statement referring to Deborah's burial there was made in order to account for the name of which the origin was forgotten. It is not improbable that this tree is where the annual '*Weeping for Tammuz*' took place. In the context of the present research no more needs to be said than that was a widely practised ceremony, very ancient and derived from the Babylonians and as *Tammuz* was always done by women, it was appropriate to celebrate it through a sacred tree.⁵²¹

The account of the divine appearance at the burning bush (Exo. 3:2-5) contains two conceptions regarding the deity: fire as indicating the divine presence and a tree as its abode. Deut. 33:16 speaks of Yahweh as "Him that dwelt in the bush". A more pointed echo of animistic belief is hardly possible.

In Gen. 14:7 it is said that another name for kadesh, 'sanctuary', was En-mishpat, 'the spring of decision'.⁵²² The name implies that it was a well where men went in order to obtain a decision about some point of dispute. It was thus an oracle-well. People must have believed that it was the abode of a spirit, in other words a holy well. This is borne out by the name of the place where the well was situated: kadesh, a 'sanctuary'. So, naturally, water and well were regarded as holy. It was from a similar source that the 'holy water' mentioned in Num. 5:17 was brought for use in a ritual aimed at finding out whether a man's wife, accused of adultery, was guilty or innocent. The fact that water is called 'holy' together with the belief in its efficacy, means that the water was thought to be impregnated by the nature and presence of a spirit. It does not necessarily follow but, realizing how often supernatural powers are associated with springs and wells,

⁵²⁰ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:23; Nimmo. *Religions Called Druidical and Hebrew Demonstrated*. 2007:69,167.

⁵²¹ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:23; Nimmo. *Religions Called Druidical and Hebrew Demonstrated*. 2007:69,167.

⁵²² Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:23; Nimmo. *Religions Called Druidical and Hebrew Demonstrated*. 2007:69,167.

there is some justification for accepting that possibly, as in the case of En-mishpat, there are other names with the prefix 'En', that were originally also associated with sacred sites. This is especially likely in the case of names in which the name of a god is attached to 'En'. Thus, we have En-shemmesh in Joshua 15:7, 16, 17, 'the spring of the sun'. Any doubt as to the significance of this name, is removed by the fact that the latter passage is in the Septuagint rendered as "the spring of Beth-Shemesh" for in placenames opening with Beth the name following it very frequently refers to a divine character. In such cases Beth means 'temple.' En-Shemesh was thus a spring that at one time was connected with sun worship.⁵²³

In Gen. 14:7 the place called Chazazon-tamar is mentioned which, according to 2 Chron. 20:2, is the same as En-gedi, 'the spring of the Kid.'⁵²⁴ Were it not for the other name by which En-gedi was known, one would naturally assume that it got its name because it was in the midst of pasturage for flocks but, as it was marked by the presence of a sacred palm-tree, the spring must have been a holy one. In the vicinity of En-gedi there was another spring called 'En-eglaim', the spring of the two calves. The mention of the two calves naturally reminds one of the two calves set up by Jeroboam I for worship (I Kings 12:29). And from 2 Kings 10:29 it looks as if two calves were set up both in Bethel and in Dan; not one calf in each. In Bethel (I Kings 12:32, and in Samaria also two calves were worshiped). It is therefore quite possible that En-eglaim was at one time the sanctuary of a cow-divinity, viz. Astarte (cp. 'Ashtoreth-karnaim', Astarte of the two horns, Gen. 14:5). The large number of images of this goddess with two horns discovered during excavations in Palestine proves how prevalent this worship was.⁵²⁵

So far we have been dealing with sacred springs or with waters that spring forth naturally, but the Hebrews also attached great importance to sacred wells: waters that appear after digging a well or Be'er. This distinction is, however, not always observed in the Old Testament. An instructive passage in this regard is Num. 21:17, 18, one of the oldest fragments of poetry in the Bible, in which the well is addressed as though it were a living being:

⁵²³ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:23; Nimmo. *Religions Called Druidical and Hebrew Demonstrated*. 2007:69,167.

⁵²⁴ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:36.

⁵²⁵ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:36.

Spring up, O well: sing ye to it:
O well, which the princess dug,
Which the nobles of the people delved
With their scepter, with their staves.

Such word, sung directly to the well, can only mean that it was believed to be the embodiment of a supernatural being who caused it to spring up. As Robertson Smith says, 'In Palestine, to this day, all springs are viewed as the seats of spirits, and the peasant women, whether Moslem or Christian, ask their permission before drawing water.'⁵²⁶

The most important site of a sacred well was Beersheba (Gen. 21:22-23).⁵²⁷ Opinions differ as to whether we are to understand this name as meaning 'the well of seven', i.e. spirits, or 'seven wells.' Samuel Curtiss⁵²⁸ argues strongly in favour of the latter interpretation, namely 'seven wells'. Driver says that the stress laid on the number seven in verse 28-30 seems to indicate that the writer perceived of 'Beersheba' as meaning 'well of seven' (Sheba being 'seven' in Hebrew) but in vs. 31 b it is expressly presented as meaning 'well of swearing'. Robertson Smith⁵²⁹ points to the fact that seven is a sacred number among the Semites, particularly in matters of ritual, and the Hebrew verb for 'to swear' means literally 'to come under the influence of seven things'. Thus, seven ewe lambs figure in the oaths exchanged between Abraham and Abimelech at Beersheba. The oaths of purgation at seven wells would doubtlessly have had a peculiar force.⁵³⁰ However, the main point in this context is that the well, or wells, of Beersheba represented a sanctuary and that, like many other sanctuaries, they had also a sacred tree which in this case was a tamarisk (Gen. 21:33). The deity that from times immemorial had been worshiped here was called 'El Olam', the 'ancient El', or god who was now identified with the God of Israel (compare Gen. 26:24).⁵³¹ From Amos 5:5, we see that the prophet slated the worship there. Another interesting illustration is that of the well, called Be'er-lahai-roi, situated between Kadesh and Bered (Gen. 16:14).⁵³² This was a very ancient well

⁵²⁶ W. Robertson Smith. *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites: First Series the Fundamental Institutions*. Adams & Charles Black: London. 2010:167.

⁵²⁷ Samuel Curtiss. *Primitive Semitic Religion Today*. Kessinger. 2005:84-85; Susan Susan Niditch. *Ancient Israelite Religion*. Oxford University Press: USA. 2001.

⁵²⁸ Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion Today*. 2005:255.

⁵²⁹ Smith. *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites: First Series the Fundamental Institutions*. 2010:185.

⁵³⁰ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:39.

⁵³¹ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:39.

⁵³² Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:39.

sacred to El-ro'i, a local god of seeing, i.e. one who sees. It was believed that the spirit, who dwelt in this well, manifested himself at certain times and therefore the well was called Be'er-er-roi. The sanctuary was adopted by the Israelites for Yahweh-worship and as a result the name was changed. As the perception was that no one could see God and live (see Gen. 32:30), the name was altered so as to read 'the well of my seeing and (yet) living. And to complete the Israelite adoption of the sanctuary the 'angel of Yahweh' was for reverential reasons substituted for Yahweh Himself.⁵³³

The narrative of Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 27:11-22) contains some points that are relevant to the present research. Jacob takes a stone from the ground and uses it as a pillow while sleeping. Owing to his contact with this stone he dreams and thus realizes that the stone is the abode of a god, a bethel. He therefore sets it up as a pillar (*mazzebah*) marking a sanctuary and he pours oil onto it acting in reverence of the indwelling deity. This sacred stone as the house of a god is what the name of the place, Bethel, is derived from (compare Gen. 35:14, 15).⁵³⁴ We have here the adaptation of an extremely ancient local tradition that is now applied to the God of Israel. But the remnants of animistic conceptions are as plain as could be.

In Gen. 31:44-48, the combination of source in vs. 44-54 makes the passage a little difficult; but for the present purpose it is sufficient to note that in the two accounts of the covenant between Jacob and Laban, one speaks of a pillar (*mazzebah*) as the witness (vs. 45), the other of a heap (*gal*), in the following verse; and one speaks of a common meal, following of course a sacrifice, as taking place by the side of the pillar (vs. 54) the other as partaken of on the heap (vs. 46) - not other as R.V. renders it (for the covenant feast cp. 26, 30).⁵³⁵ We have thus an illustration of the way in which a pillar, or a heap, is thought of as a witness, being in fact personified; and this can only be understood on the supposition that in more ancient times a spirit was believed to animate the one and the other.

Exod. 20: 24, 25 provide us with another instance of an enduring, custom based on a centuries old belief in the sacred character of certain stones. 'An altar of earth shall thou make unto me.... and if thou make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stones; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it thou hast polluted it' (cf. Deut. 27: 5&6; Joshua 8: 31). One can read into this text the ancient idea that, if a stone is hammered,

⁵³³ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:40.

⁵³⁴ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:40.

⁵³⁵ Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion Today*, 2005, p 257.

the indwelling spirit will be driven out.⁵³⁶ It is of course not to be supposed that this command in Exodus was given with any thought of the old conception but it is a good example of the persistence of customs long after their original significance has been forgotten.

All the above mentioned are evidences that the concept of animism which denotes considering inanimate objects as possessing a consciousness that humans can share spiritual experience with, are present both in the Ancient Near East and in the Old Testament.

5.3 Animatism

5.3.1 Ancient Near East

Studies of Ancient Near Eastern religions indicate the presence of the elements of animatism. The peoples of the Ancient Near Eastern believed in the ideology that the world is a sacramental place where there is no sharp dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual, and presume the existence of a supernatural force or power in certain persons, animals, and in inanimate objects like trees, streams and stones. The latter part of the definition is adopted to identify the animatistic phenomena in all the four fields of study in this research. There is evidence that these concepts of animatism were present in Ancient Near Eastern religions as described by various scholars.

Among the various categories of Babylonian priests, we read, there were ‘conjurers of the dead’⁵³⁷ or, ‘priests who bring up the spirits of the dead.’⁵³⁸ Mention is also made of ‘questioner of the dead’⁵³⁹ referring to what presumably nowadays would be called a ‘medium’, and who is believed to have the faculty of receiving messages from the spirits of the departed. In the Gilgamesh epic there is an account of the hero communicating with his dead friend Enkidu. This he does with the help of Nergal, the god of the underworld, who makes an opening in the earth and causes the spirit of Enkidu to come forth ‘like a breath of wind.’⁵⁴⁰ Here it is the god Nergal who acts the part of the medium⁵⁴¹. According to scholars, authorities on this topic are in agreement as to the prevalence of this practice among the Babylonians.⁵⁴² From the

⁵³⁶ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:48.

⁵³⁷ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:101.

⁵³⁸ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:101.

⁵³⁹ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:102.

⁵⁴⁰ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:102.

⁵⁴¹ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:102.

⁵⁴² Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:102.

massive amount of recorded cases in which mention is made of some relationship between men and departed spirits, the main concern is invariably to counteract the harmful activities of the latter. It was thought that many spirits of the departed for one reason or another left their abode in the underworld and roamed about on earth to the detriment of men. To combat such untoward activities the services of a magician were employed.⁵⁴³

Another common animatistic characteristic is the existence of numerous localised divine beings, (lumped together in the Old Testament as ‘Baal of the Canaanites’⁵⁴⁴), living in sacred trees or springs on mountain tops, or on sacred rocks as ‘owners’ (Hebrew, *baalim*) of these, ‘through a materially conceived sanctity of designated localities. The *numina* (the localised divine beings) at first did not have separate identity, and were originally not regarded as gods, but as either beneficial or dreadful spirits which in the limited surroundings of their dwelling provided either fertility of the land or wrought sinister and demonic consequences; they were provided with offerings as gifts at their sacred places – their abodes. The offerings originally were foods simply deposited, later were transposed into immaterial state by being burned’.⁵⁴⁵

The Ancient Near Eastern animatistic world-view can also be seen in relation to the belief that, whatever deities think or do, is reflected in the manner humans think or act. The deities are also presented physically in human form. ‘It is only demons and spirits of lower rank that appeared in the frequently seen total or partial animal form.’⁵⁴⁶ These latter were often portrayed as guardian forces in the form of fantastic composite creatures at the entrance of temples and palaces. ‘Theriomorphic beings of similar type were figured to be the serving attendants of great deities. In some areas like North Syria, Asia Minor-Mesopotamia, frequently an anthropomorphic deity was shown standing on the specified animal or on a pair of these animals.’⁵⁴⁷ According to Noth’s claim, the golden calf recorded in the Old Testament was not meant to be an image of a deity, but was merely a pedestal of an unseen deity who was not shown but

⁵⁴³ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:102.

⁵⁴⁴ Noth, Gruhn (trans.). *The Old Testament World*. 1964:281.

⁵⁴⁵ A striking allusion to this is by Noth revealed as recorded in the Old Testament – Judg. 6: 17 – 21; 13: 15 – 20. The evidence in Hebrew texts of these primal elements is discussed later in this research.

⁵⁴⁶ Martin Noth, Victor I. Gruhn (trans.). *The Old Testament World*, p. 284.

⁵⁴⁷ Jean Bottero, Teresa Lavender Fagan (trans.). *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. 2004:5.

envisioned standing on it.⁵⁴⁸ Egypt alone had a large number of deities in animal form from the primeval period.⁵⁴⁹

On the basis of this information it would appear that animatism in the Ancient Near East represented ways in which ancient peoples responded to the sense of the supernatural powers who, they believed, controlled the universe. As scholars have pointed out above, some divinities such as the sky and stars, seemed remote from human concerns, making people feel small and insignificant, but others, such as the powers to grow food or produce children, seemed close, essential, and familiar to human beings.

5.3.2 Old Testament

Judges 4:4, 5 is a very instructive passage relating to animatism in ancient Israel. Deborah is here introduced as a prophetess, in other words, a female oracle.⁵⁵⁰ ‘Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she sat (not ‘dwelt’ as it has often been translated; this can be compared with Judges 6:11; I Sam 14:2; and 2 Sam 22:6) under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the children of Israel came up to her for judgement.’⁵⁵¹ This is an example of an oracle terebinth like the trees in Schechem. Probably the rustling of the leaves of the sacred tree was believed to indicate the nature of the judgement that was asked for.⁵⁵² But the judgement could only be understood and interpreted by one expert in such matters. Having received the message, the prophetess was in a position to give the oracle.

Furthermore in Judges 9: 37 reference is made to ‘the terebinth of Me’onenim,’ which means the soothsayers’ or diviners’ terebinth.⁵⁵³ Another instance in Judges is in the 22nd chapter, verse 33. Here it is said that ‘all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and set themselves in array at Baal-tamar.’⁵⁵⁴ This is presumably a place-name. It is not mentioned elsewhere and its locality is unknown⁵⁵⁵. But in any case, it was called after a *baal* who was believed to take up his abode in a palm tree. That fact is sufficient for the

⁵⁴⁸ Noth, Gruhn (trans.). *The Old Testament World*. 1964:284.

⁵⁴⁹ Noth, Gruhn (trans.). *The Old Testament World*. 1964:285.

⁵⁵⁰ Jeffers. *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria*. Brill: Leiden, 1996:92,182.

⁵⁵¹ Jeffers. *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria*. 1996:92,182.

⁵⁵² Jeffers. *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria*. 1996:92,182.

⁵⁵³ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:30.

⁵⁵⁴ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:30.

⁵⁵⁵ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:30.

present purposes because these places were thought to have sacramental characteristics. In other words, they were physical spots with spiritual qualities.

The terebinth of Tabor, close to Bethel, mentioned in I Sam. 10: 3 must be identified with the terebinth of Deborah of Gen. 35: 8. The latter stood ‘below Bethel,’ and the two names Tabor and Deborah are much alike in Hebrew.⁵⁵⁶

These instances are evidence that animatism was practised in ancient Israel. The two concepts of medium consulting, and spirits living in trees in the ANE are also identifiable in the above passages in the OT. In animism there is no sharp dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual. The physical follows as it were the patterns of the spiritual. Places endowed with sacramental qualities were seen as the outward sign of the spiritual power or essence behind the particular trees and on that basis Deborah and other diviners at the time would identify the place as fit for divination. They could not have made the right choice but for the fact that they were Semites and, thus, part of the peoples of the Near East. It was inevitable that these primal perceptions would surface, in spite of the Israelites’ peculiar position as Yahweh believers. There are clearly overlaps between the primal religious practices in the Ancient Near East and the religion of ancient Israel.

5.4 Divination

5.4.1. Ancient Near East

Divination has earlier in this thesis been described as an attempt to foretell the future or discover the unknown through oracles or supernatural powers, usually via a diviner. The diviner is where people go to when there are problems in their lives. They go to find answers to questions or solution to difficulties. This section examines ways in which divination was practiced in the Ancient Near East, for example through astrology (studying the movement of celestial bodies, augury), bird flight, bibliomancy (the use of texts), the reading of cards, hand-palms, and so on.⁵⁵⁷

A general characteristic of the Assyro-Babylonian religions is the identification of gods and goddesses with heavenly bodies, with planets and stars, sun and moon.⁵⁵⁸ The perception of an influence, exerted by the

⁵⁵⁶ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:30.

⁵⁵⁷ Jack Sasson, John Baines, and Gary M. Beckman (eds.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Hendrickson Publishers: New York. 2006:52.

⁵⁵⁸ Sasson, Baines, and Beckman (eds.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 2006:52.

movements of the heavenly bodies on occurrences on earth, naturally suggested that life, including vegetation, was to an extent dependent on, especially, sun and moon, and that, thus, the heavenly bodies might provide guidance to humankind. Priests and priestesses theorized about a possible close correspondence between occurrences on earth and phenomena in the night sky.⁵⁵⁹ The sky by night is in a constant state of change as even a superficial observer could see. It was concluded that the celestial changes were connected not only to nature's varying appearance and productivity but also to the ever-changing fates of mankind as a whole and of individuals. To read the signs of the heavens was therefore to understand what the position of, and the relationship between, the heavenly bodies meant for the future of earth and mankind.⁵⁶⁰

Like the heavenly bodies, also the patterns that are present in many objects in man's daily surroundings were perceived as 'readable' and as reflecting divine dispositions. Of an animal that was sacrificed for example, liver and entrails were examined in a practice called hepatoscopy.⁵⁶¹ Hydromancy consisted in deciphering omens based on the movement of oil drops on water. There is a Mesopotamian handbook for reading these omens, dating from the nineteenth to the seventeenth centuries BC, around the time of Joseph. And, as we have seen above, throughout the Ancient Near East trees were associated with religious beliefs. The belief that they represented life implied the special powers of wood which led to rhabdomancy and the use of diving rods.⁵⁶²

In Mesopotamia and Egypt skilled practitioners of divination were highly regarded, although certain forms of divination were approved and others outlawed. The Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, for example, punished sorcery with the death penalty.⁵⁶³

The Semites knew divination by ordeal⁵⁶⁴ whereby persons suspected of a crime underwent some process that could injure them. Their innocence was divinely revealed if they were unharmed.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁵⁹ Sasson, Baines, and Beckman (eds.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 2006:52.

⁵⁶⁰ Sasson, Baines, and Beckman (eds.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 2006:52.

⁵⁶¹ Fredrick H. Cryer. *Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment: A Socio-Historical Investigation*. Sheffield Academic: Sheffield. 1994:172.

⁵⁶² Cryer. *Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment: A Socio-Historical Investigation*. 1994:172.

⁵⁶³ Harry A. Hoffner. "Ancient Views of Prophecy and Fulfillment: Mesopotamia and Asia Minor." In *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*. Vol. 29. Jewish Theological Seminary. 2004:84-92.

⁵⁶⁴ Jeffers. *Magical and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria*. 1996:199.

⁵⁶⁵ The Pentateuch called for this practice when a woman was suspected of adultery. Numbers 5: 11-28.

5.4.2 Old Testament

The most obvious illustration of divination beliefs is that of the witch of Endor.⁵⁶⁶ In the Old Testament, one of the three expressions used in reference to the belief in humans functioning as harbingers of spirits is '*Ob*, translated as 'familiar spirit.'⁵⁶⁷ What is implied by, or what is the derivation of, this expression cannot be ascertained. According to some scholars⁵⁶⁸ the root-idea involves something hollow, on account of the hollow tone of voice that is expected from a spirit.

In I Samuel 28: 7 it is said: 'Seek me a woman that doth possess (or 'is mistress of') an *Ob*.' The distinction between the woman and the *Ob* is clear, also in verse 8: 'Divine unto me, I pray thee, by the *Ob*, and bring me up whomever I shall name unto thee.' In other words, the woman is the medium and the *Ob* is, what spiritualists would call, the 'control'. The apparition would presumably be called 'materialization.' The distinction is clear in Deut. 18: 11 as well where the phrase occurs: 'one that consulteth (literally 'asks') an *Ob*'. Similarly in Lev. 20: 27: 'A man and a woman in who is an *Ob*.'⁵⁶⁹

Oesterley and Robinson⁵⁷⁰ make some other points that I wish to present here as they indicate that this practice was, at certain times, not perceived as contrary to the belief in Yahweh. Firstly, there is clearly a firm belief in the literal reality of what is recorded. The note in verse 3 about Saul having put away those who had familiar spirits is in all probability a later insertion, both because it is incongruous in relation to Saul who consulted one himself; secondly, because the belief in familiar spirits was still flourishing in the days of the prophets; but chiefly because the words of verse 7 show that their continued presence was taken for granted by Saul. When he asks where to find a woman who has a familiar spirit, his servants readily answer. There is no need to go and search for one. In addition, the consulting of the dead is regarded as a last resort. Other means of disclosing what the future held, involved dreams, *Urim*, and prophets. As all these had failed, the prophets came to be relied on.

⁵⁶⁶ I Sam. 28: 3 – 25.

⁵⁶⁷ E. Bloch-Smith. *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*. JSOT. Sheffield Academic Press: Sheffield. 1992:126.

⁵⁶⁸ J. Bright. *A History of Israel*. SCM Press: London. 1981; J.L. Cox. 'The Classification "Primal Religion," as a Non-Empirical, Christian Theological Construct' in *Studies in World Christianity: The Edinburgh Review of Theology and Religion*. 1996:55=76. Cited by James L. Cox. *From Primitive to Indigenous: The Academic Study of Indigenous Religions*. Ashgate: Hampshire. 2007:175.

⁵⁶⁹ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:91.

⁵⁷⁰ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:91.

The many passages in Isaiah⁵⁷¹ where the consulting of familiar spirits is mentioned - although with contempt - bear witness to the prevalence of this type of divination at the time. It has to be added that Isaiah's contempt is expressed implicitly but not directly, and that it was motivated by the possibility that the consulting of spirits could be seen as a mark of disloyalty to Yahweh. It is probable that the prophet regarded the phenomenon as foolishness rather than as a moral evil. In a slightly later period it was said of King Manasseh that he practised augury, used enchantments and dealt with those who had familiar spirits as well as with wizards.⁵⁷² Oesterly and Robinson⁵⁷³ see in this not a resuscitation of practices that had fallen into desuetude (in spite of earlier reforms), but rather as an official recognition of what had been practised by people all along.

Furthermore, the way in which the various codes of laws preserved in the Old Testament deal with the subject is instructive. 'The Book of the Covenant,'⁵⁷⁴ believed by scholars like R Albert to be the earliest of the codes, contains no prohibition against it. The reason proffered is that, at that time, this type of divination was regarded as a natural and legitimate practice, by the Israelites as well as among the other Near Eastern peoples. The prophets, however, gradually came to realize that spirit consultation was incompatible with the worship of Yahweh. Hence, we find that in the Deuteronomic legislation it was prohibited. Many scholars⁵⁷⁵ no longer hold with this kind of presentation of the Pentateuch but for the specific purpose of this research I will consider it. The Deuteronomic prohibition probably had not much effect for in the next code, the 'Law of Holiness,'⁵⁷⁶ condemnation is added to prohibition. The subject is not mentioned in the Priestly code, but the Chronicler accounts for the death of Saul by saying that it resulted from 'his trespass which he committed against Yahweh, because of the word of Yahweh, which he kept not; and also for that he asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire thereby, and enquired not of Yahweh; therefore he slew him...'⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷¹ Isaiah 8: 19; 29: 4; 19: 3.

⁵⁷² 2Kings 21: 6.

⁵⁷³ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:91.

⁵⁷⁴ Exodus 20: 22-23: 33.

⁵⁷⁵ R. M. Albert. 'Family Religion in Ancient Israel and its Surroundings.' In J Bodet and S.M. Olyan (eds.). *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*. Blackwell: Oxford. 2008:89-112; Assaf Yasur-Landau, Jennie R. Ebeling, Laura B. Mazow (eds.). *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond*. Brill: Leiden. 2011:392.

⁵⁷⁶ Leviticus 17-26.

⁵⁷⁷ I Chronicles 10: 13, 14.

But more important is the fact that attempts to look into the future or to discover the unknown through oracles or supernatural powers is the second feature of primal religion as discussed in chapter three of this thesis. The early Israelites sensed that they needed to empower themselves with knowledge. This strong awareness led them to access the unknown terrain with the help of diviners. They would go to diviners for answers to questions and for solutions to problems. The diviner, in his/her practice, produced substances to help people finding remedies for what worried them. The woman of Endor employed for the same purpose an *Ob*.

The presence of these elements of primal religion in the above mentioned examples from the Old Testament confirms the notion that the early Israelites practised a religion that resembled that of Ancient Near Eastern peoples in general.

5.5 Magic

5.5.1 Ancient Near East

Trying to distinguish magic from religion readily becomes a challenge. Among scholars of magic in the ancient world there is a recurrent debate about the definition of the word. ‘Its validity as a category and its applicability to the beliefs and practices of different cultures, especially when it is defined as a negative counterpart to religion,’⁵⁷⁸ has continued to generate discussion. Ian Moyer writes that scholars have struggled to free themselves of inherited preconceptions when describing and analyzing various phenomena in antiquity to which the conventional etic⁵⁷⁹ (as opposed to emic) term ‘magic’ is applied, recognizing that distinctions, derived from evolutionary or oppositional schemes of early folklores and anthropology, are not necessarily indigenous to a given culture.⁵⁸⁰ Recently, the question of emic and etic definitions of magic has been at the centre of a dispute in print between Jonathan Z. Smith and Robert Kriech Ritner, involving the interpretation of a treatise on astrological botany attributed to the Greek physician Thessalos of Tralles.⁵⁸¹ The prologue to the treatise includes the marvellous tale of Thessalos’ search for magical knowledge which ends in Thebes with an Egyptian priest and a divine revelation. The disputed issue was whether the

⁵⁷⁸ Ian Moyer. ‘Thessalos of Tralles and Cultural Exchange.’ In Scott B. Nockel, Joel Thomas Walker, Brannon M. Wheeler. *Prayers, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. Pennsylvania State Press: USA. 2003:39-41.

⁵⁷⁹ Nockel, Walker, Wheeler, *Prayers, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. 2003:39-41.

⁵⁸⁰ Nockel, Walker, Wheeler. *Prayers, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. 2003:39-41.

⁵⁸¹ Jonathan Z. Smith. *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity*. Leiden 1978:23; Robert Kriech Ritner. *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice, Studies in Ancient Oriental Egyptian Magical Practice*. Chicago. 1993:54.

acquisition of the revelation represents the novel and creative reinterpretations of ‘archaic practice typical of late antique magic’ or the ‘continuity of traditional Egyptian religion.’⁵⁸² In scholarly literature of an older date on Ancient Near Eastern religious beliefs, magic was not prominently discussed. This is because religious elements were not interpreted as magic. Ian Moyer states concerning the Thessalos document that ‘it is evident in the narrative itself that the Thessalos prologue is a narrative of cross-cultural exchange and commoditization, in which religious rites and discourse belonging to traditional Egyptian civilization are transformed and given a magical value.’ Harold Turner exhibits a similar approach in his analysis of the six features that he has identified as the very basic characteristics of primal religions.

The Thessalos text was first published in 1878 and has since been recognized by historians and scholars of religion, for example Smith, as a significant document for understanding the religion of late antiquity.⁵⁸³ Scholars like A.D. Nock and A.J. Festugiere saw the text as ‘evidence of incipient spiritualization in a decadent paganism.’⁵⁸⁴ I choose to follow the argument of Smith here that has used the Thessalos narrative to explore ‘a shift from locative to utopian modes of religious practice typical of the Hellenistic world.’⁵⁸⁵ His view on this issue is analogous to mine, namely that some religious practices in the Near East belonged to the magical arts and, therefore, were supposed to be interpreted as such: the text itself clearly describes the object of Thessalos’ quest as ‘some sort of magical operation,’⁵⁸⁶ in Greek: *tites magikes energeias*. Secondly, as the narrative goes Thessalos, a Greek, procured a revelation from a god through a Theban, an Egyptian priest and Egyptian ritual - not in a temple but elsewhere and disclosed by other priests. This suggests a cross-cultural exchange (as suggested by Moyer). Also evident from the text is that Egyptian religious ‘magic’ was clearly desirable.⁵⁸⁷ As he describes his adventure, Thessalos reveals an awareness of similar narratives current in the literature of the period that record the tribulations of a hero passing from one fount of wisdom to another and eventually arriving at his goal.⁵⁸⁸ Thessalos’ tale takes the form of a letter addressed to the Roman emperor (either Claudius or Nero), in which he claims to have outstripped all

⁵⁸² Nockgel, Walker, Wheeler. *Prayers, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. 2003:39-41.

⁵⁸³ Jonathan Z. Smith. *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity*. p172.

⁵⁸⁴ Nockgel, Walker, Wheeler. *Prayers, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. 2003:39-41.

⁵⁸⁵ Nockgel, Walker, Wheeler. *Prayers, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. 2003:39-41.

⁵⁸⁶ Nockgel, Walker, Wheeler. *Prayers, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. 2003:39-41.

⁵⁸⁷ Nockgel, Walker, Wheeler. *Prayers, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. 2003:39-41.

⁵⁸⁸ As cited in Nockgel, Walker, Wheeler. *Prayers, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. 2003. Examples of this sort of tale are found in Phitarch, *Moralia* 410 A-B, 421 A-B; Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Hapocration *Cyranides* Prologue, lines 30-68, in Dimitris Kaimakis (ed.). *Die Kyraniden*. Anton Hain 1976:15-17.

others in search for the miraculous.⁵⁸⁹ According to the prologue, he went away from his home in Asia Minor with a large amount of money and devoted himself to the study of philosophy and medicine in Alexandria. After assiduously following the lectures of theoretical physicians (Gk. *dialektikon iatron*), he made the rounds of the libraries in preparation for his departure. There he came upon a book attributed to the legendary Egyptian king and astrologer Nechepso. It contained a collection of miraculous remedies, based on the sympathies of plants and stones with signs of the zodiac and promised amazing results to the bearer of its arcane knowledge.

Unfortunately, Thessalos' attempt to put the remedies of Nechepso into practice ended in complete failure – a failure made worse by a hasty proclamation of his discovery to friends and relations in Asia Minor. Rather than face the ridicule of his Alexandrian colleagues or the disappointed expectations of the folks back home, he consigned himself to wandering in Egypt until he could accomplish something in accordance with his rash promises. Eventually, he arrived in the Upper Egyptian city of Thebes (Diopolis), where – in order to discover magical powers – he tried to ingratiate himself with the priests, most of who were scandalized at his propositions, except one who did not reject him outrightly.⁵⁹⁰

The conclusion of the narrative as presented by Moyer produces reasons why it is clear that magic was an element of the Ancient Near Eastern religions. Although the narrative of Thessalos belongs to late antiquity, it refers to the quest for the practice of magic in an earlier period in the history of the Near East. The narrative continues thus:

‘Thessalos drew aside this one priest who did not reject him outrightly. In a secluded grove away from the city, the desperate Greek implored the Theban priest to assist him with his predicament. The priest agreed and, at his bidding, Thessalos maintained purity for three days, and then met the priest at dawn on the third day – having first concealed on his person a papyrus and some ink. The priest led Thessalos to a pure house he had prepared and asked the Greek, with whom would he like to converse - some spirit of the dead or a god? Thessalos then revealed his intentions: to speak one-on-one (Gk. *Mono moi pro mono omilein*) with god Asclepius (i.e. Egyptian Imhotep). The priest was

⁵⁸⁹ Nockel, Walker, Wheeler. Prayers, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World. 2003:39-41.

⁵⁹⁰ Nockel, Walker, Wheeler. Prayers, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World. 2003:39-41.

visibly displeased. Nevertheless, he had promised, and so he carried out the rite. He seated Thessalos before the place where the god was to appear, summoned Asclepius/Imhotep with his ineffable names and left the physician to question the god about the remedies of Nechepso. As it turns out, the wisdom of king Nechepso was limited, and required supplementary knowledge of the correct times at which to harvest the plants – knowledge acquired directly from Asclepius himself and (ostensibly) matter forming the treatise that follows.⁵⁹¹

This narrative contains five points that suggest there is a dichotomy between religion and magic and that magic was a characteristic feature of the primal religions of Near Eastern peoples. The Thessalos narrative does not only reflect characteristics of magic but shows how religion was practised and how the relationship between human and the transcendent could be acted out. Concluding, there are two issues to be pointed out, firstly that religion was a social phenomenon that involved the community in its expression of humankind's relation with the transcendent. The approaching of Asclepius by the Greek and the priest is shrouded in secrecy, which means that no official liturgy was employed. It is no wonder that other priests eschewed the Greek's advances. Secondly, the priest calls the god by names not familiar which adds to the sense of mystery. Religion's social character would not allow the use of such names. In the third place, the knowledge that Thessalos is looking for is qualified as arcane. It involves the understanding of mysterious wisdom before spiritual action can be effected. Finally, the narrative refers to another man, a hero who is seeking esoteric knowledge, described in a narrative of the same kind that apparently was current in the literature of the time. This suggests that magic was indeed practised in the Ancient Near East. Probably scholars in the past who have interpreted texts and/or artefacts produced in the Ancient Near East have not recognized the aspect of magic. This would explain why there is scant information available on this particular element of Ancient Near Eastern religions.

As shown above, the practitioners of medicine and divination employed certain rites that are extraneous to religion which is social in character. There are many examples of such practices, proving that Ancient Near Eastern peoples used magic to access the spiritual. Magic would thus be one of the elements that define the peoples of the Ancient Near East as sensing the existence of a spiritual world of forces more powerful than

⁵⁹¹ Nögel, Walker, Wheeler. *Prayers, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. 2003:39-41.

humankind and that, in attempts to enter into a relationship with these and share in their powers, the services of practitioners of occultism were used.

5.5.2 Old Testament

In order to consider beliefs in magic among the early Israelites, we first need to examine the terminology used in reference to the magic arts and, secondly, to scrutinize selected passages in which magical practices are described. According to Oesterly and Robinson,⁵⁹² it is quite certain that some forms of magic were by the Hebrew religious officials not also condemned as in the case of divination above. Even in the case of those particular forms of magic that were forbidden, religious leaders did not regard them as mere imposture and that was indeed the very reason why these specific forms of magic were forbidden: the supernatural agencies that were supposedly controlled by magical rites were really believed to exist.

The words mostly used in connection with magic come from the root *Hashaph*. The words occurring in the Old Testament are *Sesheph*, always used in the plural, 'magic arts', *Eashaph* and *Mekasheph*, or magician, of which the feminine is *Mekashephah*, and *Kisheph* which means 'to practise magic.'⁵⁹³ Wherever this term for magic is used, the practice is either directly or implicitly condemned although the perception of evil is not made explicit. The safe assumption is therefore that, analogous to Babylonian magic, the condemnation of magic occurred when there was a possible connection with demons. If the supernatural powers supposed to be controlled were actually believed to be demons, it is easy to understand the condemnation of the practice on the part of the Israelites. Moreover, the type of magic involving demons appears to have been practised commonly with the aim of inflicting harm on people.

Other terms used to indicate practices of magic however, are found not to contain even a hint of condemnation. The term *lachash* means to whisper an incantation, or to mutter a spell. The words occur in passages that fall outside the scope of this research. For instance, Nicholsky⁵⁹⁴ in his *Spuren magischer Formeln in den Psalmen* identifies certain psalms as containing magical formulas or incantations against some evil-disposed persons with the term *lachash* occurring. Examples are Psalms 58: 3-9 (4-10 in Hebrew); Psalm 41:7 (8 in Hebrew).

⁵⁹² Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:85.

⁵⁹³ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:85.

⁵⁹⁴ Nicholsky. *Spuren magischer Formeln in den Psalmen*. 1927:29-42. Cited by Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:72.

Another term is the one translated as ‘charmer’ in the Revised Version. The word occurs in Psalm 43:6 in a meaning parallel to that of *lachash* and is literally translated as ‘to be one who ties knots’ (*chober chabarim*). This refers to the widespread use of knots for magical purposes. This practice is, together with other magical arts, forbidden in Deuteronomy 18: 11 and in Isaiah 57: 9& 12. The word is rendered as ‘enchantments’ in the Revised Version of the Bible. Jastrow claims that the act is referred to in various Babylonian magical texts.⁵⁹⁵

But there is a term, *nichesh* that is used in Gen. 44:5, 15, referring to Joseph’s silver cup whereby he ‘divined.’ There is no condemnation here of this practice or in Gen 30: 27 where the word is used in connection with ‘observing the omens.’⁵⁹⁶ There is no indication of how the omens were observed, but in passages like Lev. 19: 26 and Deut. 18: 10 where the word *nichesh* is mentioned, it is condemned. An occurrence of magic is found in Exod. 4: 2ff, where Moses’ rod is turned into a serpent and back again into a rod. Another instance is when Moses, by holding up his rod, ensures the Israelites of victory in battle (Exod. 17: 8ff.). Moses with his magic rod is also able to draw water from a rock (Num. 20: 8ff.). All these are clear examples of belief in the powers of the magic rod. There is another case of waters being healed in Exod. 15: 25. When Moses throws a piece of wood into the water it immediately becomes drinkable.

Imitative magic occurred during the divided kingdom and has been examined by some writers.⁵⁹⁷ In 2 Kings 6: 5-7, it is related how a man drops his iron axe head into the water. Elisha cuts a piece from a stick and throws it where the axe-head fell. Next, just like the piece of wood floats, so the iron axe head is floating. Another striking example of imitative magic also concerns Elisha in 2 Kings 13: 14-19. He tells Joash, the king of Israel, to take bow and arrows and he lays his hands upon the king’s hands (in a magical act). He bids the king to open the window eastward, i.e. in the direction of Syria looking from Samaria where this event takes place. He tells the king to shoot off an arrow and he utters an incantation: ‘A victory-arrow *from* Yahweh, a victory-arrow *against* Aram (Syria).’ That is the first part of the ritual. The imitative

⁵⁹⁵ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:86.

⁵⁹⁶ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:74.

⁵⁹⁷ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:74; Theodore J. Lewis. ‘Job 19 in the Light of the Ketef Hinnom Inscriptions and Amulets.’ In Marilyn J. Lundberg, Steven Fine, Wayne T. Pitard (eds.). *Puzzling Out the Past: Studies in Northwest Semitic Languages and Literature in Honour of Bruce Zuckerman*. Brill: Leiden. 2012:113; Daniel Richard Miller. *Incantations in Ancient West Semitic Corpora and in the Hebrew Bible: Continuity and Discontinuity*. University of Michigan: Michigan. 2006:31, 69, 203; Sarah Iles Johnston (ed.). *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. President and Fellows of Harvard College: USA. 2004:460.

magic follows: Elisha asks the king to smite the ground using the arrow. He does this three times but Elisha upbraids him for this. If he had done it five or six times he would have wholly defeated the Syrians. Since he had done it only three times, he will gain no more than three victories over them.

Another instance of imitative magic in this period occurs in 2 Kings 4: 38-41. It is again performed by Elisha. A pottage is being brewed by the prophet's followers and one of them goes out to gather herbs. Among the herbs there happens to be a poisonous one and this becomes apparent when the company begins to partake of the pottage. But Elisha calls for some meal, casts it into the brew and the immediate effect is that the poison becomes innocuous. The idea is parallel to that of the wood and the iron: as the wood floats the iron imitates it. So too, as the meal is harmless, so does the poisonous herb turn harmless, although one expects that, as in the former case, a magical formula of some sort was uttered and was originally part of the text. Elisha's magical powers were wide. In 2 Kings 4: 18=20, he is credited with the power of making the blind see by striking them. The text makes clear that it is actually Yahweh's power, used at Elisha's bidding. Elisha is also described as being able to raise the dead by means of a somewhat elaborate ritual (2 Kings 4: 32-35). The ritual suggests that, here too, he uses imitative magic. The living Elisha lies down on top of the dead boy and puts mouth on mouth, eyes on eyes, and hands on hands. Just as Elisha is alive, so the boy will return to life.⁵⁹⁸

The above described cases of magic can be associated with the second, third, and fourth characteristics of primal religions as described in chapter three. The ancient Israelites understood that man's helplessness exposes him to problems and it is this reality that inspired the search for assistance of a non-human, or supernatural, nature. Although the power of the transcendental that is employed here was considered as belonging to the God of Israel, it was applied to the solving of humankind's problems and the employment of specific words helped to achieve success. Magic is the use of supernatural powers aiming to give a person control over forces of nature so that he/she can make the impossible into reality. Magic is in many cultures used for purposes of healing, keeping away evil, seeking truth, and also for revenge. In order to make the magic effective, certain steps are taken. The practitioners of magic in some primal religions have power that enables them to control the natural things of life by using spoken words as a tool. The words are referred to as incantations, or as execration when used negatively. Incantation thus is a set of words spoken

⁵⁹⁸ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:76.

or chanted as a supposedly magic spell. Both were practised by the peoples of the Ancient Near East and ancient Israelites as had been identified above.

5.6 Medicine

5.6.1 Ancient Near East

I now turn to listing all the elements supporting the perception that followers of primal religions (in this case the Ancient Near Eastern peoples) are convinced that, being aware of their needs, inadequacy and insecurity, they can enter into a relationship with the spirit world, share in its powers and blessings, and receive protection from evil forces. Medicine in this context differs greatly from what the term conveys today. The practice of medicine that is the focus of the present section includes not only the skills of ascertaining the causes of ailments, preventing, alleviating and curing disease, and the restoration and preservation of health, but also the skill of magic in doing so. The medicine man does not see his medical preparation in isolation from magic. This will be discussed below.

Among the Mesopotamians, healing specialists were *asu* (doctor/physician) or *asipu* (exorcist, conjurer, or magician).⁵⁹⁹ The *asipu* is associated with a generally accepted magical healing tradition that made use exclusively of rituals and prayers.⁶⁰⁰ He/she would also attribute disease to supernatural causes. His/her method of healing is difficult to distinguish from the healing tradition as represented by the *asu* who used ‘rational’ treatments and who attributed disease to ‘natural’ causes.⁶⁰¹ The confusion, I believe, is caused by the fact that the social belief system of the Ancient Near East is generally attached to religious idiosyncrasy. However, in relation to the focal point of this thesis, I stipulate the fact that, as part of one of the popular methods of medical practice in Mesopotamia, diagnosis always involved diagnostic omens which have been preserved in some Ancient Near Eastern texts. Prescriptions typically consisted of figurines, amulets, and rituals.

Normally the *asipu* used both oral and manual rites. In the case of ritual the *asipu* recited one or more oral addresses. These might be incantations or prayers and served to legitimate the speaker, call upon the divine

⁵⁹⁹ Sarah Iles Johnston (ed.). *Illnesses and other Crises in Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. Harvard University Press. 2004: 456-459.

⁶⁰⁰ JoAnn Scurlock. ‘Physician, Exorcist, Conjurer, Magician: A Tale of Two Healing Professionals.’ In *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual Historical and Interpretative Perspectives*. Tzvi Abusch & Karel Van Der Toorn (eds.). STYX Publications: Grinigen. 1999:69-82.

⁶⁰¹ Johnston (ed.). *Illnesses and other Crises in Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. 2004:456-459.

powers, identify the purpose of the ritual and specify the rites that were performed.⁶⁰² (This is further discussed below as it concerns one of the elements characteristic of primal religion in the ANE). The addresses could be directed to benevolent natural forces and ceremonial objects, or to the perceived evil itself. The benevolent powers could be called upon to help client or patient and they would expel, chase away, or even destroy the evil. Alongside the addresses the *asipu* performed rituals that could range from relatively simple to elaborate performances. They would last a few hours, a whole day, or more.

In Egypt individuals and communities who were beset by crises often sought to face them with the help of gods. The most common type of such crises by far involved health, including not only issues of personal well-being but of fertility as well. In all Egyptian societies illness and plagues were attributed to divine powers. An example is the case of a certain Aninakhte, son of Lady Oubekhet. He was apparently a child or a young man living in the community of Dier el-Medina at the time of Rameses III (ca. 1193 – 1162 BCE). During excavations at Dier el-Medina in 1951 a linen necklace covered with magical signs was found in the debris of a village house. It was tied in seven knots. Attached to it, still in its original place, was a small papyrus folded eight times. The short magical text was designed to heal Aninakhte from a cold and a high fever.⁶⁰³ The disease was supposed to have been caused by a series of ill-disposed demons from the netherworld. With the help of Osiris, god of the dead, the demons were to be removed. According to the text, the amulet had to be tied around the neck of the ill person. Seven was a significant number in this type of medicine: as the knot had been tied seven times, so should the illness be tied.⁶⁰⁴

5.6.2 Old Testament

As earlier explained medicine is used to treat or prevent illness and among the adherents of primal religions and it is associated with both medicament and prophylactic. Other characteristic features of medicine in a religious context are that the medical man or woman is a diviner and a priest, as well as a manufacturer of substances that can be regarded as amulets. He/she has the means of ascertaining the causes of ailments, misfortune and death. Inevitably, magic finds a place in the practice of medicine. Idowu⁶⁰⁵ in effect observes that the two can become so interlinked as to make it difficult to know where the one ends and the other begins. We have earlier in this thesis established that medicine is at one with religion and involves the

⁶⁰² Johnston (ed.). *Illnesses and other Crises in Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. 2004:456-459.

⁶⁰³ Johnston (ed.). *Illnesses and other Crises in Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. 2004:456-459.

⁶⁰⁴ Johnston (ed.). *Illnesses and other Crises in Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. 2004:456-459.

⁶⁰⁵ Idowu. *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. 1973:199.

performance of rituals, incantations and the observance of certain taboos. It includes a belief that a medicinal substance possesses a mysterious power that may be used to harm an enemy. It also involves the employment of herbs and other plants, leaves, roots, barks, animals, birds, skins, bones, rings, brooms, pieces of thread, needles and minerals, to effect healing. Thus, the mysterious power of a medicine may be used for good or for evil ends.

A closer look at Old Testament texts and at archaeology⁶⁰⁶ will tell us that this concept of medicine as functioning in the sphere of religion was by Israel shared with her Ancient Near Eastern neighbours. For example, Rachel and Leah obviously believed that mandrake could cure infertility and enhance sexual desire. Among both the Greeks and Orientals the plant was reputed to be of a prolific virtue. It helped conception and it was used for the manufacture of aphrodisiacs as well as potions that encouraged to the making of matrimonial connections.⁶⁰⁷ It was probably on this account that Rachel desired the plants. Apparently, in the production of such potions the involvement of religious elements cannot be understated. A first century AD clay flask discovered in a cave near Qumran contained a thick vegetable oil probably to balsam, based on the proximity of the cave to ancient balsam orchards.⁶⁰⁸ Jeremiah mockingly suggests in his prophecies against Egypt that, when the Lord takes His vengeance, Egypt will look for remedies in vain.⁶⁰⁹ The making of these substances was probably associated with certain ritualistic gestures and words.

In addition to potions and balms healing could be affected by cults. Health, or *shalom* in Hebrew, encompasses a physical state associated with the fulfilment of covenant stipulations. Illness thus results from the violation of those stipulations. Therapy therefore requires reviewing one's actions in the light of the covenant.⁶¹⁰ Job's plight was interpreted along these lines by his friends. The concept is in tandem with the fourth feature of primal religion as delineated by Harold Turner (see chapter three), which he describes as 'the belief that man can enter into relationship with the benevolent spirit-world and share in its powers and blessings and receive protection from evil forces by these transcendent helpers.'⁶¹¹ One of the features of primal religion through which this relationship can be achieved is medicine that helps to maintain one's

⁶⁰⁶ I mention archaeology here to corroborate that these concepts traced in the Bible have their nexus in the ANE and its peoples who were the Israelites' near neighbours with whom they shared concepts in the ancient past.

⁶⁰⁷ Hector Avalos. 'Ancient Medicine: In Case of Emergency, Contact Your Local Prophet.' *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 39. 05Sept/Oct 2013.

⁶⁰⁸ Joseph Patrich. 'Hideouts in the Judean Wilderness.' *Biblical Archaeology Review* 15: 05, Sept/Oct 1989.

⁶⁰⁹ Jer 46: 11; also Ezekiel 30:21.

⁶¹⁰ Hector Avalos. 'Ancient Medicine: In Case of Emergency, Contact Your Local Prophet.' *BAR*.

⁶¹¹ Turner, in Hayes (ed.). *Australian Essays in World Religions*, Australian Association for the Study of Religions. 1977:27-37.

relationship with the divine ensuring a state of well being. A number of biblical prayers reflect this viewpoint. King Hezekiah of Judah fell ill and was near death. He prayed to the Lord, who added fifteen years to his life.

Concerning the importance of the cult in ancient Israelite medicine, 1 Samuel 1 tells about the childless Hannah who prays at the temple at Shiloh, asking the Lord to make her fall pregnant. In the OT infertility is presented as one of the most serious afflictions of women. Their social status depended on their fertility that often determined whether the lineage would continue.⁶¹² By way of comparison: Ancient Near Eastern women may generally have engaged sculpted images of the Canaanite mother goddess Asherah in their quest for fertility.⁶¹³ According to 2 Kings 18: 4, the Jerusalem temple contained a bronze serpent made by Moses in the wilderness. During the Exodus, anyone bitten by a snake would only have to look at the bronze to recover (Numbers 21: 9). The people of Israel burned incense for the serpent at the Jerusalem Temple apparently hoping for cures, until Hezekiah (715-6876 BC) destroyed the serpent (2 Kings 18). Archaeological finds corroborate the use of bronze serpents in healing cults. A first-century AD bronze serpent has been discovered in the temple of Asclepius, the Greek god of healing, at Pergamum in modern Turkey.⁶¹⁴ Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 BC) serpents have been found in Israel at Tel Mevorakh, Timna and Gezer where they were probably used for healing.

After the destruction of the bronze serpent and other reforms by the kings Hezekiah and Josiah (640–609 BC), there may have been a significant change in the use of the Jerusalem Temple for therapy. The kings intended to centralize worship in Jerusalem by destroying all the more remote shrines. As a result patients could no longer attend their local shrines for therapy, whether these were dedicated to Yahweh or to another deity. In fact, after the removal of the Asherah cult objects and the bronze serpent, the Jerusalem Temple changed its character as a therapeutic centre. For many patients a trip to the Jerusalem Temple to pray to Yahweh for healing may anyway have been too long and difficult. The problem of attending for those who lived far from the temple had probably been envisaged by Solomon and 1 Kings 8:37–39, part of the so-called Prayer of Solomon, suggests how patients could receive the benefits of prayer at the Jerusalem Temple from afar: 'If there is a famine in the nation...whatever plague, whatever sickness there is; whatever

⁶¹² Patrich. 'Hideouts in the Judean Wilderness.' *Biblical Archaeology Review* 15: 05, Sept/Oct 1989.

⁶¹³ Ze'ev Meshel. 'Did Yahweh Have a Consort?' *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 05: 02, Mar/Apr 1979:26.

⁶¹⁴ Joseph Zias. 'Death and Disease in Ancient Israel.' *Biblical Archaeologist* 54: 3 1991:146-159.

prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone or by all your people Israel, each knowing the affliction of his own heart, and stretching out his hands toward this house, then you shall hear in heaven, your dwelling place.’ Patients no longer needed to come to the temple to be healed. No matter where they were, the afflicted could simply extend their hands toward the temple for a long-distance cure.⁶¹⁵ All this information points to the fact that ancient Israelites looked for healing, or for remedies for their problems, to the Temple, prior to the exilic period when much of the Israelite religion underwent changes.

Part of medical procedures in primal religions is consultation. The OT presents numerous stories detailing the activities of *nabim* - prophets functioning as healers. Elijah and Elisha were consulted for everything, from leprosy (2 Kings 5) to even more deadly illnesses. Elisha promised the childless Shunammite woman that she would have a son. When the son died, Elisha went to her house, where the boy was laid out on his couch. After praying to the Lord, Elisha mounted the bed and placed himself over the child. He put his mouth on its mouth, his eyes on its eyes, and his hands on its hands. And the body of the child became warm (2 Kings 4:32–34).⁶¹⁶

When Naaman, the Aramean general, was cured of his skin disease by Elisha (who prescribed immersion, seven times, in the Jordan River), Naaman declared: “Now, I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel” (2 Kings 5:15). The implied comparison indicates that there were other options of divine healing but it emphasizes the superiority of Yahwistic over non-Yahwistic health care. Indeed, it even suggests that the land of Israel, because of Yahweh’s favour, is a healthier place to be: Naaman loads a couple of mules with some of Israel’s earth to take home (2 Kings 5:17). The Naaman case reveals that this practice of medicine, in Israel a part of Yahwistic health care, is an echo of medicine practices all over the Ancient Near East where they function under the protection of Ancient Near Eastern deities.

We can see from the foregoing that both in the ANE and OT the practice of medicine and the two major characteristics of the practice is comparable. It involved healing specialists and spiritual methods called magic in this thesis. This method includes producing substances for healing, spoken words purported to have magical powers (referred to as incantation in this thesis), and certain manual acts.

⁶¹⁵ Hector Avalos. *Illness and Health Care in the Ancient Near East: The Role of the Temple in Greece, Mesopotamia, and Israel*. *Harvard Semitic Museum Monographs 54*. Scholars Press: Atlanta. 1995:234-236.

⁶¹⁶ Burke O. Long. “The Shunammite Woman—In the Shadow of the Prophet?” *Biblical Archaeology Review* BR 7:01, Feb 1991.

5.7 Incantation

5.7.1 Ancient Near East

The next element to be presented is incantation because it is commonly used by practitioners of the last three elements discussed above, namely medicine, divination, and magic. Incantation, I interpret as words spoken for certain purposes and that are believed to be able to alter the course of nature. The practitioner chants or utters words purporting to have magical power. Incantation manipulates these powers. There is some preparation involved and the use of substances. This aspect has been examined more closely in the discussions on medicine and magic.

The comparison between prayer and incantation brings to light the dissimilarity between religion and magic. An examination of prayer and incantation elucidates their position in relation to religion and magic which are the main points of access to communion with the spiritual. Prayer, an element in religion, has a counterpart in incantation, an element in magic. Both are tools to approach the spiritual or divine. In the case of incantation in magic, the divine is not present but needs to be invoked. The words in incantation whereby not even a syllable may be changed lose their everyday communicative meanings and assume the coercive or theurgical power of evocative chant.⁶¹⁷ In the temple cult, the words of prayer or hymns are used to greet a deity who is visibly present in his/her cult statue. In the context of magic similar words are used to make a deity appear and intervene on behalf of someone in a crisis situation.⁶¹⁸

In the Ancient Near East medicine, divination, and magic employed incantation. Examples of such incantations will serve as evidence that incantation was an element of the primal religions of Ancient Near Eastern peoples. There is also evidence of incantation in, for example, Sumerian contexts that can be traced to writing on tablets originating from a religious institution dated to before the pre-Saginic period, namely the Eanna complex at Uruk.⁶¹⁹ However, it is only from the early Dynasty III period onward that substantial evidence of literary texts containing incantations is found. The tablets come from one of four Suruppak sites.⁶²⁰ The incantations thus take their place alongside the hymn to Neuhursag's temple in Kes and a cycle

⁶¹⁷ Tzvi Abusch. 'Prayers, Hymns, Incantations and Curses: Mesopotamia.' In *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. Sarah Iles Johnston (ed). Harvard University Press. 2004:353–355.

⁶¹⁸ Abusch. 'Prayers, Hymns, Incantations and Curses: Mesopotamia.' 2004:353–355.

⁶¹⁹ Erica Reiner. *Surpu: A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations*: Tablet V 1 – 70, pp 30 – 31; Tablet VII 1 – 87. ???DATE???:36–38.

⁶²⁰ Graham Cunningham. *Deliver Me From Evil: Mesopotamian Incantations, 2500 – 1500BC*. Gregorian Biblical Bookshop: Rome. 1997:5–22.

of short hymns in praise of various deities and their cult centres, both of which were found at Abu Salabikh. This is proof that religion and magic could be practised by the same cult. It indicates that the adherents of primal religions can combine worshipping their deities with coercing spiritual forces into doing their bidding in times of crisis. We will see that, also in other areas covered by this research, religion and magic were practised side by side. As I have stated above, incantation functioned as an instrument in the practice of magic.

In the Semitic context the earliest known tablet texts, found at Ebla duplicate a Sumpak incantation. In contrast to the unclear situation in Sumer, the institution responsible for the Ebla tablets has been confidently identified as a palace.⁶²¹ This implies that the use of incantation was not the exclusive preserve of priests in temples but that also royal individuals who needed to invoke the attention of spirits could do so by using incantation.

The functions of incantations, originating in the Ancient Near East as far as can be determined, are to do with this world rather than the next. Broadly speaking, the functions concern rites of passage, moments of transition such as childbirth, the laying of temple-foundations and the transition from illness to health.⁶²² The principal concern appears to be the release of a particular form of suffering that cures illness, an interpretation supported by a later lexical entry tagged 'incantation to cast for an invalid'.⁶²³ In fact, in the Sargonic period, a new use of incantation emerged, for the provision helpful divine intervention to arouse love in an uninterested woman.⁶²⁴

5.7.2 Old Testament

In regard to incantation in the Old Testament, I refer to the Song of the Sword in Ezekiel 21 that displays the characteristics of incantation and that reflects the notion of the power of words and actions of which the effect is assured by Yahweh. The nature of the incantations in the pericope is revealed in the saying about the sword of Yahweh in verses 1-12. The sword is presented as an instrument of judgement that appears to take on an independent personal existence. The sword is hypostasized and addressed directly, as if it were a

⁶²¹ Cunningham. *Deliver Me From Evil: Mesopotamian Incantations, 2500 – 1500BC*. 1997:5–22.

⁶²² Cunningham. *Deliver Me From Evil: Mesopotamian Incantations, 2500 – 1500BC*. 1997:5–22.

⁶²³ Cunningham. *Deliver Me From Evil: Mesopotamian Incantations, 2500 – 1500BC*. 1997:5–22.

⁶²⁴ Cunningham. *Deliver Me From Evil: Mesopotamian Incantations, 2500 – 1500BC*. 1997:5–22.

living being.⁶²⁵ In verse 19, the prophet is ordered to clap hands. Yahweh did the same in verse 22. The objective of the sword is to massacre and wreck slaughter. The clapping of hands intensifies the effect of the sword.⁶²⁶

Some commentators suggest that this indicates some kind of weapon magic.⁶²⁷ H. Oort compares the passage to 2 Kings 13: 18-19, where Elisha orders King Joash to strike arrows on the ground. The king struck three times, angering the prophet. Had the king struck five or six times, he would have finished off Syria. As it is he will defeat Syria only three times. In primal religions such magical ritual acts are accompanied by words. In verse 17, Elisha states: 'The arrow of the LORD'S deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them.'

In our passage, Ezekiel, the prophet has in verse 19 been ordered to prophesy and clap hands by Yahweh, who endorses the entire action. It is clear that the legitimacy of the prophet's action and words depends ultimately on the decision and the authority of Yahweh. The point being made here is, that the passage is an example of the genres of incantation and rituals, used to make the weapon more effective.

Daniel Bodi does not agree with this interpretation and claims that a metaphor often involves a precedented linguistic manoeuvre. In his opinion this is what the passage adequately represents.⁶²⁸ He stresses that the ancients' concept of, and statements about, the sword as a devouring animal can be illustrated by comparing the Akkadian expression 'to put to the sword', with the Hebrew idiom 'to the mouth of the sword,' which has been translated as 'to smite with the edge of the sword.' However, it is easier to agree with J.T. Meek and J.G. Heintz who, on the basis of archaeological evidence, interpret the texts on the sword by considering these in relation to Ancient Near Eastern concepts. The sword in the ANE is often presented as a devouring monster that eats flesh and drinks blood, as found in Akkadian texts.⁶²⁹ In the treaties of Esarhaddon (680=669 BC), we read, 'may daggers devour him.'⁶³⁰ The same is found in Egyptian texts.⁶³¹ In

⁶²⁵ Verse 21.

⁶²⁶ Daniel Bodi, *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra*, Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz: Göttingen, 1991, pp. 240 – 247.

⁶²⁷ W.A. Irwin, *The Problem of Ezekiel*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1943, p. 40; H. Oort cited in Bodi, *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra*, 1991, p. 246.

⁶²⁸ Bodi, *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra*, 1991, p. 247.

⁶²⁹ J.T. Meek and J.G. Heintz, 'Archaeology and a Point of Hebrew Syntax,' *BASOR* 122, 1950, pp. 31 – 33.

⁶³⁰ CAD A/I 254b, cited by Daniel Bodi. *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra*. p. 245.

⁶³¹ B. Couroyer. 'Le 'Glaive' de Behemoth' *RB*84. 1977:59-79. Cited by Daniel Bodi. *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra*, p. 245.

excavations throughout the Middle East, swords and battle axes have been found in which the blade is represented as the tongue sticking out of the open ravenous mouth of a lion or dragon and which constitutes either the base of the sword hilt or the axe head. Among the swords and axes, found during various excavations, there are a number of these.⁶³² In Judges 3: 16, the words read literally, ‘a sword which had two mouths.’ This illustrates the fact that these weapons were hypostasized and that – as was believed – certain words and actions could empower them to act effectively in battles.

Furthermore, there occurs in Ezekiel 21: 32 the threefold line, traditionally rendered as ‘ruin, ruin, ruin, I will make it.’ Based on parallels from an Assyrian collection of Maqlu magical incantations, J. Hermann argues that the expression carries something of an echo of a coercive magical saying.⁶³³ This form of line which is called trigemination also occurs in Maqlu and Surpu incantations.⁶³⁴

In addition, out of the three major categories of form, identified by scholars such as Hermann Gunkel⁶³⁵ and Claus Westermann,⁶³⁶ classifying psalms as psalms of praise, of lament and of wisdom, the psalms of lament had been focused on in the discourse of imprecatory incantations among the Hebrews. Generally, lament psalms had been described as typical issuances of complaint to God in relation to some current crisis. Part of this genre is the sub-category of petitions which are imprecatory in nature and whereby a request is made in graphic terms for God’s punishment of the psalmist’s enemies.⁶³⁷

Scholars have attempted to compare these Hebrew lament psalms with their Mesopotamian counterparts based on parts of the wording found in Israelite psalms of lament that are similar to those found in Mesopotamian laments. Hence, it has been suggested by scholars like G. Fohrer that incantation played just as significant a role in ancient Israelite society as it did in surrounding ancient societies.⁶³⁸ He claims that in many psalms we can catch echoes of the notion that disasters afflicting humankind are due to a spell that has to be broken by a counter spell.

⁶³² Bodi. *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra*. 1991:246.

⁶³³ J. Hermann. ‘Zu Jeremiah 2: 29; 7: 4’ *ZAW*, 62. 1950:321-322.

⁶³⁴ Maqlu incantation: ‘land, land, land indeed.’ Surpu incantation: ‘your hands are washed, your hands are washed, your hands are washed.’ E. Reiner. *Surpu: A Collection of Sumerian & Akkadian Incantations*. E Weidner: Graz. 1958:48.

⁶³⁵ Hermann Gunkel. *The Psalms: A Form Critical Introduction*. Philadelphia. 1967.

⁶³⁶ Claus Westermann. *Praise of God in Psalms*. Atlanta. 1965.

⁶³⁷ John H. Walton. *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels Between Biblical and Ancient Near East*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids. 1990:135ff.

⁶³⁸ G.Fohrer. *History of Israelite Religion*. Nashville. 1972:155-156.

However, some authors question whether such conclusions can legitimately be drawn from the existing evidence. H.W.F. Saggs for example writes that, if the Babylonian hymns concerned were compositions superimposed upon an ancient and specifically Sumerian ritual, the parallel in literary form between the Babylonian and Hebrew texts would not necessarily imply parallel usage.⁶³⁹ The ancient Israelites may not have used their written laments as incantations like the ancient Babylonians did. Sigmund Mowinckel also believes that the theology, presented in the OT, stands in clear opposition to the worldview from which incantation arises. He claims that, because of the strong emphasis on Yahweh as the only effective God in Israel, even disasters and illness can be firmly traced back to him. Both good and evil were believed to come from Yahweh. Evil is punishment resulting from his wrath whereas the Babylonians generally attribute illness and disaster to demons, sorcerers and witchcraft.⁶⁴⁰

The argument against this view is that, even if it cannot be agreed upon that the Psalms are evidence of the practice of incantation in Israel, this should not confuse the issue that, although the OT presents the official religious belief of the Israelites which appears extraneous to the religious beliefs of surrounding ancient nations, their history indicates that popular belief and practices during certain periods contained aspects that also characterized other Ancient Near Eastern cultures. Such aspects are identifiable in specific texts that are examined in the present chapter.

Incantations are a part of magical rituals performed to ward off demons believed to cause illness and calamity as discussed in the context of the Ancient Near East. Thus, prayers of complaint attempting to appease an angry deity can be connected with incantations. If the Ancient Near Eastern cultures used written laments as incantations to ward off evil from demons or from ill disposed deities, then the Israelites' use of lament psalms centring on Yahweh could probably be considered an equivalent as they believed that good as well as evil came from him. However, this thesis does not focus on theological details concerning the deities that play a role in the four subject areas examined. It is only concerned with religious practices that occur in all four with a view to demonstrating the enduring influence of features of primary religious beliefs.

If it is found that incantation rituals accompanied Mesopotamian written laments and that their wording shows specific similarities to those found in Israelite psalms of lament, then it is evident that these psalms

⁶³⁹ H.W.F. Saggs. *The Greatness That Was Babylonian*. Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd. 1988:290.

⁶⁴⁰ Sigmund Mowinckel. *Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Biblical Resource Series). Eerdmans: London. 2004:185.

are texts depicting, at least in part, early beliefs and practices of incantation in Israel, even if the OT as a whole does not present incantation as an official cultic practice.

5.8 Taboo

5.8.1 Ancient Near East

Taboo is a strong social prohibition (or ban) relating to any area of human activity or social custom that is perceived as sacred on the basis of religious beliefs.. Breaking a taboo is usually considered objectionable, even abhorrent, by society.⁶⁴¹ Taboo is one of the basic six elements of primal religion identified by Harold Turner. It is associated with the belief that humankind can enter into a relationship with the benevolent spirit-world and share in its powers and blessings while being protected from evil forces by these transcendent helpers. I however believe that before contact can be established certain factors have to be considered. The spirit world makes demands that humankind needs to fulfil before approaching it. These demands are in the present thesis tagged as taboo and as rites.

Jastrow⁶⁴² reveals Lucian's view that among the Syrians fishes were deemed holy and never touched; so were pigeons although all other birds were eaten. In the great court of the temple at Hierapolis, Lucian says,

Oxen of great size browsed; horses too are there, and eagles and bears and lions, who never hurt mankind, but are all sacred and all tame.⁶⁴³

Elsewhere he says that:

They sacrifice bulls and cows alike, and goats and sheep; pigs alone, which they abominate, Are neither sacrificed nor eaten, Others look on swine without disgust, but as holy animals. Of birds, the dove seems the most holy to them, nor do they think it right to harm these birds, and if anyone have harmed them unknowingly, they are unholy for that day.⁶⁴⁴

Significant is the mention of animals that may not be eaten. Specifically mentioned are pigeons and pigs but no doubt the others were also out of bounds because the prohibition was due to the fact that these animals were perceived as akin to the divine, in other words it was based on a religious taboo.

⁶⁴¹ Robert M.W. Dixon. *A Grammar of Boumaa Fijian*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. 2002:368.

⁶⁴² Cited in Oesterly and Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:69.

⁶⁴³ Cited in Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:69.

⁶⁴⁴ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:69.

5.8.2 Old Testament

The idea of the taboo is part of Hebrew beliefs. The corresponding term in the Old Testament is *tame*, ‘unclean,’⁶⁴⁵ but not in the sense of dirty or impure. It is simply a ritual term for something that must not be touched or, in the case of animals, eaten.

In Ezekiel 11: 16 it is said: ‘Thus saith the Lord God, whereas I have removed them (i.e. exiles) far off among the nations, and whereas I have scattered them among the countries, yet I have become unto them a sanctuary only to a small extent in the countries where they are come.’ One can deduce from the verse that the important externals of the worship of Yahweh, as it was practised in the past, were now wanting. Therefore the form of worship had become insignificant as compared with what it used to be like in the Temple. This raises the important question as to what kind of substitute for temple services were adopted by those exiles who were loyal to their ancestral religion and who intended to remain so. According to Oesterley and Robinson,⁶⁴⁶ Jeremiah and other spiritually minded prophets had already contemplated the possibility of a non-sacrificial worship.⁶⁴⁷ This was now to become a reality. But it was only the compelling force of circumstances that could have induced the people to be content with a form of worship that was alien to their traditional practice. The sacrificial system had touched the people in numerous ways in their everyday lives as well as in worship proper. Now all this had ceased. Kittel suggests,⁶⁴⁸ probably correctly, that since regular feasts could no longer be observed as they were in the past, their seasons were now celebrated as memorials. The events of the past, thus far regarded by the Israelites as mercies from Yahweh became now commemorations of those mercies so that these were preserved in their minds and kindled hope for the future. There is much in Deutero-Isaiah’s outlook and in somewhat later dated prophecies that suggest this course of development.⁶⁴⁹ But there is more direct evidence of the institution of annual fast-days that were however abrogated after the Return (Zech. 7: 3, 5; 8: 19). If feasts were observed, it is difficult to believe that these were not affected by abrogation. Sabbath, though now without its prescribed sacrifices, became the chief regular day of worship as is evident, for example, by the stress laid on the importance of Sabbaths and the denunciation of their non-observance in Ezekiel 20: 12-24.

⁶⁴⁵ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:139.

⁶⁴⁶ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:139.

⁶⁴⁷ Jer. 6: 16, 20; 7: 21, 22; Micah 6: 6, 7.

⁶⁴⁸ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:243.

⁶⁴⁹ Isa. 51: 1-3, 7.

Next to the Sabbath, the rite of circumcision, familiar from pre-exilic days, was strongly emphasized, much more so than before exile. The uncircumcised were now spoken of with contempt. With the exception of the Philistines, few men were uncircumcised in the nations surrounding Canaan, so that circumcision could not have been perceived as a special mark distinguishing a true son of Israel.⁶⁵⁰ The oldest legal code makes no mention of circumcision but conditions in the times of exile were different. The Jews came into contact with people who knew nothing such a custom. Thus circumcision became a distinctive mark of being a Jew. It was during exile that there arose among Jews, as never before, a consciousness of being different from others. A sense of superiority began to assert itself and not without reason, for their grasp of the truth of the ethical righteousness of God, together with demands made on them as the people of God, meant that, from a religious point of view, they found themselves on a much higher plane than other people. They felt therefore the need to adopt an attitude of aloofness towards all who stood on a lower religious plane. As Milgrom⁶⁵¹ argues, one of the special means of emphasizing the separation between themselves and others lay in a more strenuous observance of the ancient laws regarding purification and forbidden food. So it was with these as with the Sabbath and circumcision. Prohibitions had all to a greater or lesser extent been observed in pre-exilic days, but only now did they assume a new significance and become of fundamental importance.⁶⁵² It is for these reasons that the Priestly code strongly emphasizes these laws as well as certain others. Though quite out of harmony with the spirit of the *tame*, and the advance of religious thought, they were nevertheless made part of the Law, not for what they originally meant - for the original meaning was mostly forgotten - but with the objective of making the separateness of Jews as obvious and ostentatious as possible.⁶⁵³ In Lev. 11 there are lists of animals that may not be eaten. The following example regarding clean and unclean animals is an expansion of the Law of Holiness (Lev. 17 – 26). As pointed out, that the compilers of what ultimately became the Priestly Code did have any knowledge at all of the original reasons why certain animals were taboo, is extremely unlikely nor was such knowledge needed. The fact that some foods were prohibited and therefore not eaten by Jews differentiated them from their Gentile neighbours, and that was the main point.

⁶⁵⁰ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:243.

⁶⁵¹ Jacob Milgrom. *Cult and Conscience: The Asham and the Priestly Doctrine of Repentance*. Brill: Leiden. 1976:18,36,76,77.

⁶⁵² Mehanem Haran . *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel*. Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake. 1985:175-186.

⁶⁵³ Erhard S Gerstenberger, Douglas W. Scott (trans). *Leviticus: A Commentary*. Westminster John Knox, London. 1996:208-240.

In other words, many of these prohibitions would appear utterly pointless, were it not for the fact that, from similar prohibitions among other peoples, we know the reasons why they were forbidden. ‘The most notable feature in the Levitical prohibitions is that they correspond so closely with those of the heathen Semites and yet are expressly set forth as belonging to Israel's peculiar consecration to Jehovah. The unclean creatures therefore are the divine animals of the heathen; such animals as the latter did not ordinarily eat or sacrifice....’⁶⁵⁴ Robertson Smith also points out the significant fact that the Hebrew terms for ‘to have in abomination,’ and ‘an abomination,’ which constantly recur in Lev. 11 in reference to the prohibitions, ‘are indifferently applied to unclean beasts and to the gods of the heathen, but to nothing else.’⁶⁵⁵

A number of other taboos do, if broken, require a purificatory ceremony of one kind or another (e.g., Lev. 6. 27 ff., 11. 32 ff.). The point I wish to make is that the remnants of taboo are discernible in the Old Testament, especially during the exile. This is a further indication that some ancient Hebrew insights go back to religious views of greater antiquity.

5.9 Totemism

5.9.1 Ancient Near East

Totemism occurs in the form of a type of society – a clan or a tribe – of which the members perceive themselves as being united by kinship to a plant species or, more often, to an animal, from which they believe they are descended.⁶⁵⁶ While evidence of totemism is found all over the Semitic world, scholars indicate that it is among the culture of the ancient Arabs that the closest parallel with early Hebrew totemism is found.⁶⁵⁷ Also, the available data is much more plentiful where they are concerned than among other Semitic peoples. In his *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, Robertson Smith⁶⁵⁸ writes that the irrefutable proof of early totemism among any race involves the existence of stocks named after plants and animals, the prevalence of the conception that the members of these stocks are of the blood of the eponymous animal or have sprung from a plant of the species chosen as totem, and the ascription to the totem of a sacred character so that it becomes the subject of veneration and may even be regarded as the god of the stock. Names of Arab tribes included lion, ibex, wild cow, steer, serpent, sheep, wolf, dog, panther

⁶⁵⁴ Cited by Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:70.

⁶⁵⁵ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:70.

⁶⁵⁶ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:62.

⁶⁵⁷ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:62.

⁶⁵⁸ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:63.

and hyena. It has been shown that tribes bearing these names were bound to the animals concerned by totemic beliefs.

As to the conception that the members of a tribe and their totem were of the same blood and were thus akin to it, a case is known of a whole clan mourning over a dead gazelle. If a serpent is killed, the members of the serpent clan are bound to avenge it. For obvious reasons a totem animal is not normally eaten. For example, the *hyrax Syriacus* was not eaten because he was the brother of man and 'he who eats him will never see his father or mother again.'⁶⁵⁹ This perception may also have been based on the belief that human beings could change themselves into animals. Some animals were not eaten because they were thought to be transformed men. This kind of idea could easily have arisen if men were convinced of the physical reality of their kinship with the totemic animal. It is clear that there was a taboo on eating one's totem as if it were ordinary food. But, in keeping with its perceived sacred character, the animal could be killed for sacrifice. Thus the camel was by the camel clan to which it was sacred eaten only when offered in sacrifice, although to all other Arabs the camel was a common food.

There is plenty evidence of sacred animals being eaten when they are, on special occasions, sacrificed. Among the Syrians the dove was not eaten. It was sacred to Ashtoreth and it had all the marks of a totem. Testimonies to this effect were collected by Bochart⁶⁶⁰ and show that the bird was not merely a symbol, but a focus of divine honour. In Arabia there is a dove-idol in the Ka'ba, surrounded by sacred doves. There also were several lizard clans among the Arabs, for example the *Dobaib* (lizard). This was a sacred animal. Its flesh supplied the Arabs with medicines and with antidotes for poisons. Its bones and skin had magical virtues. Such virtues were generally ascribed to animals that were not habitually eaten.⁶⁶¹

These few examples out of many indicate that a clan would regard the animal from which it took its name as sacred. In addition, the animal was considered as the ancestor of the clan and all the clan members were its offspring. Consequently, all animals of the same kind were the clan's ancestor and as such sacrosanct. One might even say that, as the totem, or ancestor, is seen as a god, all the animals of its kind are thought of as its representatives. Robertson Smith shows that this was the actual course of development among the

⁶⁵⁹ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:64.

⁶⁶⁰ Cited in Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:64.

⁶⁶¹ Oesterly, Robinson. *Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development*. 1937:65.

Arabs.⁶⁶² He refers to an abundance of independent evidence that, not only the Arabs, but all Semites spoke and thought of themselves as children of their gods. This may imply that it was because Arabic tribes saw themselves as children of their tribal gods that they took their names. Reasoning along these lines, in the case of such tribes as the Banu Hilal, 'Sons of the crescent moon,' or Banu Badr, 'Sons of the full moon,' the divine being or the ancestor is one of those heavenly bodies that by some members of primitive cultures have been thought to be animals. Thus it might be possible to reduce the occurrence of divine tribal names side by side with animal tribal names to the single principle that is supplied by the totem theory.

The above argument is by the researcher presented under totemism because it shows a strong sense of life in nature and how this by followers of Ancient Near Eastern religions was absorbed into their religious consciousness of living things. Animals, plants, or any other natural phenomena, could thus be revered as the symbol of a clan or society and treated with the respect reserved for religious icons.

5.9.2 Old Testament

In the light of what has been discussed above, I now turn to perceived remnants of totemic beliefs in the Old Testament. In the comparatively advanced stage of culture that characterized even the earliest Hebrews we cannot expect to find in records of their beliefs more than very faint echoes of such a primitive institution as totemism. But such echoes as we pick up, seem to represent the most satisfactory indication of enduring primal elements and provide their most natural explanation. I will follow the same order as followed earlier, pointing out that, as the early Arabs, also the early Hebrews called their clans and tribes by the names of animals. Thus Simeon means 'hyena', Leah (Levi) is 'wild cow', Deborah means 'bee', Rachel 'ewe', Caleb 'dog', Shobal 'lion,' Ephraim 'young antelope' and Oren 'ibex'. Other examples are places named after animals, or rather, as Stade shows, named after the clans (with animal names) inhabiting them. Thus, Aijalon comes from Aijal, 'stag', Shaalbim from 'foxes', Ophra and Ephron from Ephraim or 'young antelope', Eglon from Egel, 'calf', Nimra from Namer, 'leopard', and so on..⁶⁶³ All these, it is noted, are clan or tribal, but not personal, names. And among the many names of animals that occur in the Old Testament by far the greater number refers to clans or tribes. The significance of this lies in the fact that such clan names point to an ancient, original belief in the kinship of all the clan members with the animal

⁶⁶² Robertson Smith. *The Religion of the Semites*: First Series Fundamental Institution. Kessinger: London. 2004 pp. 240ff.

⁶⁶³ Robertson Smith. *Kinship*. General Books. 2010:10-164.

after which the clan is named.⁶⁶⁴ A personal animal name, on the other hand, might have its origin in a variety of reasons, but would not be based on a belief that its bearer shared kinship with the animal. According to Buchanan Gray,⁶⁶⁵ even personal animal names, are indirectly explained by the totem theory. He clarifies: ‘With the break-up of the totem clan system, the clan names became in certain cases personal, instances of which we perhaps find in Eglah, the name of David's wife, the two Deborahs, and other names of early individuals, though we have, it is true, no direct evidence that these were ever tribal. But the strictly personal character of many of the early names classified in the synopsis is open to doubt. It is certainly curious that so many of the early and apparently individual names turn out on closer inspection to be possibly or even probably tribal.’⁶⁶⁶

It is furthermore noteworthy that, although the Old Testament offers little indication of a belief that the members of a clan with an animal name were the offspring of a totem animal, there are hints that worshipers thought themselves to be descended from a god and there are some grounds for holding that this was a development of an earlier totemic belief. Thus, names compounded with a divine name, such as Abijah (‘my father is Yah’), or Ahijah (‘my brother is Yah’), and others, suggest the question as to whether or not they signal a transition of the totemic conception of kindred with a divine or totem animal to the conception of kinship with a personal god.

That the conception of a physical connection between a god and his people was not unfamiliar to the Hebrews is evident from Num. 21: 29: ‘Woe to thee, Moab! Thou art undone, O people of Chemosh; he hath given his sons as fugitives, and his daughters into captivity, unto Sihon king of the Amorites.’ It is significant that this downright expression of physical kinship to a god is toned down in later days when Jeremiah, quoting this passage, says: ‘Woe unto thee, Moab! the people of Chemosh is undone; for thy sons are taken away captive, and thy daughters into captivity’ (Jer. 48: 46). The significance of this is enhanced by the realization how familiar Jeremiah was with the conception still in vogue among the idolaters. In the text quoted he also says: ‘Which say to a stock, thou art my father; and to a stone, thou hast begotten us’ (Jer. 2: 27). On the basis of this we have to acknowledge that there are good grounds for believing that some remnants of totemism can be discerned in the Old Testament.

⁶⁶⁴ Smith. *Kinship*. 2010:10-164.

⁶⁶⁵ G. Buchanan Gray. *Studies in Hebrew Proper Names*. Kessinger Publishing. 2003:101,103,114,255.

⁶⁶⁶ Gray. *Studies in Hebrew Proper Names*. 2003:101,103,114,255.

The above discussions on attitudes of ancient Israelites to nature indicate their belief that the particular places or things they related with the spiritual possessed a consciousness or a power that linked them to the ultimate essence they sought. This thesis had tagged this perception as animatism. Furthermore, from the biblical evidence presented above, one senses that the early Israelites regarded natural objects as symbols and that they treated them with the kind of respect normally reserved for religious icons. Their use of such objects as symbols of kinship can be defined as evidence of totemism. Hence, on the basis of the foregoing arguments it can be established that the early Israelites shared a history of animatistic and totemistic tendencies with their Near Eastern neighbours. As these two elements are features of primal religion, located within both the Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern cultures, it can be asserted that the latter have influenced the former.

5.10 Rites

5.10.1 Ancient Near East

Rituals played a central role in Ancient Near Eastern religions. This is evident from the amount of data available in relevant scholarly studies. According to J.M. Sasson⁶⁶⁷ Hittite mythology was concerned with different gods from those who figured in important sanctuaries and rituals. In one set of stories the god Telepinus disappears, or has gone into hiding, and has to be found or coaxed back to his temple. This tale is often interpreted as symbolic of the seasonal disappearance of vegetation and its reappearance in the following spring.⁶⁶⁸ Another myth records the slaying of the dragon Iluyankas. Some scholars see in this a myth of defeat of chaos and disorder in preparation for the start of a new year. There is also a myth that tells of a formidable stone monster that was eventually defeated with the great knife once used to separate heaven from earth.⁶⁶⁹ Another myth recounts the story of a dynasty of gods in which the founder-god is displaced by his son who, in turn, is castrated and displaced by his son who thereafter rules as chief god. In the 7th century BC the Greek poet Hesiod recounted a similar story involving the gods Cronus and Zeus.⁶⁷⁰

Hittites performed burial practices by cremating their dead in ceremonies that have sometimes been compared to the cremation scenes of Hector and Achilles in the *Iliad*. The afterlife was grim and cheerless.

⁶⁶⁷ Jack M. Sasson (ed.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Scribner: New York. 2001:1401-1420.

⁶⁶⁸ Sasson (ed.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 2001:1401-1420.

⁶⁶⁹ Sasson (ed.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 2001:1401-1420.

⁶⁷⁰ Sasson (ed.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 2001:1401-1420.

The spirits of some dead, especially of evildoers or those, to whom for some reason a proper funeral was denied, were doomed to wander the earth and these had to be placated by rituals and prayers.⁶⁷¹

After the disappearance of the Hittite empire in the 13th century BC, the Phrygians settled in that part of Asia Minor. They may have immigrated from the Balkans or northern Greece. By the middle of the 8th century BC, a Phrygian kingdom had been established that included much of central and Western Asia Minor.⁶⁷²

According to Greek and Roman authors, the principal Phrygian deity was Cybele, known as the Great Mother of the Gods. She took for her lover a young and handsome god named Attis.⁶⁷³ When he proved unfaithful to her, the angry goddess had him castrated. He died of his injuries but later returned to life. The priests of Cybele were also castrated so as to play the role of Attis, and adherents of this religion worked themselves into frenzies with drums and cymbals, slashing themselves with knives and rubbing the blood over their bodies. Initiates could gain strength by being born again through a rite called the *taurobolium*.⁶⁷⁴ In this rite the believer lay in a pit and a bull was slaughtered on a grate above him so that the blood gushed over the worshiper. Many Greeks and Romans regarded this religion with horror, but it would spread throughout the Roman Empire as a mystery religion.⁶⁷⁵ Some Phrygian practices were carried out in open-air holy places rather than closed shrines. Little else is known of the beliefs and religious practice of the Phrygians.⁶⁷⁶

Syrian religion of the 3rd millennium BC is known from clay tablets found at Ebla, a city near Halab. These indicate a division between the gods in heaven and those who dwell in the underworld. Lists of offerings and rituals mention gods and goddesses known from later times. No myths of the early period have been discovered. Syrian religion of the late 2nd millennium BC is known primarily from clay tablets discovered at Ugarit, dating to the 13th century BC.⁶⁷⁷ From these and other sources it appears that the Syrians

⁶⁷¹ Sasson (ed.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. 2001:1401-1420.

⁶⁷² Benjamin Read Foster. *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*. 1995:215.

⁶⁷³ Mari Vasilake (ed.). *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*. Ashgate: Aldershot. 2005: 4; Leslie Brubaker, Mary B. Cunningham. *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images*. Ashgate: Surrey. 2011:99.

⁶⁷⁴ Foster. *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*. 1995:209- 215.

⁶⁷⁵ Foster. *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*. 1995:209-215.

⁶⁷⁶ Foster. *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*. 1995:209-215.

⁶⁷⁷ Foster. *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*. 1995:310.

venerated a male creator god called El and his wife Asherah, known as the Mother of the Gods.⁶⁷⁸ El, a sky god, lost in importance or was displaced by Baal, a weather god symbolized by a bull and a lightning bolt.⁶⁷⁹ The life and death of Baal were identified with prosperity and drought. Important goddesses included Anath, Baal's wife and sister.⁶⁸⁰ She was fierce and violent, wearing a necklace of severed human heads. Like Baal, she lived on a mountaintop. She was gradually displaced by the Phoenician goddess Astarte, a goddess of reproduction and fertility, sometimes portrayed as a naked woman on horseback.⁶⁸¹ In the Hellenistic Age (4th to 1st century BC) she was replaced by the Syrian goddess Atargatis who united in the personal characteristics of the earlier goddesses, including their role in love and warfare.⁶⁸² Other gods included Mot, the god of death, Reshef, god of the underworld, Dagan, a god from the Euphrates area and perhaps an underworld deity, and Kawthar, god of craftsmanship and skill. The Greeks and Romans freely equated Syrian gods with their own—for example Jupiter with El or Baal, Aphrodite with Astarte, and Hercules with Melqart, the city god of Tyre.⁶⁸³ All these gods are worshipped through ritual dramas that illustrate the belief the adherents had in them.

Syria-Palestine generally did not have the great temple complexes that were common in Egypt and Mesopotamia. A variety of modest shrines have been discovered, but much worship was possibly carried out in the open air at altars on hilltops or in holy places marked by stone pillars. Rituals involved sacrifice to the gods of agricultural products, animals, or occasionally human beings such as prisoners or children. There was a special class of priests and rulers were not high priests as elsewhere in the Ancient Near East. Evidence suggests that in some periods there were priestesses and religious prostitution existed.⁶⁸⁴

In addition to the elaborate rituals that characterized the official state cult, common to all ANE religions, personal religion affected many aspects of daily life in ancient Mesopotamia. The great gods, like mortal

⁶⁷⁸ Bob Becking, Meindert Dijkstra, Marjo C.A. Korpel and Karel J.H. Vriezen. *Only One God?: Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah*. Sheffield Academic: London. 2001:104.

⁶⁷⁹ Sarah Iles Johnston (ed.). *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. President and Fellows of Harvard College: USA. 2004:418.

⁶⁸⁰ Bob Becking, Meindert Dijkstra, Marjo C.A. Korpel and Karel J.H. Vriezen. *Only One God?: Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah*. Sheffield Academic Press: London. 2001:104.

⁶⁸¹ Becking, Dijkstra, Korpel and Vriezen. *Only One God?: Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah*. 2001:104.

⁶⁸² Bob Becking, Dijkstra, Korpel and Vriezen. *Only One God?: Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah*. 2001:104-106.

⁶⁸³ Becking, Dijkstra, Korpel and Vriezen. *Only One God?: Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah*. 2001:104-106.

⁶⁸⁴ Foster. *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*. 1995:300.

kings and queens, seemed increasingly remote, powerful, and inaccessible to the individual who therefore turned to a personal deity. Usually known simply as “my god” or “my goddess,” the personal deity was supposed to protect a person from harm and ensure good fortune. People employed rituals to ask for good fortune and for protection from witchcraft and from the harm signified by such events as eclipses or strange behaviour of animals. Demons could be exorcised by specialists or warded off by spells, rituals, and by a vigilant personal deity.⁶⁸⁵

From later burials in Ur it is apparent that hundreds of servants, soldiers, and entertainers were sacrificed to accompany deceased rulers in their tombs although this custom disappeared soon in favour of simple burials without sacrifices.⁶⁸⁶

Throughout the ancient Middle East worship during rituals implied that human beings turned to a god in prayer, either addressing the god directly or turning to a lesser god who acted as an intermediary. The rituals to honour the gods were carried out by professional priests and priestesses and there were public festivals in which the entire population could participate. As natural phenomena were attributed to divine will, the gods were believed to speak to their subjects through such phenomena. However, gods could also communicate directly with people through dreams - messages from the gods - or through prophets whose words, often uttered in a trancelike state were also considered as coming from a god.⁶⁸⁷

5.10.2 Old Testament

Under this section, I will first consider burial as an example of ancient Israelite rites. Ancient Israel looked upon decent burial as a matter of great importance. The Israelites shared their view with the rest of the Ancient Near East. The Egyptians made extravagant provisions for the dead and so did the peoples of Mesopotamia who dreaded nothing more than the thought of lying unburied. One of the curses most frequently used in Mesopotamian texts is: ‘May the earth not receive your corpses,’ or some equivalent. Similarly, one can measure the importance attached to burial by the Israelites by the frequency with which

⁶⁸⁵ John G. Gammie, Leo G. Perdue (eds.). *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Eisenbrauns: USA. 1990:61.

⁶⁸⁶ Snell (ed.). *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*. 2010:221.

⁶⁸⁷ Cryer. *Divination in Ancient Israel and its Near Eastern Environment: A Socio-Historical Investigation*. 1994:124-216; Jeffers. *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria*. 1996:146-181; John H. Walton. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*. Baker Academic: Grand Rapids. 2006:239; Leda Ciruolo and Jonathan Seidel (eds.). *Ancient Magic and Divination in the Ancient World*. E.J. Brill: Leiden. 2002:239; Jonathan Stokl. *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: A Philological and Sociological Comparison*. E.J. Brill: Leiden. 2012:25.

the Bible refers to the fear of being left unburied. Thus, one of the curses for breach of the covenant is: ‘Thy carcasses shall be food unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth’ (Deuteronomy 28: 26).⁶⁸⁸ Many times the prophets use this threat, especially Jeremiah. He says, in judgment on King Jehoiakim, ‘He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem’ (Jeremiah 22: 19).⁶⁸⁹

There is also abundant positive evidence for the importance of burial. Abraham's purchase of the cave at Machpelah as a family tomb in Genesis 23 and the measures taken by later patriarchs to ensure that they would be buried there, occupy a prominent place in the patriarchal narratives (Gen. 49:29–33; 50:25–26).⁶⁹⁰ Biblical biographies ordinarily end with the statement that a man died followed by an account of his burial (e.g. Josh. 24:30), especially if it was in some way unusual as in the case of Uzziah, the leprous king (II Chron. 26:23). This was not only based on a literary convention but reflects the value that was attached to a proper interment.⁶⁹¹ Tombs of the Israelite period in Palestine show that those who could afford it gave considerable, though not lavish, care to the hewing out of tombs and the provision of grave goods.

However, this assessment of the importance of decent burial needs some qualification. Archaeology reveals no distinctively Israelite burial practices during almost the whole of the biblical period. The Israelites continued to use modes of burial employed in Palestine long before the conquest.⁶⁹² It means that it is risky to draw firm conclusions about Israelite religious beliefs on the basis of specific burial practices, for example the provision of grave goods or the lack of them, the custom of communal or individual burial, and so on.

Of significance though is the Torah's concern about avoiding defilement by the dead (Num. 19:16; Deut. 21:22–23). The priests were forbidden to come in contact with dead bodies. They are permitted, however, to become defiled when their closest relatives are concerned: father, mother, brother, unmarried sister, and child.⁶⁹³ They are not allowed to enter any house or enclosure, in which there is a dead body (or a part thereof) (Leviticus 10:6, Leviticus 21:1–5, Ezekiel 44:20, Ezekiel 44:25). Practical examples of these

⁶⁸⁸ Roland De Vaux. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (trans. John McHugh). Eerdmans: Grand Rapids. 1997:56-61.

⁶⁸⁹ De Vaux. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. 1997:56-61.

⁶⁹⁰ De Vaux. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. 1997:56-61.

⁶⁹¹ De Vaux. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. 1997:56-61.

⁶⁹² De Vaux. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. 1997:56-61.

⁶⁹³ Taylor Marshall. *The Crucified Rabbi: Judaism and the Origins of Catholic Christianity*. Saint John Press: Dallas. 2009:84-85.

prohibitions include a taboo on entering a cemetery or attending a funeral, and on being under the same roof (at home or in a hospital) as a dismembered organ.⁶⁹⁴ The exact rules and regulations of defilement are complex, but briefly summarized they entail that priests may not enter a room where there is a dead person or come within a few feet of the body.⁶⁹⁵ There are other rites pertaining to how they should wear their hair (Leviticus 21: 5).

The Torah refers to many rituals of purification relating to menstruation, childbirth, sexual relations, nocturnal emission, unusual bodily fluids, skin disease, death, and animal sacrifices. The regulations of biblical law generally prescribe a form of water-based ritual washing for removal of any ritual impurity, sometimes requiring just washing of the hands and at other times requiring full immersion. For example, he who touches a *zav*, i.e. a person with an unusual discharge, without having rinsed his hands in water, shall wash his clothes and bathe and remain unclean until the evening (Leviticus 15:11). Subsequently seven clean days are required, culminating in a ritual and temple offering before the *zav* is purified of his malady. The person having a running discharge needs seven days to become clean. He will have to wash his garments and bathe his flesh in running water and get thoroughly clean. On the eighth day he should take two turtledoves or two young pigeons and appear before Jehovah at the entrance of the ‘tent of meeting’ and give them to the priest (Leviticus 15:13-14).⁶⁹⁶ Reference to hand-washing can be seen in Psalms 26:6 (‘I will wash my hands in innocence; so will I compass Thine altar, O LORD’).

5.11 Initiation

5.11.1 Ancient Near East

As part of initiation, the Ancient Near East knew the concept of circumcision and bas-reliefs bear witness to its existence as a custom from the third millennium BC onward. Archaeological texts mention it and Herodotus speaks of it as an Egyptian concept, although some mummies are not circumcised.⁶⁹⁷ On the other hand, Jer. 9: 24-25 mentions Egyptians along with Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab and the Arabs as being circumcised in the flesh but uncircumcised in heart, also in Ezek 32: 21-30.⁶⁹⁸ According to pre-Islamic poets the ancient Arabs were circumcised. Peoples with whom Israel had direct contact in Palestine,

⁶⁹⁴ Marshall. *The Crucified Rabbi: Judaism and the Origins of Catholic Christianity*. 2009:84-85.

⁶⁹⁵ Marshall. *The Crucified Rabbi: Judaism and the Origins of Catholic Christianity*. 2009:84-85.

⁶⁹⁶ Marshall, *The Crucified Rabbi: Judaism and the Origins of Catholic Christianity*, 2009, pp. 84 – 85.

⁶⁹⁷ Roland De Vaux (trans.). *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd: London. 1961:46-48.

⁶⁹⁸ There is no discussion of initiation in the Hebrew text in this section, only an allusion to the ANE practices in the Bible.

the Philistines, were uncircumcised.⁶⁹⁹ This distinguished them from the Canaanites, who were never described but who must have been circumcised.

The most famous of the ancient mysteries, and the most important in Classical Greece, were the Eleusinian mysteries. The mysteries known as Orphic, Dionysian or Bacchic pertained to the god Dionysus and his "prophet" Orpheus. Apuleius, a 2nd-century Roman writer, describes an initiation into the mysteries of Isis.⁷⁰⁰ The initiation was preceded by a bath in the public baths and a ceremonial sprinkling by the priest. The candidate was thereafter given secret instructions in the temple of Isis. The candidate had to abstain for ten days from meat and wine, after which he was dressed in linen and led by night into the innermost part of the sanctuary where the actual initiation, the details of which were secret, took place. During the next two days, dressed in the robes of his consecration, he participated in feasting. Apuleius describes also an initiation into the cult of Osiris and yet a third initiation, all of the same pattern.⁷⁰¹

5.11.2 Old Testament

By way of introducing the discussion of Israelite initiation perceptions, I present the example of Deborah sitting under a tree for the purpose of divination. Some decision was needed and probably the rustling of the leaves of a sacred tree was believed to indicate a road forward.⁷⁰² However, only an expert in such matters could understand and interpret such a message and act as oracle. The concept indicates that the diviner, or the prophetess, could understand what the sounds of leaves and wind conveyed whereas others heard only leaves rustling.

Initiation could be identified as an element of the primal religion of the ancient Israelites. In the perspective of this thesis I use David Brooks Dodd's delineation⁷⁰³ of initiation as consisting of two concepts, namely initiation into secret mysteries and initiation into a new phase of life, for example the life crisis ritual that transforms children or adolescents into adults. The first kind of initiation leads back to the very roots of the terminology. The Latin *initia* is Cicero's and Varro's rendering of the Greek word *musteria* – referring to

⁶⁹⁹ 1Sam. 18: 25; cf. Judges 14:3; 1Sam. 17: 26, 36.

⁷⁰⁰ Apuleius, "11.23" cited in E. J. Kenney (trans.). *The Golden Ass, or, Metamorphoses*. Penguin Books: New York City. 1998:208–210.

⁷⁰¹ Apuleius, "11.23" cited in E. J. Kenney (trans.). *The Golden Ass, or, Metamorphoses*. 1998:211-214.

⁷⁰² Ann Jeffers, *Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East, Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria*, Brill: Leiden, 1996, pp. 92, 182.

⁷⁰³ David Brooks Dodd, *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*, Routledge: London, 2003, p. 4.

mystery cults as performed at Eleusis and on Samothrace. However, *initiare*, as a translation of Greek *mueisthai* (to initiate into a mystery cult), and *initiates* as the Latin equivalent of Greek *muemenos* (initiate of a mystery cult), are at least a century older. Via the derivative noun *initiation*, first applied by Suetonius to the ritual introduction into the Eleusinian mysteries, the term came to be used in Oliver's English anthropological terminology and, since then, has figured prominently in twentieth-century anthropology. The ritual undergone by Abraham can be considered characteristic of primal religion as it involves both the concepts of imitation as described above. The rites of his initiation into the covenant with Yahweh could be seen both in the light of Abraham being introduced to the covenant, and Abraham being transformed and reaching another level of life with Yahweh, hence the physical enactment of circumcision and the change of names.

The circumcision concept goes back to the Ancient Near East where bas-reliefs from the third millennium BC onwards bear witness to the custom.⁷⁰⁴ Archaeological texts identify it also as an Egyptian concept though some mummies are not circumcised. On the other hand, Jer. 9: 24-25 mentions Egyptians along with Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab and the Arabs as being circumcised in the flesh but 'uncircumcised in heart' (also Ezek 32: 21-30). According to the pre-Islamic poets the ancient Arabs were circumcised. Peoples with whom Israel had direct contact in Palestine, the Philistines were uncircumcised.⁷⁰⁵

Originally circumcision seems to have been a general initiation rite before marriage, also meant to initiate a man into the common life of his clan. This was very probably the aim of circumcision in Egypt where it was performed at puberty.⁷⁰⁶ The custom must originally have had the same purpose in Israel: the story of the Shechemites expressly connects it with marriage.⁷⁰⁷ The obscure episode of Exodus 4: 24-26 also seems to refer to marriage, for the pretence of circumcising Moses makes of him a 'bridegroom of blood'.⁷⁰⁸ That circumcision was associated with the concept of initiation is confirmed by the metaphorical uses of the word. The 'uncircumcised heart',⁷⁰⁹ is a heart that does not understand.⁷¹⁰ The 'uncircumcised ear' is an ear

⁷⁰⁴ De Vaux. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. 1997:46-48.

⁷⁰⁵ 1Sam. 18: 25; cf. Judges 14:3; 1Sam. 17: 26, 36.

⁷⁰⁶ De Vaux. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. 1997:46-48.

⁷⁰⁷ Genesis 34.

⁷⁰⁸ De Vaux. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. 1997:46-48.

⁷⁰⁹ Jeremiah 9: 25.

⁷¹⁰ Contrast Deut. 10: 16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4.

that does not listen,⁷¹¹ while ‘uncircumcised lips’ cannot speak.⁷¹² Metaphorically, when heart, ear, and lips are initiated, they will be able to understand, listen and speak. Therefore circumcision was in ancient Israel practised as a concept of initiation that was thought to make a man fit for normal sexual life and, thus, marriage. This meaning must have faded and eventually the operation came to be performed soon after birth. Possibly, I believe, this change occurred during the period of exile when circumcision became the distinctive mark of men who belonged to Israel and to Yahweh.

5.12 Conclusion

The above analysis reflects the viewpoints of scholars on the presence and the nature of aspects of primal religions in the Ancient Near East and Old Testament, based on archaeological materials, both artefacts and written texts. With a view to the research areas covered by this thesis, I have, in studying the religious ideologies of the ANE and the OT, focused on those aspects that are shared by various peoples.

In the third chapter, an attempt was made to create a basis for structuring the discussions on primal religions as presented by the present research. This chapter accordingly has followed the same structural theories in arguing whether primal elements of Ancient Near Eastern religions are identifiable in the ancient religion of Israel. That the influence of the Ancient Near East played a role in the religion of ancient Israel has become clear by the primal religious elements identified in Old Testament texts.

⁷¹¹ Jer. 6:10.

⁷¹² Exo. 6: 12,30.

CHAPTER FIVE

SERMON ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

A comparison had been done between the Ancient Near Eastern religious beliefs and the Old Testament in the thesis. The next task is to also do a comparison between the Yoruba primal religious beliefs and the sermons of Yoruba Pentecostal preachers collected, but without analysing them, it will be difficult to do a comparison between the latter duos. This analysing will produce the identification of primal elements from the sermons, which will enable the researcher to compare the primal religious elements discovered in them with that of the Yoruba primal religious concepts. In the ANE and OT, identification of these primal elements had been done by scholars whose works had been referred to. But identification of the primal religious elements has not been done yet by anybody from sermons in general. This is the task of this chapter, focussing on the sermons which had been collected by me from the various publications of the preachers. In order to undertake this task I will use the analytic tool called Grounded Theory.

6.2 A Framework for Data Analysis: Grounded Theory

Grounded theory has been defined, described, and discussed in a variety of ways by diverse social scientists without, so it seems, adding much in the way of different meanings. Any researcher needs a method enabling him/her to develop a theory that offers a way to process and interpret the results of the research. From the perspective of the present research grounded theory constitutes an acceptable approach to analyzing the data collected from sermons in Yorubaland that are a principal concern of this thesis.

Two proponents of grounding theory are Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. Their views differ slightly but before I present their arguments, a definition of grounded theory is called for. I will base the definition on a discussion of the theory by social scientists,⁷¹³ who themselves were drawing on arguments from Glaser and

⁷¹³ Patricia Yancey, Martin & Barry A. Turner. 'Grounded Theory and Organizational Research.' *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*. Vol. 22, no. 2. 1986:16; G. Allan. 'A Critique of Using Grounded Theory as Research Method.' *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*. Vol. 2, no. 1. 2003; Udo Kelle. 'Emergence' vs. 'Forcing' of Empirical Data? A Crucial Problem of 'Grounded Theory' Reconsidered. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research [On-line Journal], 6(2), Art. 27, 2005; G. Thomas and D. James., Reinventing Grounded Theory: Some Questions about Theory, Ground and Discovery. *British Educational Research Journal*. 2006:37-45; K Charmaz. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 2006; A. Clarke. *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 2005; G. Mey & K. Mruck (eds.). *Grounded Theory Reader (HSR – Supplement 19)*. Cologne: ZHSF. 2007; C. Goulding. *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide for Management, Business and Market Researchers*. London: Sage. 2002; Robert A. Stebbins. *Exploratory Research in the Social Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 2001.

Strauss' book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, and Strauss and Corbin's *Basics of Qualitative Research* where the method is introduced. (The work of the two proponents of grounded theory will be discussed later in this chapter). The phrase 'grounded theory' refers to a theory that is developed inductively from a corpus of data. If done well, the resulting theory fits at least one dataset perfectly. This contrasts with theories that are derived deductively from a 'grand' theory without consideration of the data that have to be processed, and which therefore could turn out to fit no data at all.

Grounded theory takes a case rather than a variable perspective, according to Borgatti,⁷¹⁴ although the distinction is nearly impossible to draw. This means in part that the researcher takes different cases to 'be a self-contained' work, the wholes in which the variables interact as a unit to produce certain outcomes. A case-oriented perspective tends to assume that variables interact in complex ways and judges simple additive models to be suspect. Part and parcel of the case-orientation is a comparative orientation. Cases, similar in many variables but with different outcomes, are compared to see where the key causal differences may lie. This is based on John Stuart Mills' method of differences - essentially the use of (natural) experimental design.⁷¹⁵ Similarly, cases that have the same outcome are examined to see which conditions they have in common, thereby revealing necessary causes.

The grounded theory approach, particularly the way Strauss⁷¹⁶ develops it, consists of a set of steps whose careful execution is thought to guarantee a good theory as the outcome. Strauss would say that the quality of a theory can be evaluated by the process of its construction. This contrasts with non-scientific perspectives that claim that, how one generates a theory, whether through dreams or analogies, is irrelevant, because the quality of a theory is determined by its ability to explain new data.⁷¹⁷ It is apparent that grounded theorists are concerned with, or largely influenced by, emic understandings of the world: they use categories drawn from the research topics themselves and they tend to focus on making implicit belief systems explicit. Various scholarly works have been written that focus on the significance of the influence of primal religions on Christendom. The purpose of the present research however is to make an analysis that will explain this fact, rather than only showing that there is indeed an analogy between the Old Testament and Ancient Near

⁷¹⁴ S.P. Borgatti. A Statistical Method for Comparing Aggregate Data Across a Priori Groups. *Field Methods* 14(1). 2002:88-107.

⁷¹⁵ Arthur H. Miller & Ola Listhaug. *John Stuart Mill (1891): A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive*. University Press of the Pacific, Honolulu. 2002:83-87.

⁷¹⁶ Anselm L. Strauss. *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, England. 1987:109-146.

⁷¹⁷ Strauss. *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. 1987:10.

Eastern religious practices. The researcher aims to use an empirical approach demonstrating the point through an application of grounded theory. Grounded theorists analyse structural and functional elements of data, using categories. Thus, in order to prove that primal religious elements are factors that characterize the sermons of Yoruba Pentecostal preachers, these elements have to be identified and categorized.

Before I describe the specific methods as explained by experts in the theory, I will present a few other perspectives on grounded theory. According to Helen Scott, grounded theory is a general research method (and is thus not owned by any particular school or discipline) that provides guidance on matters of data collection (whereby one can use quantitative data or qualitative data or any other type, e.g. video, images, text, observations, spoken word, etc.), and that details strict procedures for data analysis.⁷¹⁸ Therefore, using the theory in the present theological research is very apt. Moreover all research is ‘grounded’ in data, but few studies produce a ‘grounded theory.’ Grounded theory is a research tool that enables one to seek out and conceptualize latent social patterns and structures in an area of interest through a process of constant or continuous comparison.⁷¹⁹ Initially an inductive approach to generate substantive codes from one’s data is essential. In other words, it is pertinent to first generalize the universal views of those who have delved into the field before. In this research, the contributions made by various scholars to the study of the influence of primal religion on Christianity have been taken into account. It is on the basis of these contributions that the present thesis is developing its theory. They have also provided suggestions regarding where to go to collect data. More focused questions will be asked in what represents the deductive phase of the grounded theory process.

Grounded theory can be used with either qualitative or quantitative data. The data collected for this research consist in sermons of Yoruba Pentecostal preachers, published between 2000 and 2007 when the research started. From these sermons categories of relevant elements will be identified. This thesis is a study in theology, within the scope of biblical studies but with a special interest in the social behaviour in its field. It focuses on how a particular social group relates with the Bible. Thereto the corpus of its relation with the Bible has to be analysed. Grounded theory is relevant to this theological study as it is used in the social field for analysis and study of social behaviours.

⁷¹⁸ Helen Scott. Data Analysis: Getting Conceptual. *The Grounded Theory Review: An International Journal*. 8 (2):89=109.

⁷¹⁹ Scott. Data Analysis: Getting Conceptual. *The Grounded Theory Review: An International Journal*, 8 (2):89-109.

6.3 Theories of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss

Grounded theory, developed by the sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, is the result of their collaboration in research on dying hospital patients. The research led them to write the book *Awareness of Dying* in which they developed the constant comparative method, later known as grounded theory and described in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Since its original publication in 1967, Glaser and Strauss have disagreed on 'how to do' Grounded theory, resulting in a split in the theory between Straussian and Glaserian paradigms. This split occurred most obviously after Strauss published his *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* (1987). Thereafter, in 1990, Strauss, together with Juliet Corbin, published *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. This was in 1992 followed by a rebuke by Glaser who highlighted, chapter by chapter, what he argued was original grounded theory and why, in his eyes, what Strauss and Corbin had written was not grounded theory in its 'intended form'. These different views of Grounded theory methodology have become the subject of much academic debate, by Glaser in 1998 referred to as a 'rhetorical wrestling'

According to Kelle, "the controversy between Glaser and Strauss boils down to the question of whether the researcher uses a well defined 'coding paradigm' and always looks systematically for 'causal conditions,' 'phenomena/context, intervening conditions, action strategies' and 'consequences' in the data, or whether theoretical codes are employed as they emerge in the same way as substantive codes emerge, but drawing on a huge fund of 'coding families.'⁷²⁰ Both strategies have their pros and cons. Novices who wish to be clear in their mind on how to structure data material may be satisfied with the use of the coding paradigm. Since the paradigm consists of theoretical terms that carry only limited empirical content, there is only a small risk that data would be forced by its application. However, it should be remembered that it is linked to a certain micro-sociological perspective. Many researchers may concur with that approach, especially since qualitative research always had a relation to micro-sociological action theory. Others who want to employ a macro-sociological and system theory perspective may feel that the use of the coding paradigm would lead them astray.⁷²¹

⁷²⁰ Kelle. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research [On-line Journal]. 6(2). Art. 27, 2005.

⁷²¹ Patricia Yancey Martin & Barry A. Turner. 'Grounded Theory and Organizational Research.' *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*. Vol. 22, no. 2, 141.

The first book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, published in 1967, was ‘developed in close and equal collaboration’ by Glaser and Strauss. Glaser wrote a methodology, *Theoretical Sensitivity*, in 1978 and has since then written five more books on the method and edited five readers with collections of Grounded theory articles and dissertations.

The Glaserian strategy is not a qualitative research method, but claims the dictum ‘all is data’. This means that, not only interview or observed data, but also surveys or statistical analyses or ‘whatever comes the researcher's way while studying a substantive area’ can be used in the comparative process and so can data from written material produced by science, the media or even fiction. Thus the method is according to Glaser not limited to the realm of qualitative research, which he calls ‘QDA’ (Qualitative Data Analysis). QDA is devoted to descriptive accuracy while the Glaserian method emphasizes conceptualization ‘independent from’ or ‘uninfluenced by’ time, place and people. A grounded theory concept should be easy to use in fields outside the substantive area where it was generated.

Glaser sees Grounded theory as a systematic generation of theory from data that embraces both inductive and deductive thinking. One goal of a Grounded theory is to formulate hypotheses based on concepts. Others may try to verify the hypotheses that are generated by constantly comparing conceptualized data on different levels of abstraction, whereby deductive steps are taken. Another goal of a Grounded theory is to discover the participants’ main concern and how they continually try to resolve it. The questions one keeps on asking in Grounded theory are ‘What’s going on?’ and ‘What is the main problem of the participants and how are they trying to solve it?’ These questions will in due course be answered by the core variable and its sub-cores and properties. In this research, the participants’ collected sermons will provide the answers to the main concern of the thesis, which is whether their sermons contain elements of their primal religions.

Grounded theory does not aim for the ‘truth’ but wants to conceptualize what's going on by using empirical data. In a way Grounded theory resembles what many researchers do when retrospectively formulating new hypotheses to fit data. However, in Grounded theory the researcher does not pretend to have formulated the hypotheses in advance since preformed hypotheses are prohibited.⁷²² If a research goal is accurate description, then another method should be chosen since Grounded theory is not a descriptive method.

⁷²² B.G. Glaser & A. Strauss. *A Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Sociology Press. 1967:194=200.

Instead it has the goal of generating concepts that explain people's actions regardless of time and place. The descriptive parts of a Grounded theory are there mainly to illustrate the concepts. This is the main reason why Grounded theory has been employed to analyze the sermons selected by the researcher. By the time the sermons have been analyzed using the grounded theory, they will speak for themselves with the relevant features clearly identified. In most behavioural research the units of analysis are persons, for example patients, whereas in Grounded theory the unit of analysis is the incident.⁷²³ As every participant usually reports many incidents, there are generally at least several hundred of these analyzed in a Grounded theory study. When comparing many incidents in a certain area, the emerging concepts and their relationships are in reality probability statements. Consequently, Grounded theory is not a qualitative method, but a general method that can use any kind of data, even if qualitative ones at the moment are most popular.⁷²⁴ However, although working with probabilities, most Grounded theory studies are considered qualitative because they don't use statistical methods and figures are not presented. The results of Grounded theory consist not in the reporting of facts but in a set of probability statements about the relationship between concepts, or in an integrated set of conceptual hypotheses developed from empirical data.⁷²⁵ This translates into the fact that, as concerns the present thesis, the quality or character of the data collected is more significant than the quantity. The nature of the sermons as will be revealed by Grounded theory analysis contains the trace of the primal elements.

Data is a fundamental to Grounded theory. This means that the researcher has to consider whatever comes his way when studying a certain area as data. Data help the researcher to generate concepts for the emerging theory. Field notes may come from informal interviews, lectures, seminars, expert group meetings, newspaper articles, internet mail lists, even television shows, conversations with friends, etc. In the case of this particular study, I am delving into the sermons of certain preachers that have appeared in the media. Some have been collected from the electronic media; but most were selected from publications of the preachers concerned. In the general use of grounded theory it is even possible - and sometimes a good idea - that a researcher with much knowledge of the area of study interviews him/herself, treating that interview

⁷²³ Glaser & Strauss. *A Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. 1967:9.

⁷²⁴ B.G. Glaser. *The Grounded Theory Perspective I: Conceptualization Contrasted with Description*. Sociology Press. 2001:47; B.G. Glaser. *The Grounded Theory Perspective II: Conceptualization Contrasted with Description's Remodelling of Grounded Theory*. Sociology Press. 2003:47-49.

⁷²⁵ B.G. Glaser. *Doing Grounded Theory – Issues and Discussions*. Sociology Press, 1998. Cited by Melanie Birks & Jane Mills. *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide*. Sage Publications Inc.: London. 2011:151.

like any other data, coding and comparing it and generating concepts from it.⁷²⁶ This may sound impractical because one doesn't have to interview oneself to discover what one knows, but one's knowledge may not be on the conceptual level and Grounded theory deals with conceptual level data. Grounded theory thus reveals in an academic way that which I as a person know concerning the question posed by this research. For instance, I am aware that many preachers among the Yoruba exhibit elements of the primal religion, not only in their exposition of the Bible but also in the liturgy of their denomination. This knowledge is mine because I am a Yoruba. It is intrinsic in me to recognize elements of the traditional religious concepts without looking for the knowledge in books.⁷²⁷ Hitherto, I had erroneously perceived that the presence of these primal elements is caused by the low level of formal education of some preachers and their lack of exposure to Western lifestyles. But, on the contrary, after employing Grounded theory for an analysis of the sermons of Pentecostal preachers who are regarded as highly educated,⁷²⁸ I discovered that features tagged as primal religious elements are rife in their sermons as well. The data is a significant key in achieving, not so much the simple awareness of a fact, but the best answer to a problem. In other words, Grounded theory is the theoretical method that effectively evaluates data supplied by the study in a wide sense, and that brings out uncharted facts.

According to Glaser, 'open coding' or 'substantive coding' is the first level of grouping data into categories. Written data from field notes or transcripts are conceptualized line by line. In the beginning of a study everything is coded in order to get closer to the problem and how it is to be resolved. The coding is often done in the margin of field notes. This phase may be tedious as one is conceptualizing all incidents in the data yielding many concepts. These are compared, as one codes more data, and merging into new concepts occurs, and eventually these are renamed and modified. The Grounded theory researcher goes back and forth while comparing data, constantly modifying the growing theory and sharpening it at the same time, following the different steps of Grounded theory's build-up schedule. In my research, this aspect of the method involved the careful reading of the sermons to be analyzed, line by line, whereby certain concepts that had to be tagged according to genre were underlined.

⁷²⁶ B.G. Glaser & A. Strauss. *A Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. 1967:194-200.

⁷²⁷ But I am not orientated to expose the Bible the way the Pentecostals do because of my ministerial training as an Anglican priest.

⁷²⁸ Some of them were University lecturers before taking up the ministry job.

‘Selective coding’ is done after the core variable, or what is thought to be the core, in other words the tentative core, has been found. The core explains the behaviour of the participants in resolving their main concern. The tentative core is never wrong. It more or less fits with the data. After having chosen the core variable, one selectively codes data, guided by the core and without bothering with concepts that have little relevance to the core and its sub-cores. Also, one now selectively samples new data with the core in mind. This is called ‘theoretical sampling’, a deductive part of Grounded theory. ‘Selective coding’ delimits the study which makes it move faster. This is indeed to be encouraged when doing Grounded theory,⁷²⁹ since Grounded theory is not concerned with data accuracy (as descriptive research is), but focuses on generating concepts that are not influenced by time, place and people, in other words, abstract concepts. ‘Selective coding’ can be done by going over old field notes or memos that have already been coded once at an earlier stage, or by coding newly gathered data. In this second deductive stage in the sermon analysis the underlined aspects of the sermon body were categorized into as many features of the Yoruba primal religion as had been identified.

‘Theoretical codes’ integrate the theory by weaving the fractured concepts into hypotheses that work together in a theory explaining the main concern of the participants. Theoretical coding means that the researcher applies a theoretical model to the data. It is important that this model is not conceived beforehand but that it has emerged during the comparative process of Grounded theory. Therefore, the ‘theoretical codes,’ just like ‘substantive codes’ should be generated by the process of constantly comparing the data in field notes and memos.

The nomenclature of Grounded theory as used by Glaser is somewhat confusing for a newcomer to Grounded theory. The terminology is discussed below. I have to note however that, although in the description of my analysis of the sermons of Yoruba priests Glaser’s terminology does not appear in actual words, the analysis includes his methods in practice.

‘Theoretical memoing’ is ‘the core stage of grounded theory methodology.’ ‘Memos are the theorizing write-up of ideas about substantive codes and their theoretically coded relationships as they emerge during coding, collecting and analyzing data, and during memoing.’⁷³⁰

⁷²⁹ Melanie Birks & Jane Mills, *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide*, Sage Publications Inc.: London. 2011: 88-111.

⁷³⁰ Birks & Mills. *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide*. 2011:115.

Memoing is important in the early phases of a Grounded theory study, for example when open coding. At that stage the researcher is conceptualizing incidents and memoing helps this process. Theoretical memos can be anything written or drawn and subjected to the constant comparing that makes up a Grounded theory. Memos are important tools both to refine and to keep track of ideas that develop when one compares incidents with other incidents and, thereafter, concepts with concepts while the theory keeps evolving. In memos one develops ideas about naming concepts and relating them to each other. In memos one arranges the relationships between concepts in two-by-two tables, in diagrams or figures or whatever makes the ideas flow and generates comparative power. Without memoing the theory remains superficial and the concepts generated won't be very original. Memoing works as an accumulation of written ideas so that they become, as it were, a 'bank' of ideas about concepts and how these relate to each other. This 'bank' is rich in fragments of what will later become the written theory. Memoing is total creative freedom without rules regarding writing, grammar or style.⁷³¹ Memo writing is an instrument for the flow of ideas and nothing else. The writing of memos makes one's ideas grow more realistic because they are converted from thoughts into words and they become communicable. In Grounded theory the pre-conscious processing that occurs when coding and comparing is recognized. The researcher is encouraged to register ideas about the ongoing research that eventually may link the study to everyday situations. Also an awareness of the serendipity of the methods used in Grounded theory is necessary to achieve good results.

The next step entails the sorting of memos. This is the key for formulating the evolving theory in order to present it to others. Sorting puts fractured data back together. During sorting a lot of new ideas emerge, which in turn are recorded in new memos, creating the memo-on-memos phenomenon. Sorting memos generates theory that explains the main action in the area of study. A theory written from unsorted memos may be rich in ideas but the connection between concepts is weak.

Sorting is followed by writing up the sorted piles of memos. At this stage the theory comes close to the written Grounded theory product. The different categories are now related to each other and to the core variable. The theoretical density should be dosed by mixing concepts with descriptions, tables, and figures to optimize readability. In the later rewriting, the relevant literature is woven in with the text to put the

⁷³¹ Birks & Mills. *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide*. 2011:115.

theory in a scholarly context. Finally, the Grounded theory is edited and eventually submitted for publication.

In Grounded theory there is no pre-research literature review involved no taping and no talk. Grounded theory, according to Glaser, gives the researcher freedom to generate new concepts that explain human behaviour. This freedom is optimal when the researcher refrains from taping interviews, from making a pre research literature review, and from talking about the research before it is written up. These rules make Grounded theory different from most other methods using qualitative data.

A pre-research literature review is undesirable because studying the literature on the topic of study creates preconceptions of what to expect from the research while the researcher gets desensitized by borrowed concepts. Instead, studying the development of grounded theories in other study areas and reading Grounded theory method books increase theoretical sensitivity. Relevant literature should not be read before the sorting stage when it has to be treated as more data to code and compared with what has already been coded and generated.

Taping and transcribing interviews is common practice in qualitative research but it is counterproductive and a waste of time when applied in the context of Grounded Theory which moves faster if the researcher delimits his/her data by making field-notes on interviews. The field-notes will generate concepts that fit with collected data and that are relevant, explaining how participants resolve their main concern.

Talking about the theory before it is written up is to be avoided as it drains the researcher of motivational energy. Talking brings either praise or criticism and both diminish the motivation to write memos that develop and refine the concepts and the theory. Positive feedback tends to make one satisfied with what one has done. Negative feedback hampers one's self-confidence. The researcher should only talk about the Grounded theory to persons capable of helping him/her without influencing final judgments.⁷³²

Anselm Strauss, a student of Herbert Blumer, and Barney Glaser, studying under Paul Lazarsfeld, both at the University of California, were working together on a study of the sociology of illness when they

⁷³² Birks & Mills. *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide*. 2011:177.

developed a methodology that became the foundation for the important branch of qualitative sociology called grounded theory.⁷³³

Strauss also considered categories, codes and codings as the important concepts of Grounded theory. According to him the research principle behind grounded theory is neither inductive nor deductive, but offers a way of combining these.⁷³⁴ It is a method that leads to a conclusion by generalizing observed instances and by applying the rules of logic to a premise. This results in a research practice in which data sampling, data analysis and theory development are not seen as distinct, but as different steps to be repeated until one can describe and explain the phenomenon that is the subject of the research.⁷³⁵

In an interview shortly before Strauss' death in 1994, he named three basic elements that every grounded theory approach must include.⁷³⁶ The first one is *theoretical sensitive coding*, that is, generating theoretical strong concepts from the data to explain the phenomenon researched. Secondly, *theoretical sampling* which entails deciding whom to interview or what to observe next, depending on the state of theory generation, and that implies the start, with the first interview, of data analysis and the writing down of memos and hypotheses at this early stage. The third basic element is the need to *compare* between phenomena and contexts to make the theory strong.

Differences between the two proponents could be summarized as follows. Grounded theory according to Glaser emphasizes induction or emergence and the individual researcher's creativity within a clear framework of stages, whereas Strauss is more interested in validation criteria and a systematic approach.

6.4 Problems of Grounded Theory

Critics of grounded theory have focused on its status as theory, whereby the question has arisen whether what is produced is really 'theory.' On the notion of 'ground,' the critics have asked why 'grounding' one's finding is important in qualitative inquiry. What are they 'grounded' in? Also the claim to use and develop

⁷³³ Kathy Charmaz. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. Sage Publications Inc.: London. 2006:4-6.

⁷³⁴ Charmaz. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. 2006:42-71.

⁷³⁵ Charmaz. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. 2006:42-71.

⁷³⁶ H. Legewie, B. Schervier-Legewie. "Forschung ist harte Arbeit, es ist immer ein Stück Leiden damit verbunden. Deshalb muss es auf der anderen Seite Spaß machen". *Forum: Qualitative Social Research On-line Journal*, 5(3), Art. 22, 2004.

inductive knowledge was questioned. These criticisms are summed up by Thomas and James⁷³⁷ who suggest that it is impossible to free oneself of preconceptions in the collection and analysis of data in the way that Glaser and Strauss say is necessary. They also point to the formulaic nature of grounded theory and the lack of congruence of this with an open and creative interpretation - which ought to be the hallmark of qualitative inquiry. They suggest that the one element of grounded theory worth keeping is the constant comparative method.

Grounded theory was developed in a period when other qualitative methods were often considered as unscientific and it became the main qualitative method that was on the whole accepted as academic enough. Thus, especially in America, qualitative research is often equated with grounded theory. This is criticized by qualitative researchers using other methodologies (such as traditional ethnography, narratology, storytelling, etc.).

In my conclusion, I will surmise that no theory is without any shortcomings. Theories are bodies of rules, ideas, principles, and techniques that are applied to a subject especially when this is seen as distinct from actual practice. For instance many coaches have a good grasp of the theory of football but cannot motivate players. Theories are speculations, abstract thoughts, contemplation. They are sets of hypothetical circumstances or principles. They are also scientific principles employed to explain phenomena. They are methods for gathering reliable information to answer a question or support an experimental hypothesis, an assumption, or a system of assumptions, accepted principles, and rules of procedure based on limited information or knowledge, devised to analyze, predict, or otherwise explain the nature or behaviour of a specified set of phenomena through abstract reasoning. Grounded theory has become an accepted principle of analysis, employed successfully to formulate theories in social sciences. Therefore I have assumed that it could be adapted to be used in an empirical approach to the subject of this research.

In summary, grounded theory is first and foremost a research method. But the term 'grounded theory' is used in two ways: if one adheres to the strictures of grounded-theory-the-research-method one engages in a research process that will produce a theory-which-is-grounded-in-data i.e. a grounded theory. Thus, the research method and the output of the research process have the same name which can be confusing.

⁷³⁷ G. Thomas and D. James. 'Reinventing Grounded Theory: Some Questions about Theory, Ground and Discovery'. *British Educational Research Journal*: 767.

Grounded theory uses a number of terms each of which means something specific. One can read about these terms and try and grasp their meanings but it is not until one engages with the grounded theory method and tussles with the process that the distinctions and meanings become well understood. For example, *substantive codes* form the basis for one's theory and are the outputs of the *open coding* stage.

As one codes one's text based data line by line, one will notice a specific section of the data (be it a word, a line or a paragraph) and label it. That section can be thought of as an 'incident'. As one identifies more incidents and labels them, particular labels grow and become saturated. A label that is saturated earns its place in the theory and is now termed a *substantive code*. The incidents which built up that code are similarly elevated to the status of indicator. Thus a *substantive code* comprises many indicators. In practice labels are thought of as tentative codes, or working codes and they are referred to as codes. There are four stages of analysis. The first is conceptualizing or modelling on the first level of abstraction. All ideas conceptualized are called incidents in the data and these will yield the concepts. The second stage involves the codes, or the identification of anchors that allow the key points of the data to be gathered. The next concern is the selective coding whereby collections are formed of codes of similar content allowing the data to be grouped. Thus core categories emerge: broad groups of similar concepts that are used to generate a theory. The theory finally is a collection of explanations of the subject of the research.

6.5 Data Collection

In grounded theory as mentioned before, qualitative and quantitative data are used both or singly (some scholars maintain that the theory uses only quantitative data).. This is in agreement with the views of Strauss and Glaser. Thus the data I have collected represent the observation of the substantive group of people within the substantive area of focus in this research. These are the sermons preached by the Yoruba preachers of some Pentecostal churches.

The research adopts the qualitative research approach that depends typically on what has been written, said, or observed as data sources. This provides a rich and descriptive data, because it is presented from the participants' viewpoint. The field work is done within the Yoruba Pentecostal community and churches and is limited to the Ibadan, Remo, and Lagos areas. The inhabitants of these areas form part of the Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria. They are located in three states of Nigeria, namely Oyo, Ogun, and Lagos states.

In grounded theory, public or private records, irrespective of form, can be included in the data type. Included are also conversations with individuals or groups of individuals, either face-to-face or synchronously (e.g. telephone, text chat) or asynchronously (e.g. e-mails). I however, in the present research, in congruence with the ethics of research field working of my University and its School of Religion and Theology, I will examine the publications of the sermons by the selected ministers in order to identify the primal elements that survive in their interpretations of biblical texts.

The data consists in the published sermons of the ministers. The sermons have been published between 2000 and 2009 making them relatively recent. I have taken two steps in their collection. First, in the survey of sermons in three areas of Yorubaland, namely Lagos, Ibadan and Ijebu/Remo areas, I have identified 20 initially and then secondly refined these to 10 that exemplify the 10 primal features. My preliminary analysis of the 20 sermons helped me to identify the 10 sermons, with each of the 10 exemplifying one key primal category. The sermons exhibit more than one primal feature, as my analysis in the Appendix demonstrates, but for the purposes of my analysis I will focus on only one primal feature per sermon.

6.6 Sermon Analysis

The following steps will be taken to analyze the sermons of Yoruba Pentecostal preachers so as to bring out enduring features of Yoruba primal religion. This is with a view to answering the research question: ‘Does the primal religion of the Yoruba preachers influence their interpretation of the Bible and its concepts?’ To answer the question, elements of the Yoruba primal religion have to be identifiable in the sermons.

The sermons are analyzed in an inductive way. The conclusion of my research theory will be based on the facts drawn from the sermons. As I have iterated in the introduction of the thesis above, this method of sermon analysis is adapted from Andre Verweij’s analysis of Lenten sermons on the suffering of Jesus, whereby he used grounded theory,⁷³⁸ but my own sermon analysis is in a different field and purpose.

I have made an effort to painstakingly follow the advice in Barney’s books on methodology. I am aware that, in a case study such as this, numbers of data collected are not as important as the correctness of the

⁷³⁸ Research Andre Verweij. May 2009.

analysis. Ten examples from the sermons collected are selected and featured to avoid creating an over-long thesis, and they are all in the Appendix I.

6.6.1 Open Coding

The identification of the core categories, e.g. animism, magic, rites, etc., to which every single incident belongs, involves three actions. The first process which is called **Open Coding** involves cataloguing the sermons into categories. In this thesis, the categories are two. The sermons that are my data will be conceptualized with a view to finding out in what genre of Christian motif to catalogue them, and this is a preliminary allocation of the sermons into two key categories. It is the first form of analysis in Grounded Theory. In this thesis, it has to be decided in regard to each concept, to which of the two motifs that have prominently emerged in the church in Africa they belong: the Faith Gospel or the Demonic Possession.⁷³⁹ An examination of the sermons collected for analysis, makes clear that their common characteristic can be pinned to the two paradigms identified by Paul Gifford as core conceptions in African Christianity, namely Faith Gospel and Demonic Possession.⁷⁴⁰

Faith Gospel holds that Jesus has already won for Christians all the blessings of health and wealth. This idea is linked with spiritual laws, for example the law of increase (sowing and reaping). God will give us as many blessings as we give to Him and to our fellow human beings. Furthermore, the work of Christ on the cross; the power of the Holy Spirit; and so on; are spiritual principles that give believers dominion over sickness, poverty and failure in life. The Demonic Possession syndrome concerns the preoccupation with demons and the tendency of interpreting all dimensions of life in terms of spiritual forces of every kind. These two constitute the main and most visible motifs in the context of this case study of sermons as preached by Yoruba Pentecostal ministers. Therefore the published sermons have been categorized as determined by one of the two themes. In Grounded Theory, the themes, or the similarity of contents, allow the data to be grouped through the process of constant comparison. The following section will showcase a brief presentation of background information on the ten preachers, whose sermons have been analysed in the thesis.

⁷³⁹ Niels Kastfelt (ed.). *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003:16–35.

⁷⁴⁰ Niels Kastfelt (ed.). *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003:16–35.

This is intended to identify their Christian or church background as well as some particular patterns occurring in their ministries. These patterns will be helpful in cataloguing the preachers and their sermons in the first step of coding in Grounded Theory. The preachers, their churches, and their sermons fall into either of the above mentioned two patterns or paradigms.

6.6.1.1 The Preachers

The brief profile of each preacher is based on information accompanying their publications. This information mainly concerns the fact that they are Yoruba, and their educational, social, and religious background as well as their activities in their churches. Some of these preachers are not attached to any Church organization, but they are preachers who engage in the ministry not administering any Church or administered by any Church organization.

Also the information that gives evidence of the background of the ministers who administer Church organizations is found on the churches' websites. All facts that will be presented in this regard are thus in the public domain.

6.6.1.1.1 The Faith Gospel Paradigm

6.6.1.1.1.1 Pastor Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola

The ministry of Dr. Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola has spanned more than 28 years since, in 1979; he became leader of the Ibadan Varsity Christian Union (IVCU), then Africa's largest campus fellowship.

The following year, he became national president of the Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES), the world's largest Christian students' body which he also served as its national prayer secretary for six years.

He founded the Gethsemane Prayer Ministries whose reach, today, is worldwide. Dr. Aransiola is an alumnus of the Haggai Institute for Advance Leadership in Singapore. He ministers on at least five continents on a regular basis.

Dr. Aransiola is currently the national coordinator of two national prayer bodies, 'Nigeria Prays', a 'national prayer mobilization' initiated by General Dr. Yakubu Gowon, Nigeria's ex-head of state, and the National Committee on Repentance, Reconciliation, and Mobilization.

Dr. Aransiola has a Ph.D. in Fisheries Management and was a University of Ibadan lecturer for many years.⁷⁴¹

6.6.1.1.1.1 The Gethsemane Prayer Ministries

The Gethsemane Prayer Ministry started as Gethsemane Prayer Fellowship and was commissioned in 1987 as a forum for continuous and consistent teaching and practice of God's word in prayer, fasting, praise, worship, intercession, supplication and deliverance. The founder was Dr. Moses Aransiola and it now has a worldwide following.

The Ministries incorporate the Gethsemane Prayer Fellowship, Prayer School, Chapels, Itinerant Ministry, Publications, Media, and National Prayer Mobilization.

The church has planted vibrant churches in major cities of Nigeria including Abuja, Ibadan, and Lagos.

Gethsemane Prayer School under Dr. Moses Aransiola runs schools, academies, and conferences that focus on prayer as well as revival meetings in five continents. The Gethsemane Prayer School has trained and commissioned more than 100,000 prayer warriors, intercessors, and lay people all over the world. It has a global reputation for sound Bible based teachings on aspects of prayer and effective spiritual warfare. Its headquarters are in Ibadan, Nigeria.⁷⁴²

6.6.1.1.1.2 Bishop David Oyedepo

David O. Oyedepo is reported to be the richest pastor in Nigeria, affectionately called "Papa" by members of his congregation. He is a Christian author, preacher, the founder and presiding Bishop of Living Faith Church World Wide, also known as Winners' Chapel, and of its affiliated international churches known as Winners Chapel International, with headquarters in Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. Oyedepo is the senior pastor

⁷⁴¹ Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola. *Advanced Level Prayers*. Fortress Publishers: Lagos. 2004.

⁷⁴² www.gethsempray.org/aboutus.htm.

of Faith Tabernacle, a 50,000 seat church auditorium, reported to be the largest church auditorium in the world by the Guinness Book of Records. The Winners' Chapel network of churches is located in over 300 cities, in all states of Nigeria, as well as more than 63 cities in 32 African nations, Dubai, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Oyedepo has been seen as a pioneer of the Christian charismatic movement in Africa and has been referred to as one of the most powerful preachers in Nigeria. He is Chancellor of Covenant University.

Oyedepo, born in 1954 in Osogbo, was raised in a mixed religious family His father, Ibrahim, was a Muslim healer. His mother, Dorcas, was a member of the Eternal Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement (C&S), a branch of the Aladura movement in Nigeria. He was raised by his grandmother in Osogbo who introduced him to the virtues of Christian life by attending early morning prayers with him. She also taught him the importance of tithing. David was 'born again' in 1969, through the influence of his teacher, Betty Lasher, who took a special interest in him during his high school days. He studied architecture at Kwara State Polytechnic and worked briefly with the Federal Ministry of Housing in Ilorin before resigning to concentrate on missionary work. Oyedepo received a Ph.D. in Human Development from Honolulu University, Hawaii, United States.

A vision and a mandate from God to liberate the world from all oppression of the devil through preaching the word led to the founding of the Living Faith Church World Wide (LFCWW), first called Liberation Faith Hour Ministries, in 1981. Two years later, Pastor Enoch Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, ordained David and his wife, Florence Abiola Akano (known as Faith Abiola Oyedepo) to become pastors and officially commissioned the new church. Five years later, Oyedepo was ordained as Bishop.

As described earlier in this chapter, Living Faith Church (AKA Winners Chapel) started in Kaduna but moved to Lagos, the former capital of Nigeria, after Oyedepo claimed to have received instructions from God to reach out to the people of Lagos. The church in Lagos would become the international headquarters of Living Faith Church, attended by ever increasing crowds spilling over onto adjacent roads and decks of nearby uncompleted buildings and compelling people to stand for hours to hear his teachings. This led to the building of the renowned Faith Tabernacle, as instructed by God.

Oyedepo is an author and publisher of over 70 titles in addition to articles in periodicals. He is chairman of Dominion Publishing House (DPH), a publishing arm of the ministry. Through Oyedepo, Covenant University, Landmark University, Faith Academy (Nigeria), Faith Academy and Kingdom Heritage Schools have been established to equip the youth for making a global impact. The construction of a third university, Crown University is underway in Calabar, Cross Rivers, Nigeria.⁷⁴³

6.6.1.1.2.1 Living Faith Church World Wide (Winners' Chapel)

Winners' Chapel (also known as Living Faith Church Worldwide) is a mega church founded by Bishop David Oyedepo in 1981. The church has since developed into a global network of churches with congregations in 34 countries.

In May 1981, David Oyedepo claims, he had an 18 hour vision in which God said to him: 'Now the hour has come to liberate the world from all oppressions of the devil, through the preaching of the Word of faith; and I am sending you to undertake this task.' Two years later the church was formed with four members.

The international headquarters of Winners Chapel is called Faith Tabernacle. It covers about 70 acres (280,000 m²) and it is in a church complex called Canaanland. It was dedicated in 1999 with 97,800 people in attendance.

Faith Tabernacle is the largest church building in the world with a seating capacity of 50,400 people and an outside overflow capacity for 250,000 more. It has four services every Sunday.

The Church is founded on twelve core principles, namely Faith (1 John 5:4; Eph. 6:16)

The Word (John 1:1-12; Heb. 1:3)

Signs And Wonders (Ps. 82:5-7; John 3:8)

The Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1-8; Isaiah 10:27)

Prosperity (3 John 2; Ps. 35:27; Zech. 1:17)

Prayer (1 John 5:14)

Healing (Isaiah 53:3-4; Jer. 8:22; Matt. 8:17)

Wisdom (Prov. 24:3-4, Isaiah 33:6)

⁷⁴³ David O. Oyedepo. *Wonders of the Age: Manifestation of the Sons of God*. Dominion Publishing House: Lagos, 1996.

Success (Joshua 1:8-10)

Vision (Prov. 29:18, Jer. 29:11)

Consecration (Hebrews 12:14; 2 Tim. 2:19)

Praise (2 Chro. 20:20-22; Ps. 67:1-7; 149:1-9)⁷⁴⁴

6.6.1.1.3 Bishop Kehinde Adedokun

Bishop Kehinde Adedokun is the president of Victory International Church, Oluyole, Ibadan. He has been actively involved in the ministry for the past thirty years. His desire is ‘to see every saint in the body of Christ fully equipped, trained and placed as functional component of God’s end-time army’.

Because the church he oversees is active in various countries of the world, he has travelled widely, ‘strengthening churches, both leadership and individual members through his deliverance and prophetic ministry’. His current activity is focussed on an international missionary initiative in Central Europe and in the French speaking countries of West and Central Africa. He has authored many books.⁷⁴⁵

6.6.1.1.2 The Demon Possession Paradigm

6.6.1.1.2.1 Rev. Dr. D. K. Olukoya

Dr. D.K. Olukoya is the general overseer of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries. He holds a first class Honours degree in microbiology from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, and a Ph.D. in molecular genetics from the University of Reading, United Kingdom. As a researcher, he has over seventy scientific publications to his credit.

Dr. Olukoya is a teacher, prophet, evangelist and preacher.

6.6.1.1.2.1.1 Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries

MFM Ministries is a full gospel ministry devoted to the Revival of Apostolic Signs, Holy Ghost fireworks and the unlimited demonstration of the power of God to deliver. Absolute holiness within and without is taught as being a pre-requisite for going to Heaven. MFM is a do-it-yourself Gospel ministry where one’s hands are trained to wage war and one’s fingers to do battle. Aggressive prayer is used as an aid to spiritual

⁷⁴⁴ www.davidoyedepoministries.org.

⁷⁴⁵ Kehinde Adedokun. *Power in the Spirit*. Victory Press: Ibadan, 2002.

focus and a check against being overwhelmed by the flesh. At MFM Prayer City prayer goes on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, non-stop.

In 1989, soon after completing his Ph.D. in the United Kingdom, and while working at the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research, Dr. Daniel Kolawole Olukoya summoned a prayer meeting. 23 brethren showed up at the meeting. The venue was in the living room of Dr. Olukoya. It was the first a series of meetings where the power of God was experienced and verifiable miracles began to happen in the lives of the attending brethren. A kind of spiritual explosion occurred with people coming from far and wide to seek the face of God.

Soon a larger location was required. The prayer meetings moved to 60 Old Yaba Road in Yaba, Lagos where the audience grow even faster, necessitating another relocation.

The prayer group purchased an abandoned slum at 13 Olasimbo Street, Onike, Yaba. It was a fairly large piece of land near the University of Lagos. That slum has now been transformed into the International Headquarters of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries of which Dr. Olukoya is the General Overseer. The name "Mountain of Fire & Miracles Ministries" was revealed to him during normal prayer and the church had its first service on April 24, 1994.

Also at the new location, the congregation kept growing. The situation posed a challenge in respect of crowd and expansion management to the leadership. MFM then evolved the strategy of developing a network of branches in every state capital, local government headquarters, senatorial district and locality. To this day and across the world, MFM branches keep springing up and it remains one of the fastest growing churches of its generation. International church branches were first established in London, spreading to the United States, Canada, the rest of Europe, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. On every continent, MFM makes an impact.

MFM's vision is to turn the joy of its enemies into sorrow. Thereto we should have a deliverance ministry wherever we are. Who doesn't believe in deliverance, should not be there because MFM's aim is to build an aggressive end-time army for the Lord. It is thus an 'end-time church'.⁷⁴⁶

6.6.1.1.2.2 Prophet (Dr.) Samson Ayorinde

'The prophet' as he is popularly known holds a master's degree in architecture and is an apostle of the church.

He preaches the word of God across the continents 'with prophetic anointing, confirmed by miracles, signs and wonders'. His television ministry is beamed to the world through Faith World Channel, U.K., while his crusade outreach draws large audiences and has led to numerous conversions.

He is founder and general overseer of World Evangelism Bible Church (WEBIC) with headquarters in Lagos and branches all over Nigeria, Europe and the U.S.A.⁷⁴⁷

6.6.1.1.2.2.1 World Evangelism Bible Ministries, Ojota, Lagos

World Evangelism Inc. of Prophet Samson Ayorinde is at 51/53 Ogudu Road near the Kosofe Local Government Council Office in Ojota, Lagos.

The church was revealed to the prophet by God, during his first 40-days fasting and prayer, waiting on the Lord in Kaduna in 1992-1993.

On the 37th to 38th day, the Lord called him up, giving him a golden key and saying: "This is the key for the working of miracles." In the same encounter God told him of a task ahead which is world evangelism. As part of equipping the prophet for this task the Lord gave him the authority to perform miracles (Matt. 18 v18).

⁷⁴⁶ www.mountainoffire.org.

⁷⁴⁷ Samson Ayorinde. *Ancient Ancestral Covenants and Strategic Warfare*. WEBIC Inc.:Lagos. 2004.

The month of November every year is set aside to celebrate this commission. Representatives from churches in Africa, Europe and Asia attend. The prophet often uses the week long programme to retrain, equip and inspire workers, ministers and pastors for the work that is still ahead.

The Holy Communion is a sacred and prophetic service conducted strictly by the prophet because “by a prophet He led them out.” (Hosea 12:13). As the prophet’s website informs us, God divinely instructed him to break bread and serve the blood of Jesus Christ to enrich and edify the body of Christ. This all is carried out in obedience and ‘many tremendous signs and wonders with evidence that cannot be denied have been recorded, such as blood diseases and incurable sickness getting cured, people with haemoglobin genotype SS turning to AA, fibroid dropping out of people’s body, the barren conceiving and mighty deliverances’, etc.

Another church programme is the anointing night when thousands come to pray. It started as a modest indoor activity a few years ago and has grown into a major activity with attendances of several thousands. Nowadays the event may be held at open air stadia such as the National Stadium in Lagos, Nigeria, or at the church grounds in the national headquarters in Nigeria.

Heaven is not just concerned with the salvation of our souls but also with humankind living good and healthy lives. This is borne out by the interdenominational service known as miracle service. “How God anointed Jesus with...Who went about doing good, healing...” (Act 10:38).

The miracle service started as a counselling service with the prophet in 1996. He received divine instructions to turn it into a miracle service ‘where many mighty miracles are performed by Jesus Christ with an infallible proof of God’s love for us. The blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, and the barren conceive’.⁷⁴⁸

6.6.1.1.2.3 Pastor Isaiah Olatunji

Isaiah Olatunji is a pastor of All Nations Evangelical Church in Oke-Aanu, Ibadan. With a Foursquare background, he has been twice president of the Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship International, Ondo and Ife chapters.

⁷⁴⁸ www.samsonayorinde.org.

He holds a 1978 Bachelor's degree from the University of Ibadan and from Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife an MBA (1990). In 1998 Ashland University, Ohio, USA awarded him a Doctorate in ministerial arts. Pastor Olatunji was a banker for many years and is married with children.

He is the author of several books. He has a vision of a future 'liberated Christian community that is asserting its rights spiritually, materially and physically'.⁷⁴⁹

6.6.1.1.2.3.1 All Nations Evangelical Church, Ibadan

All Nations Evangelical Church Oke-Anu (21 Olawale Street, Imalefalafia, Ibadan) is a branch of All Nations Evangelical Church Worldwide, based in Ibadan, a nonprofit organization dedicated to cultivating and increasing Christianity in Nigeria.

'We believe in laying examples for others to follow and help individuals in their race towards the kingdom of God. We preach and reveal the power of God to depopulate the kingdom of the devil and promulgate the King of our heavenly Father'.

6.6.1.1.2.4 Pastor Sola Folaranmi

Sola Folaranmi resides in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. He has a Ph.D. in petroleum geochemistry and is a former University don and a petroleum consultant with two national prizes from the Nigerian Mining and Geo-science Society.

He has a prophetic ministry and an apostolic drive to plant churches across the world.

His healing ministry has attracted many followers. He believes in the infallibility of the written word of God, and is noted for strictly pursuing the plan and purpose of God. He is also the host of a radio programme called Hour of Power.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁹ Isaiah Olatunji. *The Blood Covenant*. Oakland Publishers: Lagos. 2002.

⁷⁵⁰ Sola Folaranmi. *Breaking the Satanic Horns of Oppression*. Lagos. 2006.

6.6.1.1.2.5 Pastor Sola Akorede

Sola Akorede hails from Ode-Omu in Osun State. He gave his life to Jesus Christ at Okeho, Oyo State in 1987. ‘Since then he has been a terror to the kingdom of darkness’.

He was a staff member on the Board of Internal Revenue, Iseyin, when he received a calling to start a ministry called Watch and Pray Evangelical Ministry in 1990.

He retired voluntarily from Osun State Civil Service in 1999 where he had been district tax officer for Obokun local government.⁷⁵¹

6.6.1.1.2.6 Pastor Tunde Aremu

Tunde Aremu is a non-denominational preacher, whose ministry has received God’s approval, enabling diverse miracles, signs and wonders to take place. ‘His books have been used by God to bring salvation, deliverance and revival to many lives’.

He is the founding president of Prayer Network for Universal Revival (PNUR), a ministry working for revival in today’s church.

He has authored, among others, *How to be delivered and Remain Delivered*; *The Right Ways to Fast and Pray*; *Prayer That God Must Answer*; *Overcoming The Enemy Called Stagnancy*, Pastor Lukas’ Church, *Spirit Husband/Wife – How to Fight and Win*.⁷⁵²

⁷⁵¹ Sola Akorede. *Release from Curses*. Sphinx House: Ibadan. 1999.

⁷⁵² Tunde Aremu. *The Overcoming Believer*. Noelen: Ibadan, 2002.

6.6.1.1.2.7 Pastor Mrs. Toyin Okehi

Toyin Okehi is a minister of the Gospel and a teacher of the word by calling. Her ministry is characterized by with strong prophetic anointing. She worked for many years as a personal assistant to many heads of organizations, both in Nigeria and overseas. She was also a successful business woman and an industrialist. She studied at Pitmans College, London and at the University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos. Nigeria.

For her pastoral studies, she went to the Community Bible College Ogbe, Abeokuta where she obtained a B.A. and a B.Th. in theology, and also at the Faith Bible College, Ibadan branch for leadership training. She taught at the Community Bible Seminary for one year.⁷⁵³

The table below exhibits the summary result of constantly comparing the ten sermons till three fall under the Faith Gospel paradigm, and seven fall under the Demonic Possession paradigm.

⁷⁵³ Toyin Okehi. *The Occult World and the Way it Affects You as a Christian*. JOAS: Ibadan, 2004.

Faith Gospel Paradigm	Demonic Possession Paradigm
<p>Sermon 1</p> <p>Prophetic Prayer Works</p> <p>by Pastor Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola</p> <p>of The Gethsemane Prayer Ministry, Ibadan.</p>	<p>Sermon 2</p> <p>Ancient Ancestral Covenants and Strategic Warfare</p> <p>by Prophet (Dr.) Samson Ayorinde</p> <p>of World Evangelism Bible Ministries, Ojota, Lagos.</p>
<p>Sermon 7</p> <p>Believer’s Power Instrument</p> <p>by Bishop David Oyedepo</p> <p>of Living Faith Church Worldwide, Sango-Ota.</p>	<p>Sermon 3</p> <p>Dealing with Territorial Strongholds</p> <p>by Pastor Sola Folaranmi,</p> <p>non-denominational preacher who resides in Ado-Ekiti.</p>
<p>Sermon 8</p> <p>Power in the Spirit</p> <p>by Bishop Kehinde Adedokun</p> <p>of Victory International Church, Oluyole, Ibadan.</p>	<p>Sermon 4</p> <p>Release from Curses</p> <p>by Pastor Sola Akorede a non-denominational</p> <p>preacher who founded Watch and Pray</p> <p>Evangelical Ministry who resides in Osogbo.</p>
	<p>Sermon 5</p> <p>Deliverance from Evil Altar</p> <p>by Revd. Dr. D. K. Olukoya of Mountain</p> <p>of Fire and Miracles Ministries, Onike, Yaba, Lagos.</p>
	<p>Sermon 6</p> <p>The Trap of Blood Covenant</p> <p>by Pastor Isaiah Olatunji</p> <p>of All Nations Evangelical Church in Oke-Aanu, Ibadan</p>
	<p>Sermon 9</p> <p>Deliverance from Repeated Unpleasant</p> <p>Circumstances and Situations by Pastor Tunde Aremu</p> <p>a non-denominational preacher who founded</p> <p>Prayer Network for Universal Revival</p>
	<p>Sermon 10</p> <p>Deliverance from Occultic Practices</p> <p>by Pastor Mrs. Toyin Okehi,</p> <p>a non-denominational preacher who resides in Ibadan.</p>

6.6.2 Selective Coding

Selective coding takes place in the second step. The sermons that have been open coded according to the two themes are further analyzed by identifying the primal concepts in them. This involves underlining such identifiable incidents. This is done in detail in Appendix II

The third step is called **sorting**. This involves modelling and labelling the conceptualized incidents, and tagging them. This is done meticulously in Appendix III

After these steps, my task will now be to search for theoretical codes. These are the most abstract of the codes and they form the framework of my grounded theory. The theoretical codes are found in the process of constant memoing, comparing, and reviewing the coding. My theoretical codes therefore are ‘positioning’, ‘employing’, and ‘weaving’, in relation to biblical interpretation as influenced through certain features of the primal religion of the interpreter. The theory is coded thus: ministers *position* their teaching on Faith Gospel or Demon Possession by *employing* animism, magic, rites, taboos, and divination, etc. By this *positioning* through *employing*, they *weave* the fabric of a certain biblical interpretation.

6.7 Conclusion and Summary

In conclusion, the following points should be noted in order to understand how the steps above are taken to arrive at the theory.

The full analysis by Grounded Theory of the ten sermons is in the Appendix. As earlier iterated, after a broad survey and having collected 20 sermons, I have chosen 10 from the collection and have numbered them from 1 to 10.

Three of the sermons are classified under Faith Gospel as they exhibit the perception that Jesus has already won for Christians all the blessings of health and wealth. The association of this perception with spiritual laws (e.g. sowing and reaping) and with spiritual principles that empower believers to triumph over the negative aspects of life are the pattern for this kind of preaching paradigm in Africa. This was done in the stage called **open coding**.

Seven of the sermons are classified under Demonic Possession because they interpret all dimensions of life in terms of spiritual forces and they portray people and things as possessed by demons from which they need deliverance. This was also done in the stage called **open coding**.

The ten sermons are open-coded or classified as follows: sermons 1, 7, 8 under the Faith Gospel paradigm, and sermons 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10 under the Demon Possession paradigm.

In summary, the following four observations are made. I want to iterate here also that these observations are not borne out of bias against the preachers or their sermons, but out of my attempt to establish the theory that Yoruba primal religion brings to bear upon the interpretation of certain Yoruba Pentecostal preachers, and this is a significant nature of primal religions to be observed.

Firstly, the faith practices of the churches contain the following invariables: faith, the Word, signs and wonders, the Holy Spirit, prosperity, prayer, healing, success, the seeing of visions, praise and worship.

Secondly, the rapid membership growth common to all of these churches is a result of their attraction for the working class and students and this in turn has to do with their appeal for people who have high hopes of success in their studies and jobs.

Consequent upon this, it is obvious that the churches focus more on individual well-being than on the community as a whole. This is in congruence with the Yoruba concept of life: the *alaafia ni oogun oro* life style. *Alaafia ni oogun oro* simply means that the life well spent is the one that is spent in well-being. Troubled and afflicted life is not a life well spent. In the sermons of these preachers, there is less emphasis on preaching against the ills of society for example, than might be expected of parishes that have so much influence upon the populace.

I believe also that for this reason all of them have more, if not their entire, membership in urban centres. This focus on urban centres inevitably translates into more financial gain and a better economic status than these churches would experience in rural areas. Most are economically so strong that they can afford to establish branches on foreign shores.

As regards the preachers, firstly it will be noted that most of them are well educated, even up to Ph.D. level. Some were university dons before they took up the ministry. Yet features of primal religion are traceable in their faith interpretations.

In the third place, about 90% of these ministers are well au fait with the international community. Their ministries are located in large cities of the world. For example, David Oyedepo's ministries are in major cities of the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Yet, elements of primal religion are plentiful in their handling of the Bible.

Fourthly, most preachers have their ministries in the urban centres of Lagos and Ibadan. The ministries of only three are located elsewhere: Pastor Sola Akorede in Osogbo, a Yoruba town in Osun State, and Pastor Sola Folaranmi is in Ado-Ekiti, the capital city of Ekiti State, but in the hinterland of Yorubaland. In spite of the strong urban orientation of their various ministries, the Bible interpretations of preachers are characterized by the presence of primal religious features that one would sooner expect to find in rural areas.

The four points made above in regard to Yoruba Christian preachers are indicative of the intrinsic worth of elements of primal religion in the religious ideologies of the preachers concerned. Hence these elements are found interwoven with other strands in their Bible interpretations.

CHAPTER SIX

AN OVERVIEW OF YORUBA PRIMAL RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS AND THEIR TRACES IN THE SERMONS: A COMPARISON

7.1 Introduction

The Yoruba Primal religion primarily exhibit certain concepts that are similar to the Near Eastern religious beliefs, some of which had been examined under features of primal religions as itemised by Harold Turner, but modified into ten with the goal of easy identification, namely Animatism, Totemism, Divination, Medicine (Good or Bad), Animism, Initiation, Magic, Incantation, Taboo, and Rites. The ANE had been showcased as a primary under structure on which certain practices in the Israelite religion stand. This had become a pattern for the Yoruba primal religion. It has become a pedestal also on which the Yoruba Christian Pentecostal preachers that are examined in this thesis base their biblical interpretations. In the last chapter the steps taken in analysing the published sermons of these preachers are iterated, in order to be able to compare the latter with the Yoruba traditional religious concepts that are analogous in both. Therefore in this chapter I shall do a comparison between the evidences of these elements in the Sermons with the Yoruba traditional religious elements. This shall validate the theory that the Yoruba Pentecostal preacher is influenced by their primal beliefs in interpreting the Bible.

For clarity purposes I will present again the step taken in the process of analysing the sermons, which was discussed above here. The first was Open Coding, which is identifying the core categories. In the step, cataloguing the sermons into two categories was done. The sermons were conceptualized in order to do a preliminary allocation of the sermons into the two motifs that have prominently emerged in the church in Africa: the Faith Gospel or the Demonic Possession.⁷⁵⁴ The common characteristics can be pinned to the two paradigms. The second called Selective coding involved underlining identifiable incidents, which are the elements of primal religion traceable in the sermons. This can be found in detail in Appendix II.⁷⁵⁵ And the third step called sorting involved modelling and labelling the conceptualized incidents or elements of primal religions, and tagging them. This can be found in Appendix III.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵⁴ Niels Kastfelt (ed.). *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003:16–35.

⁷⁵⁵ Appendices: 85 - 164

⁷⁵⁶ Appendices: 171 - 206

During the analysis of the sermons using Grounded theory, I discovered that each sermon possesses more variety of the incidents which is the elements of primal religion. For example one sermon may possess up to twenty incidents with a variety of five feature of primal religion. The most prominent incident shall be used in the comparison with the correlating feature of primal religion. These elements of primal religion identified and tagged in the sermons are presented in this section as Appropriation. As earlier delineated, appropriation is the interaction of the understanding of the preacher of the biblical narratives or texts they used in their sermons with their intrinsic knowledge of concepts of Yoruba primal religion.

The relation of the first juxtaposition (ANE and OT), and the second (Yoruba primal religious concepts and the Yoruba Pentecostal preachers) will present an analogy between the two scenarios. This is the nub of this research. The primal religion is immensely significant to the ‘secondary’ religion and it is evident in the equivalent religious elements that can be traced in the four subjects of this thesis.

In this section, a summary of Yoruba primal religious elements which had been garnered from some literature in that area of study shall be compared with the sermons of Yoruba preachers. To do this, five steps are taken.

1. I have said before that in the analysis (as demonstrated in the Appendix), the sermons exhibited more than one primal feature. But focus shall be made on only one primal feature per sermon in this comparison, in order to avoid an unwieldy presentation. Therefore comparison of the Yoruba primal religious ideology with the sermon of the particular Yoruba Pentecostal preacher will stand on the basis of each of the ten categories that were presented above in 4.3, which are the key categories of scholarship with respect to primal religion. These are Animism, Animatisms, Divination, Magic, Medicine, Incantation, Taboo, Totemism, Rites, and Initiation.
2. The second step is to present the biblical text to which the preacher relates his interpretation in which one of the ten categories could be identified, and to simply outline the content of the biblical text. This is called **The Text** in italics below. I have not done an exegesis of the text because this will derail the focus of the analysis, in that, that will portray that the thesis is conducting a test or an exam for the preacher. The attention here is not to assess whether the preacher had written his/her sermon in the conventional way. It is noted that the preachers fail to present the exegesis of the texts they interpret.

Therefore my task here is simply to show the story in or content of the text in an outline, and see how the preacher relates to it.

3. The next step is to exhibit the Yoruba primal religious ideology that any of the ten categories best describes. For example, the step will display what the Yoruba believes about concepts one can label animism, divination, magic, etc. This is called **Context of the Preacher (Yoruba Religious Concept)**.
4. And the fourth step will show forth chunks of the analyzed sermons where traces of concepts one can label with any of the ten categories are traceable. These chunks are culled from Appendix III which consists of the modeled, labeled, tagged and sorted incidents. This is the section that depicts how the preacher applied the text (2), as affected by his orientation in his Yoruba religious context and mind-set (3). Since this is how the preacher had appropriated the biblical text, it is therefore called **Appropriation** below.
5. In the final step of this section which I call **Comments** below, a comparison is made by putting the particular Yoruba primal religious concept (3) side by side the preacher's appropriation of the particular outlined biblical text (4). And a deduction that the preacher is being influenced by his knowledge of the Yoruba traditional religious concepts in interpreting the narratives of the biblical texts is made.

7.2 Animism

Sermon 3 is titled 'Dealing with Territorial Strongholds' by Pastor Sola Folaranmi which has been categorised under the Demon Possession paradigm shall be compared with the Yoruba primal religion. He has interpreted Exodus 5: 2 – 4 within the text of his sermon, and the element tagged animism shall be traced in it because it is the most prominent of the feature of primal religion in the sermon.

The term called Animism as earlier elucidated can be understood as a belief that a supernatural force or power exists in certain persons, animals, and in inanimate objects like trees, streams and stones.⁷⁵⁷ It therefore means the belief that all things, even those considered to be inanimate objects, possess consciousness.

⁷⁵⁷ Richard Clark, *The Multiple Natural Origins of Religion*, Switzerland, 2006, p. 172.

7.2.1 The Texts

Exodus 7: 15

Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; Lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand.

Exodus 8:20

And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; 10, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

The passage starts with the mission of Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh-the one to be as God, the other as a prophet of the Most High (verses 1 & 2). It was prediction by God that Pharaoh's heart should be hardened, so that God might multiply his signs and wonders in Egypt, that the inhabitants might know He alone was the true God, (verses 3-4). God gives them directions how they should act before Pharaoh, (verses 5 & 9). Moses turns his rod into a serpent, (verse 10). The magicians imitate this miracle, and Pharaoh's heart is hardened, just as it was predicted by God (verses 11-13). Moses is commanded to wait upon Pharaoh next morning when he should come to the river, and threaten to turn the waters into blood if he did not let the people go, (verses 14-18). Then the waters in all the land of Egypt are turned into blood, (verses 19 & 20). The fish die, (verses 21). The magicians imitate this, and Pharaoh's heart is again hardened, (verses 22 & 23). The Egyptians became sorely distressed because of the bloody waters, (verse 24). The narrative ends with the information that the plague endures seven days, (verse 25).

7.2.2 Context of the Preacher (Yoruba Religious Concept)

Among the cultic functionaries are the servants of the gods. They minister in the shrines dedicated to the various divinities. They give them daily, weekly, monthly or annual offerings and in that way they maintain the relations between the community and the divine powers. In addition, they ascertain the wishes of the divinities and reveal these to men. They pray for people, help them to make their offerings and advise them in crises. The priests are particularly conscious of the fact that they should approach their sacred task with care and a sense of awe. If they take a wrong step or say a wrong word, their spiritual activities and leadership become unacceptable to the divinities and their lives as well as those of the supplicants to whom

they minister may be in serious jeopardy. In recognition of these risks the priests realize both the benefits of receiving some training for their task and the need to safeguard their spiritual relation which ultimately is the reason why they function as they do.

As the principal divinities have their priesthood, so do they have sacred places where worship is conducted by the priests. These places are called by different names,, depending on where they are located and to which divinities they are dedicated. These names do exhibit the belief that the sacredness of the places brings to bear the fact that spirits abide there. The Yoruba refer to them mainly as '*Ojubo*' (the place of worship).⁷⁵⁸ The place of worship may be devoted to a divinity (*orisa*). In that case it is referred to as '*Ojubo orisa*' or '*Ile orisa*' (the place of worship or the house for the divinity). If it is an ancestral shrine, it is called '*Ojubo baba*' or '*Oju Eegun*' or '*Oju orori*' (the place of worship of the ancestors).⁷⁵⁹ But if the place of worship is in a grove, it is referred to as '*Igbo*.' For example, the grove dedicated to the worship of Agemo is identified as *Igbo Agemo* (the grove of Agemo) or '*Agbala*'. The grove of Oro is called *Igbo Oro* or *Igbo Imale*. Similarly, the grove dedicated to the worship of Egungun is specifically known as *Igbo Igbale* while that of Ifa is called *Igbodu* (Igbo odu). In Ile-Ife, we have the popular *Iwinrin* grove and in Itebu-Manuwa *Ugbowen*.⁷⁶⁰

There are innumerable shrines, temples and groves in Yorubaland – indeed there are as many shrines as there are divinities. There may be two, three or more shrines or temples dedicated to one divinity in the same town or village. This multiplicity of shrines stresses the fact that a shrine is not the permanent, and not the only, abode of a divinity. He/she can be invoked in one shrine just as well as in another.⁷⁶¹ When he is invoked, it is believed, that he is present to meet with the worshippers, to receive their prayers and offerings, and to bless them.

Apart from the shrines kept inside, there are others that are exposed. They are found in market places or at road junctions, at main entrances to the towns or villages, by riversides and trees, or on a hill. For example, the main community shrine of *Qbaluwaye* or *Soponna* is always outside a village or town gate. A large

⁷⁵⁸ J. Omosade Awolalu & P. Adelumo Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. Onibonoje Press & Book Industries (Nig.) Ltd: Ibadan. 1979:220.

⁷⁵⁹ Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:221.

⁷⁶⁰ Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:221.

⁷⁶¹ Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:221.

agbada (a coverless earthenware vessel) is placed on a mound.⁷⁶² Into this, people put palm-oil, palm-wine, and *eko tutu* (cold cornmeal). The divinity concerned guards the gate and prevents smallpox from entering the village.⁷⁶³

Furthermore, there are water shrines erected on the banks of rivers, lakes or lagoons to worship river spirits, like *Osun*, *Yemoja*, *Olosa* (the lagoon spirit) and *Olokun* (the sea-spirit).⁷⁶⁴ Such shrines are common in riverine areas.

7.2.3 Appropriation

At two separate instances the Lord told Moses to get up early in the morning and meet Pharaoh as he went to the waters. Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. (Exodus 7: 15) And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (Exodus 8:20) One may ask, "What was Pharaoh going to do at the river?" Certainly not to bathe, because there were several swimming pools and baths in the palace; rather, he got up early in the morning to draw power from marine spirits at his marine altar. When Pharaoh did not budge, Moses went to the river and stretched forth his rod upon the river and everything became blood. For about seven days, all the waters of Egypt became blood. A type of the blood of Jesus had been employed to poison and suffocate all the marine lives that inhabited their water bodies. The blood of Jesus judged all of them. Thus, the marine power-base of Pharaoh was neutralized.⁷⁶⁵

And Pharaoh said, who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, the God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days journey into the desert,

⁷⁶² Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:221.

⁷⁶³ Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:221.

⁷⁶⁴ Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:221.

⁷⁶⁵ Appendices: 12

and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them, wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people front their works? Get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. (Exodus 5:2-4) This response of Pharaoh was very clear and unambiguous. He retorted: “Who is the Lord? I don't know Him why should I obey His voice to allow Israel to go? Go back and tell the God that sent you, I don't know Him and I shall not release Israel.” Now somebody who speaks like that knows what he is talking about. When somebody is defiant like that you know he is speaking from a position of strong confidence in something. Pharaoh knew where he was coming from; he knew the ancestral powers of Egypt, and the spiritual pillars (gods) that supported his throne. The Egyptian monarchs and other kings, ancient or modern, don't rule ordinarily. You see them on the throne, but there are other thrones behind their physical thrones. The physical throne is just an ordinary decorated chair in the palace. The real rulers are unseen spiritual entities which give them power and confidence to lord it over other men.⁷⁶⁶

Pharaoh and all Egypt served a lot of territorial deities or you call them territorial spirits that gave them power and authority. This was the reason why God decided to take on the thrones behind his throne in an unprecedented strategic spiritual warfare that lasted several months.⁷⁶⁷

Characteristics of the spirit of Pharaoh: It is a spirit of: Oppression Bondage Captivity Servitude Deprivation Wickedness Defiance Obstinacy Arrogance Sorcery Witchcraft Idolatry.⁷⁶⁸

Egypt was the earthly seat of Satan.⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁶ Appendices: 9

⁷⁶⁷ Appendices: 10

⁷⁶⁸ Appendices: 10

⁷⁶⁹ Appendices: 10

The battle for Israel's release had to be fought at three levels for an effective judgement and overthrow of the gods. The battle was fought: at the level of the waters; at the level of the land (earth); finally, at the level of the heavens (cosmic level warfare).⁷⁷⁰

The first power to be confronted was the serpent. Egyptians worshipped serpentine spirits. When you get to the court of Pharaoh or you see the picture of ancient Pharaohs on top of their crown, you will see the head of a serpent with its fangs sticking out indicating their submission to the serpentine spirits. It was a national symbol.⁷⁷¹

As those serpents moved up and down the palace, the dominion serpent of Moses opened its mouth and swallowed up the serpents of the magicians! Moses took up his own snake and it turned back into a rod! What happened was a divine judgement against serpentine spirit of Egypt. God dealt with that spirit and Pharaoh couldn't draw power from the snakes anymore.⁷⁷²

The Nile and other water bodies of Egypt were a haven for marine spirits. In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt: Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales. (Ezek 29:1-4)⁷⁷³

⁷⁷⁰ Appendices: 11

⁷⁷¹ Appendices: 11

⁷⁷² Appendices: 11

⁷⁷³ Appendices: 12

One after the other, in a systematic but strategic way, the Lord began to take out all the other gods of Egypt from the frog to lice, flies, cattle, boils to locusts. All these symbols of Egyptians gods were employed to destroy the gods themselves. At one time, the Egyptians tried as usual to duplicate that which Moses was doing by invocation and high-level enchantments, but they couldn't do it. Then, they turned to Pharaoh and said to him: “now this is the finger of God”. Because of this, Pharaoh then began to think of and believe the existence of a bigger and stronger God somewhere. He then started to make concessions. He began to feel the pressure.⁷⁷⁴

7.2.4 Comment

In the above two subjects under scrutiny, namely the Yoruba concept of animism and the appropriation of the preacher of the text he interprets, two main patterns are equivalent: firstly, recognition of cultic functionaries who daily or from time to time minister at the shrines, and secondly the acknowledgement of sacred places in and around the town or city.

Firstly, the Yoruba believes that cultic functionaries of deities give them daily, weekly, monthly or annual offerings and in that way they maintain the relations between the community and the divine powers. In addition, they ascertain the wishes of the divinities and reveal these to men. They pray for people, help them to make their offerings and advise them in crises. The preacher in his sermon also presents Pharaoh as an official cultic functionary that is responsible for the people of Egypt, who had to daily appear before the spirits in Nile River. He acknowledges that the Pharaoh and all Egypt served a lot of territorial deities that gave them power and authority. Pharaoh goes early in the morning to the Nile to draw power from marine spirits at his marine altar, and that other territorial deities like the serpent were all conquered by Moses before Pharaoh and the Egyptians could release them.

Secondly Pastor Folaranmi believes that certain places are sacred and dedicated to certain spirits in Egypt, just as the Yoruba people do. Egypt itself is a seat of Satan. There are symbols of the serpent, frog, lice, etc which represent gods in Egypt, which God destroyed through the rod of Moses.

⁷⁷⁴ Appendices: 12

From the above one can deduce that the preacher being influenced by his knowledge of the Yoruba traditional religious concepts interpreted the narrative above the way he did.

7.3 Animatism

Sermon 1, 'Prophetic Prayer Works' by Pastor Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola under the Faith Gospel paradigm shall be compared with the Yoruba primal religion here, and the element tagged animatism shall be highlighted in both.

As earlier explained, Animatism is an element of primal religion whereby natural forces, including humans, animals and plants are treated with respect in ritualistic tradition, because they are considered to be inhabited by benevolent or malevolent spirit beings.. In such world views, ritual is considered essential for survival as it wins the favour of the spirits that are associated with the natural forces.

7.3.1 The Text

Jeremiah 22:29

O earth, earth, earth, Hear the word of the LORD!

This passage is the section of Jeremiah's prophecy, extending to the end of the eighth verse of the next chapter, addressed to the king of Judah and his people. It enjoins on them the practice of justice and equity, as they would hope to prosper, 14; but threatens them, in case of disobedience, with utter destruction, 5-9.

The captivity of Shallum, the son of Josiah, is declared to be irreversible, 10-12; and the miserable and unlamented end of Jeconiah, contemptuously called Coniah, is foretold, 13-19. His family is threatened with the like captivity, and his seed declared to be forever excluded from the throne, 20-30.

The particular verse the Yoruba preacher alludes to, Jeremiah 22: 29 contains the words of the prophet in reply to the exclamations of the people, when they heard those solemn denunciations against their king and their country, in verse 28; and it simply means: O land! Unhappy land! Desolated land! Hear the judgment of the Lord!

7.3.2 The Context of the Preacher (Yoruba Religious Concept)

The earth is venerated in Yorubaland because it is believed to be inhabited by a spirit. The Yoruba attach great importance to the earth. In creation, the myth says, earth was spread on the face of the deep, and land appeared. Furthermore, Obatala used clay to mould human before Olodumare gave him/her breath. When a new-born baby comes into the world, the first landing place is the earth; when man grows old and dies, he is buried in the earth. The earth supplies food for human consumption, and so it keeps life going.⁷⁷⁵ From the Yoruba point of view, an element which has such manifold and useful functions must have a spirit dwelling there. Hence, the spirit of the earth is constantly being called upon to witness to the pact made between people; and it is believed that it can punish anybody who breaks the covenant.⁷⁷⁶ Because of the power of the spirit, intercourse with a woman is forbidden on the bare ground. It angers the spirit, for it is an unclean act. The breaking of such a taboo normally involves the offender in a very elaborate purification rite. People say of such a culprit, *O ba ile je* ('he spoils or desecrates the earth').⁷⁷⁷

Since most of the Yoruba depend on agriculture for their sustenance, and crops are grown in the soil, *Ile* (the earth) receives special sacrifice at the time of planting and harvesting.⁷⁷⁸ And since the corpses of the ancestors are buried in the earth and there are powerful spirits dwelling therein, the Yoruba have the habit of pouring the first drop of any drinks on the ground and of throwing some portion of food to the earth before they drink or eat in order that the spirits may drink and eat first.⁷⁷⁹ Furthermore, where no special shrines are used, the blood of an immolated victim is poured into a hole dug in the earth.⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁵ Jonathan Olumide Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas: Being an Account of the Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Yoruba Peoples of Southern Nigeria, Especially in Relation to the Religion of Ancient Egypt*, CMS Bookshop, 1948, pp. 40-79

⁷⁷⁶ P. Morton Williams, 'Ogboni cult,' *Africa*, xx, 1960, p.364.

⁷⁷⁷ Jonathan Olumide Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, pp. 40-79.

⁷⁷⁸ Jonathan Olumide Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, pp. 40-79.

⁷⁷⁹ Jonathan Olumide Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, pp. 40-79.

⁷⁸⁰ Jonathan Olumide Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, pp. 40-79.

7.3.3 The Appropriation

Jeremiah 22:29

O earth, earth, earth, Hear the word of the LORD!

All created things have ears at their own level of existence. This includes both living and non-living matters. For example, these non-living materials were addressed in prayer - Earth: - Jeremiah 22:29, Altar: - I Kings 13: 1-5; The sun and the Moon:- Joshua 10: 12-14; Lazarus: John 11: 11. If all things have ears, therefore the material elements from which they were made can hear and respond to the word and voice of God.⁷⁸¹

These objects were made by the word of the Lord, therefore they must obey the same word. This is the mystery of creation. The occultists and spiritualists understand this very well. Demons, elemental entities, and all created objects will obey us only when our own obedience is complete.⁷⁸²

7.3.4 Comment

It is shown in the context of the preacher (Yorubaland) that the earth is venerated because it is believed to be inhabited by a spirit; thereby attaching great importance to it. This concept is also traceable in the sermon when the preacher asserts that all things including the earth have ears at their own level of existence. And the material elements from which the earth was made can hear and respond to the word and voice of God. The preacher, though a Christian believes that the earth has an animated life that enables it to hear when it is spoken to.

Albeit, he does not attach veneration to the earth as the case is in his primal religious context. He only believes that all things, even those considered inanimate objects, possess consciousness, and this is animatism under which this is being discussed. It is my aim here to point out that the element of primal religion traceable in the sermon here is animatism, not syncretism.

⁷⁸¹ Appendices: 2

⁷⁸² Appendices: 2

There is a correlation in the belief of the Yoruba and how this preacher applied Jeremiah 22: 29 and this is the crust of the matter in contextual interpretation paradigm. Contextualization gives a picture that no text has a total or complete meaning. The meaning of a text is determined by the person reading it and his or her situation. In this case, even though it is a Yoruba Pentecostal Christian engaging with the text, therefore the element of the Yoruba primal religion is traceable in his appropriation of the text.

7.4 Divination

Sermon 14: 'Power in the Spirit' by Bishop Kehinde Adedokun under the Faith Gospel paradigm shall be compared with the Yoruba primal religion, and the element tagged divination shall be showcased in both.

Divination is a way in which humans can approach the deity in a realization of weakness. Human is aware that much of the future is alarmingly unknown. He/she then seeks to penetrate this unknown by the means used is divination⁷⁸³ Divination is therefore the act of obtaining information about unknown happenings or future events from supernatural sources by means of techniques.

It is also the attempt to gain insight into a question or situation by way of a process or ritual through contact with a supernatural agency. It relates also with a situation which from the client's perspective calls for a decision on important plans or essential actions to be taken on certain important occasions.⁷⁸⁴

7.4.1 The Text

2 Chronicles 1: 10.

Give me now wisdom and knowledge that I may go out and come in before this people:
for who can judge this thy people that is so great!

Solomon, and the chiefs of the people of Israel, go to Gibeon, where the tabernacle of the Lord, and the brazen altar was, and there he offers a thousand sacrifices, (verses 1-6). The Lord appears to him in a dream, and gives him permission to ask any gift, (verse 7). He asks wisdom, (verses 8-10), which is granted; including riches, wealth, and honour, (verses 11 and 12).

⁷⁸³ D.H. Smith 'Divination' in, Samuel George Frederick Brandon (eds.), *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, Scribner, 1970, p. 459.

⁷⁸⁴ G.K. Park 'Divination and its Social Contexts,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 93, part 2 July/Dec., 1963 p. 195.

His kingdom is established, (verse 13). Verses 14 and 15 reveal his possessions in chariots, horsemen, and horses, and his abundant riches. He brings horses, linen yarn, and chariots, at a fixed price out of Egypt (verses 16 and 17).

7.4.2 The Context of the Preacher (Yoruba Religious Concept)

Like peoples of other religious convictions, the Yoruba practise divination, probably because they are anxious to know the will of the deity as well as what the future holds for themselves and those close to them. A popular saying goes: '*Bi oni ti ri, ola kii ri bee; eyiyi lo mu ki Babalawo maa difa ororun*' ('Because each day has its own peculiar problems, the Babalawo (Ifa priest) has to cast his Ifa (to divine) every fifth day'). They also say: '*Ojumo ki mo ki Awo ma sode wo; agbede a gbon ada*' ('As there is never a morning when a blacksmith is not called upon to sharpen matchets for farmers, so there is never a morning when a *Babalawo* does not consult his oracle').⁷⁸⁵

The Yoruba employ various systems of divination, which include the use of kola-nuts, the species called *obi abata* (*Cola acuminata*) that must have four lobes (*awe merin*). Two of the four lobes are known as *ako* (male) and the other two are *obi* (female) in accordance with the natural marks on them. The instruments of divination include sixteen cowries which the diviner holds in his fists. They are shaken while the diviner asks what action his client should take or what causes his/her troubles. The sixteen cowries are then thrown on the ground, landing on either their concave or their convex sides.⁷⁸⁶

Furthermore the Yoruba use *Opele*, which consists of eight half-pods strung together on a cord or chain of about three to four feet long. The half-pods are arranged equidistant from each another so that, when the chain is held in the middle, there will be four half-pods hanging down on either side. Tassels are attached to the ends of the chain, beads, cowries and coins on one end and small bells and metals on the other. The diviner holds the chain in the middle, swinging it right and left, forward and backward. He thus invokes the spirit of Orunmila and he pays homage to his predecessor-diviners. Thereafter he swings the chain in such a

⁷⁸⁵ J. Price, *Ifa Yoruba Divination*, New York: Maryknoll, 1973, p. 121.

⁷⁸⁶ R. Prince, *Ifa: Yoruba Divination and Sacrifice*, Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1973, p. 23.

way that the portion he originally held moves away from him and the two sides fall in parallel lines. Each half-pod will show its concave or its convex side just as in the case of *obi*.⁷⁸⁷

Finally in this section, *Ifa* is by far the most renowned means of divination among the Yoruba. Ifa divination employs sixteen specially selected palm nuts called *ikin*, an *opon Ifa* (a divining tray that may be rectangular, semi-circular or circular), *iyerosun* (divining powder), the *irofa* (a conical bell made of horn, ivory or wood) that is used for tapping by intervals on the divining tray, especially at the beginning of the divining session, to invoke the oracular spirit, and finally the *ibo* (lots) consisting of a variety of objects - broken pottery, animal teeth, cowry shells, and some large flat glossy brown seeds called *sesan*. The fragments of pottery, broken chinaware and teeth stand for 'bad luck' or 'no', the cowry shells and *sesan* indicate 'good luck' or 'yes'. The *ibo* are used to decide which verses of the particular *odu* should be emphasized.⁷⁸⁸

7.4.3 The Appropriation

2 Chronicles 1: 10.

Give me now wisdom and knowledge that I may go out and come in before this people:
for who can judge this thy people that is so great!

Revelation is the ability to take delivery of instructions from God, as vision without instruction equals frustration. Knowing where you're going is good, but knowing how to get there is equally important, because you never get to your destination by just knowing where you're going. You also need to know how to get there.⁷⁸⁹

You can't operate the Spirit of wisdom and not be creatively productive. There's a better way of doing that job, and a better approach to that assignment. All you need do is to call on Him, to show you the better way, Please note that the Spirit of knowledge is the same one called the Spirit of revelation in Ephesians 1: 1 7. This Spirit unfolds the mysteries of the kingdom of God.⁷⁹⁰

⁷⁸⁷ W. Abimbola, *Sixteen Great Poems of Ifa*, New York: Unesco, 1975, p. 67.

⁷⁸⁸ W. Abimbola, *Ifa: an Exposition of Ifa Literary Corpus*; London: Athelia Henrietta Press, 1997, p. 45.

⁷⁸⁹ Appendices: 66

⁷⁹⁰ Appendices: 58

Revelation is developing life equations from scriptures, for outstanding solutions. It is knowing what God is saying, and putting them together in order to punish the devil and give him a technical knockout!⁷⁹¹

Worthy of note is the fact that everyone that operated in the Spirit of wisdom lived a clean life. This is because the Holy Spirit will not relate with filthy men, Daniel lived a clean life. He purposed in his heart not to defile himself (Dan. 1: 8). When cornered by Potiphar's wife to lie with him, Joseph said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 9: 39). They lived extraordinary and very productive lives because of the wisdom of God at work in them. But first of all, they were men of pure of hearts. God said in Proverbs 1:23: *Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.*

Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard. Proverbs 13: 15. There is a Spirit of understanding. It is the excellent Spirit that causes men to excel cheaply. It makes one become outstanding on the earth.⁷⁹²

There's a level of understanding you walk in that every hierarchy of darkness will have no choice but to give way when you're coming. Concerning Jesus the Bible says in Luke 2:47: *And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.*⁷⁹³

Friend, there's a spirit called the Spirit of understanding. It is also known as the excellent spirit. It distinguished Daniel in the land of captivity. You are now in a free land, that same spirit will much more cheaply distinguish you, in the name of Jesus.⁷⁹⁴

The Bible says that gift knows what is in the darkness. That's unusual insight! No wonder Daniel knew what was in darkness, and light dwelled with him.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹¹ Appendices: 68

⁷⁹² Appendices: 59

⁷⁹³ Appendices: 59

⁷⁹⁴ Appendices: 60

The Spirit of counsel divinely orders your steps, so you will be free from all regrets.⁷⁹⁶

Also, when you invoke the release of the Spirit of counsel, all wariness, frustrations and regrets come to a final end - "for (His) counsel it shall stand."⁷⁹⁷

You need the Spirit of counsel to do exploits, because you need His guidance and visions to have manifestations. The Spirit of counsel is the force behind visions in life (Prov. 29: 18). It offers guidance and direction, so that God's purpose for your life is not lost.⁷⁹⁸

7.4.4 Comment

My comment is premised on six notions that are corresponding between the context of the preacher, which is the Yoruba conception on divination and his appropriation of 2 Chronicles 1: 10. The first is the acknowledgement of receiving instructions from the supernatural. When the Yoruba goes to the diviner he/she goes to understand what the spirit world knows about his/her situation. Secondly the instructions from the divine are to serve as information on certain steps to take. Although Solomon did not go to the Lord to divine per se, but the favour he sought from the Lord was to be able to possess information on what right steps to take in his administration.

In the third place, the recognition of the function of the spirit behind divination is also striking. The Yoruba invokes the spirit of Orunmila for example, and the preacher refers to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of revelation, Spirit of understanding, Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of counsel. In other words, the spiritual must be involved when divination is being conducted. Another conspicuous idea analogous in both is the concept of the objects involved in divination. The preacher says 'Revelation is developing life equations from scriptures, for outstanding solutions.' Among the Yoruba various objects are also employed in their attempts to know what only the divine knows.

⁷⁹⁵ Appendices: 61

⁷⁹⁶ Appendices: 61

⁷⁹⁷ Appendices: 62

⁷⁹⁸ Appendices: 62

Also embedded in the appropriation of Bishop Kehinde Adedokun of the scripture in focus in this section is the idea of taboo observed by the diviner.

Worthy of note is the fact that everyone that operated in the Spirit of wisdom lived a clean life. This is because the Holy Spirit will not relate with filthy men, Daniel lived a clean life. He purposed in his heart not to defile himself (Dan. 1: 8). When cornered by Potiphar's wife to lie with him, Joseph said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 9: 39). They lived extraordinary and very productive lives because of the wisdom of God at work in them. But first of all, they were men of pure of hearts.

Although this notion is not included in the Yoruba concept of divination here, but it shall be seen later when the concept taboo is being discussed, diviners and medicine-men are required to live a certain life style that may be different from others in order to enhance their power of divination.

Finally in this section, the preacher did not ignore the reasons why the Yoruba engage in divination when he says 'The Spirit of counsel divinely orders your steps, so you will be free from all regrets.' The Yoruba divine because they are anxious to know the will of the deity as well as what the future holds for themselves and those close to them.

7.5 Magic

Sermon 5: 'Deliverance from Evil Altar' by Revd. Dr. D. K. Olukoya under the Demonic Possession paradigm shall be compared with the Yoruba primal religion, and the element tagged Magic shall be traced in it.

Magic is a term used by religious studies scholars to describe one of the relationships between humans and the transcendent. Magic goes beyond the basic concept regarding nature as possessing spiritual quality worthy of venerating, which is *religion*. Human recognizes that behind phenomena is a power greater than him/herself, and he/she approaches to it according to his/her conception of the power and the way which he/her believes would lead to the goal of his/her soul's sincere desire. He/she could approach it with the attitude of tapping and harnessing it and make it sub-serve his own end. This works with technique, seeking to secure the proper means to the end that human may have control over these elemental forces. It is an attempt on the part of human to tap and control the supernatural resources of the universe for his/her own benefit through procurement by those who know 'how.'

When human makes an appeal in order to get the resources he requires, he is practising religion. But when he devises some other means of getting his resources, he is said to be practising magic. Magic operates on the principle that supernatural power can be controlled by certain mechanical techniques. Hence religion has as its motto: 'Your will be done' whereas the motto of magic is: 'My will be done'.⁷⁹⁹

Nevertheless, magic in my view does not try to coerce the Transcendental Being to get things done. No one can exert force on the Supreme Being. What magic does is to tap the resources that have already been provided by the Transcendental Being for the use of mankind. These resources are accessible only to those who have the necessary esoteric knowledge. The tapping of the elemental forces of nature is esoteric in the sense that it is limited to those who know how to go about it. Parrinder⁸⁰⁰ describes those who practise magic as experts who constitute a class apart in the community. In fact, the magician is a kind of scientist, in that he seeks to discover and use the laws of the universe, not only those of physical nature, but also spiritual ones. He believes that there are powers that constitute hidden secrets that can be tapped. He believes not necessarily that he can force these powers for a purpose of his own, but rather that there are laws which may be set in motion by knowledgeable persons, like the electrician who uses the forces of nature to light his house.⁸⁰¹

7.5.1 The Text

1 Samuel 7:7-11

Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. So the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines." And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. Then Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.

⁷⁹⁹ Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:74.

⁸⁰⁰ Edward Geoffrey Parrinder. *West African Religion: A Study of the Beliefs and Practices of Akan, Ewe, Yoruba, Ibo, and Kindred Peoples*. Barnes & Noble: London:156-191.

⁸⁰¹ ⁸⁰¹ Edward Geoffrey Parrinder. *West African Religion*:156-191.

Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel.

And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car.

After the ark had been seven months in the land of the Philistines, they consult their priests and diviners about sending it to Shiloh, (1 Samuel 6: 1, 2). They are advised that it should be sent back with a trespass-offering of five golden tumours, and five golden mice, (1 Samuel 6: 3-6), one for each lord of the Philistines. The tumours had afflicted their bodies; the mice had marred their land, both, they considered, as sent by God; and, making an image of each, and sending them as a trespass-offering. They are advised also that it be sent back on a new cart, drawn by two milk cows from whom their calves shall be tied up; and then conclude that if these cows shall take the way of Beth-hemesh, as going to the Israelite border, then the LORD had afflicted them, if not, then their evils were accidental, (1 Samuel 6: 7-9). They do as directed; and the cows take the way of Beth-shemesh, (1 Samuel 6: 10-13). They stop in the field of Joshua; and the men of Beth-shemesh take them, and offer them to the Lord for a burnt-offering, and cleave the wood of the cart to burn them, and make sundry other offerings, (1 Samuel 6: 14, 15).

For too curiously looking into the ark, the men of Beth-shemesh are smitten by the Lord, (1 Samuel 6: 19, 20). They therefore send to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, that they may take away the ark, (verse 21).

The narrative continues in chapter 7. The men of Kirjah-jearim bring the ark from Beth-shemesh, and consecrate Eleazar, the son of Abinadab, to keep it; and there it continued for twenty years, (1 Samuel 7: 1 & 2). Samuel reproves and exhorts the people, and gathers them together at Mizpeh, where they fast and pray, and confess their sins, (1 Samuel 7: 3-6). The Philistines go up against them; the Israelites cry unto the Lord for help; Samuel offers sacrifices; and the Lord confounds the Philistines with thunder; Israel discomfits and pursues them to Beth-car, (1 Samuel 7: 7-11). The latter is the pericope of the preacher's text. Samuel erects a stone for a memorial, and calls it Eben-ezer, (1 Samuel 7: 12). The Philistines are totally subdued, and Israel recovers all its lost cities, (1 Samuel 7: 13, 14).

The chapter ends with the information that Samuel acts as an itinerant judge in Israel, (1 Samuel 7: 15-17).

7.5.2 The Context of the Preacher (Yoruba Religious Concept)

In this survey of Yoruba beliefs this section examines the concept of mysterious powers. Almost every Yoruba who has grown up in a traditional society understands what is meant by belief in mysterious powers that manifest themselves in various ways, for example in the form of incantations, medicine, magic, sorcery and witchcraft. Belief in these powers that can alter the course of nature is real and prevalent among the Yoruba.⁸⁰²

In Yoruba religion, the offices of the priest and of the magician are sometimes held by one and the same person and ceremonies may be characterized by a mixture of religious and magical elements.⁸⁰³ As a result of age-old traditions, Yoruba traditional religion, and African traditional religions in general, have adopted set patterns. Things must be done in one way and not in any other way for worship to be acceptable. Songs have to be sung in appropriate places, dancing steps should not be missed, one specific type of offering is appropriate for one particular occasion. Many of these rites and ceremonies have become so stereotyped and mechanical that they take on a magical appearance while in operation.⁸⁰⁴ They represent an attempt on the part of men and women to get a quick solution to problems. Awolalu believes that this desire is present in every religion and is not peculiar to the African traditional religion.⁸⁰⁵ Nevertheless, that there are differences cannot but be acknowledged.

The Yoruba believe in the reality of the super sensible world, in the existence of powers causing and controlling the phenomena of nature and in the possibility of establishing contact with these mysterious powers. As we have indicated above, they employ both religion and magic to achieve their goal. The practitioners of magic use incantations, amulets, spells, enchanted rings, horns, small gourds, padlocks, alligator pepper and many other objects for the purpose of tapping and controlling the supernatural resources in the universe.

⁸⁰² Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979: 74-79.

⁸⁰³ J.O. Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, 1948: 267.

⁸⁰⁴ P.J. Niemark., *The Way of Orisha*, New York: Harper & Row, 1993: 43.

⁸⁰⁵ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:74-79.

Among the Yoruba, Magic has been employed in a practical way for good and for evil. For example, magical preparations have been used for personal protection against attacks by witches, adversaries or bad medicine or as a means of warding off evil.⁸⁰⁶ They have also served as a means of securing invulnerability from or protection against gun-shots or machet cuts. Magic has been used to bring rain to the crops or game to the nets; to win the love of a man or a woman, to give increased skill in wars, speed in travelling or to win in sporting activities.⁸⁰⁷ Besides providing personal protection, there are many examples of magical preparations for the public good. Houses are protected by charms hanging over the doorway or buried in the floor of the house or in the yard. Entrances to towns and villages are also protected by such magical preparations.⁸⁰⁸

As there are magical preparations for the good of mankind, so there are also examples of evil magic. Dangerous burglars may be equipped with magical preparations that enable them to burgle houses easily and without molestation. By the use of enchanted rings men have been rendered blind, charmed alligator pepper has been used to bring incurable disease on its victims and hair or nail parings, chewing sticks or articles of clothing of people have been used in preparing offensive charms against them.⁸⁰⁹

In summary, Yoruba magical acts are almost always characterized by three elements.

(a) There are words to be uttered according to a formula or set order. Any slip, omission or alteration of wording deprives the magic of its power.

(b) A set of actions has to be carried out. For example, if there is a plan to kill an enemy from a distance, the preparation may include the following steps. The sorcerer will procure water in a bowl and have ready a cudgel or machet or a loaded gun, he summons, by magical means, the spirit of the enemy to appear in the water in the bowl and he hits, cuts, or shoots the figure that appears. As a result, the person whose spirit was summoned will receive an actual wound or gun-shot wherever he may be. In another example, rain-making usually involves the sprinkling of water on the ground or the wetting of twigs that are shaken about in an imitation of rainfall. The preventing of rainfall involves tying some seeds of alligator pepper and some other objects in a handkerchief or tying palm-fronds into knots and swinging these overhead swiftly while incantations are uttered. Other acts may involve pulling out an enchanted needle stuck into an enchanted

⁸⁰⁶ W. Bascom, *The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria*, New York: Maryknoll, 1969: 64.

⁸⁰⁷ Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979::74-77.

⁸⁰⁸ Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:74-77.

⁸⁰⁹ Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:74-77.

horn, or ritual spitting on a magical preparation, or sticking needles into the effigy of an enemy to cause him incessant pain, or locking an enchanted padlock to make it impossible for an accuser to speak against one in a law court.

(c) The condition of the ‘actor’ is also of ritual significance. In all communities, the magician has to observe many taboos such as refraining from eating certain foods, from casual sexual indulgence and from other contaminating actions. Unless he observes these taboos rigidly, his charms will lose their potency.

In keeping with the belief in magical power, many Yoruba wear all kinds of charms: copper rings (*oruka baba*), amulets (*ifunpa*), and preparations sewn into leather girdles or belts (*onde*).⁸¹⁰ In homes we may find a broom hanging from the door post, a small gourd shining bright from which some liquid is dripping, an enchanted chain partly buried in the ground or some cowries arranged in symmetrical order on the floor.⁸¹¹ Some babies wear coils round their necks and waists. Men and women have a black powder rubbed into incisions (*gbere*) made in their flesh.⁸¹² Surprisingly, such customs may also be followed by Yoruba Christians who however reject the primal religious artefacts, but who instead use objects like handkerchiefs, ‘anointing oil,’ etc, prepared by their pastors which they carry along hoping for miracles and protection wherever they go. This shall be discussed fully under Medicine. It is not surprising that elements of medicine can be alluded to here, it is because elements of primal religions are in reality inter-related. They are categorised in this thesis for easy identification.

7.5.3 The Appropriation

In the passage we have read (1 Samuel 7:7-11), Samuel raised up an altar in the name of the Lord against the Philistines. God became angry with the Philistines and thundered against them from heaven. The altar fought the battle for Israel and it was practically a walk-over. Israel did not fight. God looked down and fought for his people against their enemies.⁸¹³

You can raise an altar to bless or to destroy, to improve or to demote, to promote or to put down. You can raise an altar to enhance or to frustrate. You can raise an altar

⁸¹⁰ Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:79.

⁸¹¹ Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:79.

⁸¹² Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:79.

⁸¹³ Appendices: 24

for a particular person or for a set of people, those you like or those you do not like. In the Old Testament, altars are built to destroy and to frustrate the enemies.⁸¹⁴ Many things that God has designed in the Bible to bless, the devil has their counterfeits. He can always make his own. Just like the cross of Jesus, you will see men and women dropping sacrifices at the crossroads. This is a corruption of the cross of Jesus.⁸¹⁵

Many problems of the black people can be directly linked to dark ministrations at altars. The enemy has erected satanic altars of affliction against many and these altars have priests of wickedness ministering regularly on them. You can ask, “How did the devil get to know about all these?” Don't forget, he was with God in the beginning. He saw the order of heaven and understood how things were run. He has now corrupted that order. He has taught his own people the secret of altars they are using for destructive purposes.⁸¹⁶

Every satanic altar erected against me and my family be demolished by fire, in the name of Jesus. Every vessel submitting my name to the altar be frustrated, in the name of Jesus. I refuse to be a prisoner of any local altar, in the name of Jesus.⁸¹⁷

Sacrifices are foods given to wicked spirits to seek for their assistance. That is why the Bible says, “Do not eat food sacrificed to idols.” If you eat it you are eating on the same table with the devil. The Bible says this because it wants to educate us that food sacrificed to idols is food for demons, and when you share food with demons, you go away with them. Wicked people put food on an altar and ask wicked spirits for assistance to afflict people.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁴ Appendices: 24

⁸¹⁵ Appendices: 24

⁸¹⁶ Appendices: 24

⁸¹⁷ Appendices: 24

⁸¹⁸ Appendices: 25

Some of the things that we call migraine and headache are sometimes a result of demonic affliction. That is why before we do anything to our body we should pray. Even if you had so much faith in drugs you had better pray. We Christians rely on the Holy Spirit and angels to fight for us in the spirit world. When names are taken to the altar to monitor and influence people's lives and they do not know what is going on, it is as if someone is following them around and destroying anything that comes.⁸¹⁹

I am not saying what I am saying to scare people. Many house-helpers, nannies and in-laws are altar priests, and agents passing information to other altar priests. They should not be brought in to your house without prayers.⁸²⁰

Demons try to see whether they should waste their ammunition on you or not because there is no point shooting a corpse. When someone has been eaten up, what is the point in shooting him again? They use these altars as control instruments which cause problems for people. Tying a rope to the neck of a cock and mentioning a person's name in the process, and then putting the cock at the crossroads severely limit that person. When there is something good around and you move towards it, something else will prevent you from reaching it. These evil altars can dominate a person; they can tie him down so that he cannot have a mind of his own.⁸²¹

Therefore they are not the kind of thing you look at and you say gentle prayers. It is the kind of thing you face, the way that the prophet in 1 Kings 13 did. He prophesied against an altar and destroyed it. That is the only way out.⁸²²

⁸¹⁹ Appendices: 25

⁸²⁰ Appendices: 25

⁸²¹ Appendices: 25

⁸²² Appendices: 25

7.5.4 Comment

There are about four or five points that are strikingly similar in the two areas of discussion. Firstly, just like in the Yoruba traditional religious context, the preacher believes that certain religious concept can be used to afflict people with harm. Secondly, certain words must be spoken in a particular way or according to formula for this happen. He said, ‘Therefore they are not the kind of thing you look at and you say gentle prayers. It is the kind of thing you face, the way that the prophet in 1 Kings 13 did. He prophesied against an altar and destroyed it. That is the only way out.’ His interpretation of the prayers offered by Samuel in verse 9 of the passage is the kind of words spoken by the Yoruba when he/she is practicing magic, which is called incantation. He makes reference to this in 1 Kings 13: 2 when the man of God from Judah to Bethel prophesied against an altar, and the altar split into two, (1 Kings 13: 5). This shall be discussed fully below, because it is also an element of primal religion to be examined from both the Yoruba context and one of the sermons.

In the third place, the fact that a set of actions must be carried out for the magic to work is striking in the two subjects. For example, among the Yoruba, if a sorcerer is planning to kill an enemy without being near the victim physically, the preparation may include steps like the following. The sorcerer will procure water in a bowl and have ready a cudgel or machet or a loaded gun, he summons, by magical means, the spirit of the enemy to appear in the water in the bowl and he hits, cuts, or shoots the figure that appears. As a result, the person whose spirit was summoned will receive an actual wound or gun-shot wherever he may be. Comparably, the preacher declares that a Christian can raise an altar to destroy, to demote, and to put down. A Christian can raise an altar to frustrate. He/she can raise an altar for a particular person or for a set of people, like those you do not like. He claims that in the Old Testament, altars are built to destroy and to frustrate the enemies, referring to how Samuel raised an altar to bring down God’s fury upon the Philistines. I believe what he means by raising an altar in his sermon may not imply building it physically, but setting up a special time of fervent prayer by a Christian. ‘Raising altars’ is a parlance I have heard among Pentecostals to mean, setting up a time for fervent prayers. Furthermore the mention of the Cross of Jesus is also striking in that he likens it with the crossroads where the Yoruba drop sacrifices for deities, which he implies is an altar where wicked people can afflict their victim. Therefore this implies that apart from the prayer meetings where fervent prayers are made, objects of symbol in the Christendom like the Cross can be used as an altar to fight the enemies.

Fourthly, the preacher asserts his belief that ‘many problems of the black people can be directly linked to dark ministrations at altars. The enemy has erected satanic altars of affliction against many and these altars have priests of wickedness ministering regularly on them.’ In other words he as a Christian believes magic can be done against a person from altars of the world of darkness and that this is mostly an African thing.

7.6 Medicine

Sermon 7: ‘Believer’s Power Instrument’ by Bishop David Oyedepo under the Faith Gospel paradigm shall be compared with the Yoruba primal religion, and the element tagged Medicine shall be traced in it.

Among the primal religious adherents, medicine is considered as the professional skill of the medicine man in curing, alleviating and preventing diseases as well as restoring and preserving health. Usually the medicine person is a diviner, a priest as well as a manufacture of charms, because he/she has the means of ascertaining the causes of ailments, misfortunes and death. Medicine in primal religions means more than cure of ailments. It includes believing that a medicinal substance could possess a mysterious power which could be used to do harm to an enemy. He/she employs different means including herbs, plants, leaves, roots, barks, animals, birds, skins, bones, rings, brooms, pieces of thread, needles and minerals, to do his/her business. Furthermore, he/she has some magical words to go with his preparation, and so, inevitably, magic, as discussed above finds a place in the practice of medicine.⁸²³

7.6.1 The Texts

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Revelation 12: 11.

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward ... 1 Samuel 16: 13

The Book Revelation is one of the enigmatic of books of the Bible. Therefore to write a commentary on it may be a courageous move especially in the academic circle. But one thing is constant in the context of the book, and that its title is a description of what the writer wants to convey to the readers. ‘The Revelation of

⁸²³ Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, 1948: 83; Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979: 73.

Jesus Christ' which is evidently a title or caption of the whole book, and is designed to comprise the substance of the whole; for all that the book contains would be embraced in the general declaration that it is a Revelation of Jesus Christ.

The twelfth chapter consists of the narrative of the woman clothed with the sun, and in travail, (verses 1, 2). The great red dragon is waiting to devour the child as soon as born, (verse 3, 4). The woman is delivered of a son, who is caught up unto God; and she flees to the wilderness, (verses 5, 6). Verses 7 & 8 reveal the story of the war in heaven between Michael and the dragon. The dragon and his angels are overcome and cast down to the earth; at which point the whole heavenly host give glory to God, (verses 9-11). The dragon, full of wrath at his defeat, persecutes the woman, (verses 12, 13). She flees to the wilderness, where he attempts to pursue her; and he makes war with her seed, (verses 14-17)

In the passage from where the second verse is drawn, Samuel is sent from Ramah to Bethlehem, to anoint David, (verses 1-13). The Spirit of the Lord departs from Saul, and an evil spirit comes upon him, (verse 14). His servants exhort him to get a skilful musician on the harp to play before him, (verses 15 & 16). He is pleased with the counsel, and desires them to find such a person, (verse 17). They recommend David, 18. He is sent for, comes, plays before Saul, and finds favour in his sight, (verses 19-23).

7.6.2 The Context of the Preacher (Yoruba Religious Concept)

Among those who have knowledge of certain esoteric spiritual principles that may help Yoruba to cope with life's challenges are the medicine-men.⁸²⁴ Medicine in this context consists in substances used to treat or prevent disease. In other words, medicine in the Yoruba conception aims at healing as well as prevention.⁸²⁵ The professional skill of a medicine-man includes curing, alleviating and preventing disease as well as restoring and preserving health. In many cases, he is a diviner, a priest as well as a manufacturer of charms.⁸²⁶

Also the medicine, when finally prepared, is believed to be charged with power. The medicine may come in the form of a ring or an amulet, or it may be a black powder that has to be applied to incisions in one's body,

⁸²⁴ Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, 1948: 84-85, Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:74-76.

⁸²⁵ Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, 1948: 84-85, Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:74-76.

⁸²⁶ Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, 1948: 84-85, Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:74-76.

or it can be soap. But, whatever it is, its use has to be accompanied by incantations that imbue the medicinal preparation with power.⁸²⁷ From time to time the medicine-man makes offerings to the spirit of his medicine. He may chew kola-nuts and alligator pepper and spit these onto the medicine as he utters incantations and prays that the medicine may preserve its power. He sometimes offers blood in addition to gin and kola-nuts or alligator pepper.⁸²⁸ It has to be stressed that medicine, as conceived of by the Yoruba, is believed to have something extra - a mysterious power that can cure or prevent ailments but that in some cases could be used to harm an enemy. The fact that in the production and application of medicine certain spiritual entities are invoked means that the process must be defined as magic. This had been delineated above.

Because of the powers believed to be inherent in these medicinal preparations, anyone who uses them has to observe certain taboos. For example, some medicine must not be taken to an unclean place, for example a latrine, or be worn by a man when he has intercourse with a woman or be touched by a woman who is menstruating. The power in such preparation will disappear and the medicine will be rendered useless. In some cases, food taboos have to be observed: one may not drink palm wine or share an egg with another person or eat okra stew if the preparation is to retain its potency.⁸²⁹

Apart from the mysterious power of a medicine being used for curing certain ailments, it may also be used for gaining success in different enterprises such as fishing, hunting, trading, burgling a house or being protected from a burglary and, generally, for warding off enemy attacks. It may be used to render an enemy blind or impotent or to cause him failure and untold hardship. While the good medicine man is loved and respected by all who love good and beautiful things, the wicked medicine man is feared and hated by all. He will be singled out and described as a sorcerer. He is notorious for his use of medical and magical powers to do harm, cause discomfort and failure and bring even death to people, especially those that he happens to hate. The fear of the wicked medicine man will be easier to understand when we turn our attention to an examination of the mysterious power of magic.

⁸²⁷Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief*. London. 1962:99-109, Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, 1948: 84-85, Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief*. London. 1962:99-109.

⁸²⁸ Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief*. London. 1962:99-109, Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, 1948: 84-85, Idowu, *Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief*. London. 1962:99-109.

⁸²⁹Lucas, *The Religion of the Yorubas*, 1948: 84-85, Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:73.

7.6.3 The Appropriation

Revelation 12: 11.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

There is a continuous sprinkling of the blood, twenty-four hours of the day, in Zion. Therefore, whenever a child of God appears there, whether alone or with other believers, he gets sprinkled with the precious blood of the Lamb. So, if the devil comes to you with depression or any form of oppression, just blast the atmosphere with the blood. Declare vehemently, "The blood of Jesus is against you, Satan!"⁸³⁰

The blood and testimonies are instruments of triumph. Testimonies eradicate trials.⁸³¹

Stop talking about trials; instead, talk testimonies! Locate relevant testimonies, wrap them up in the blood, and begin to shoot them as missiles at your targets. David shot testimony arrows at Goliath, and collected Goliath's head (1 Sam. 17:37)!⁸³²

The blood of Jesus and testimonies are two powerful weapons commonly used even in heaven.⁸³³

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward ... 1 Samuel 16: 13

The anointing oil is not a chemical product. It is the Spirit of God mysteriously put in a bottle, and mysteriously designed to communicate the power of God bodily. It is the power of God in the person of the Holy Spirit, placed in a tangible form in the hand of man to humiliate Satan, making an open show of him.⁸³⁴

⁸³⁰ Appendices: 45

⁸³¹ Appendices: 45

⁸³² Appendices: 45

⁸³³ Appendices: 45

⁸³⁴ Appendices: 46

The anointing oil carries mysterious virtue.⁸³⁵

God introduced the mystery of the anointing oil in Exodus 30:23-31, where He gave Moses details on how it was to be mixed.⁸³⁶

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward ...⁸³⁷

In 1 Samuel 16: 13, we see that it is the Spirit of God. David was anointed with oil, but what came upon him was not oil, but the Spirit of the Lord. So the anointing oil is a medium through which the Holy Spirit, the power of God, is invoked to intervene on man's behalf. The Holy Spirit goes into manifestation when the oil is applied.⁸³⁸

The anointing oil is able to end all frustrations in your life. When it touches the barren, she becomes abundantly fruitful. When it touches anyone chained by the devil, the person becomes automatically free. There is no sickness or disease of any kind that can escape the power in the anointing oil. So, discover the mystery in the anointing oil, and it will put you over always, causing you to walk in dominion!⁸³⁹

Look beyond that common chemical called, "Olive oil", into the mystery that it carries. The anointing oil is not mere oil; there is a person mysteriously packaged inside it.⁸⁴⁰

That bottle in your hand is no ordinary liquid, but fire! In other words, its content is highly dangerous. What natural explanation can you give that will justify its catching fire when poured on the ground? The Person inside the oil came alive!⁸⁴¹

⁸³⁵ Appendices: 46

⁸³⁶ Appendices: 46

⁸³⁷ Appendices: 47

⁸³⁸ Appendices: 46

⁸³⁹ Appendices: 47

⁸⁴⁰ Appendices: 47

⁸⁴¹ Appendices: 47

I blessed a bottle of oil for a cousin in 1991, and he kept it away in his wardrobe. His business was about to hit the rocks when suddenly he remembered the oil. He brought it out of his wardrobe, and anointed all his signposts with it, and business immediately picked up for him! The Holy Ghost is THE comforter, not A comforter. There is no situation he cannot handle. Every hardship in life answers to his authority.⁸⁴²

Note that we are not only to anoint people with the oil, but can also anoint things. The children of Israel anointed their tabernacle, laver, offerings, etc. with the oil. *And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, And the table and all his vessels and the candlestick and his vessels and the altar of incense, And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations.* Exodus 30:26-31⁸⁴³

Stop carrying the bottle of anointing oil about for fun; use it! It is not enough to be seen carrying the bottle of anointing oil around; you must put it to work. Moses never parted with his rod, as it was his only weapon of defence.⁸⁴⁴

Whenever you sense evil around you, stand to your feet and pour the oil on the ground. Speak to the situation and let it know you are in charge.⁸⁴⁵

Any day you are on your way out and you've left your oil at home, go back for it. Somebody might need your help on the way, and you will be able to manifest your glory.⁸⁴⁶

⁸⁴² Appendices: 48

⁸⁴³ Appendices: 48

⁸⁴⁴ Appendices: 49

⁸⁴⁵ Appendices: 49

The man Smith Wigglesworth was a man of one book and one bottle - the Bible and the oil. He died at the age of 87 and never needed to use any form of medicine.⁸⁴⁷

It will be recalled that at the time of Elijah's departure, Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him. When he got to the bank of Jordan and could not cross over, he smote the waters with The mantle that fell from Elijah, declaring, "Where is Lord God of Elijah" and the waters parted, and Elisha went over (2 Kgs. 2:13-14).⁸⁴⁸

Any material that has come in contact with the anointed of God carries the unction for manifestation.⁸⁴⁹

The name of Jesus is a strong tower, an institution of power. Once you invoke that name in faith, a strong tower is erected round about you.⁸⁵⁰

7.6.4 Comment

In summary, among the Yoruba, medicine consists in substances used to treat or prevent disease, and the medicine (substances), when finally prepared, is believed to be charged with power. In some cases could be used to harm an enemy, and finally it may also be used for gaining success in different enterprises.

The preacher, Bishop Oyedepo refers to the following as substances carrying power to bless and defend believers, and harm the enemy: the blood of Jesus, the name of Jesus, the anointing oil, and the mantle. He interprets the blood of the Lamb in Revelation 12: 11 as the substance through which the seed of the woman, the church overcomes the red dragon: Satan. Therefore in the contemporary times, Christians can used the blood of Jesus (who is the Lamb) to fight and overcome the enemy. Just as David was anointed and he was favoured to be in the palace, and ultimately became king after Saul's rejection and death, so can the anointing oil that is blessed by a man of God 'put you over always, causing you to walk in dominion!'

⁸⁴⁶ Appendices: 48

⁸⁴⁷ Appendices: 48

⁸⁴⁸ Appendices: 48

⁸⁴⁹ Appendices: 48

⁸⁵⁰ Appendices: 42

Furthermore, apart from the fact that the preacher's interpretation exhibits that the mentioned above are substances to put to use just like the Yoruba will put to use the medicine he/she receives from the medicine man, Bishop Oyedepo asserts that the substances firstly, must be carried around just as the Yoruba wears his/her own medicine substance in form of rings and amulets on the body.

Stop carrying the bottle of anointing oil about for fun; use it! It is not enough to be seen carrying the bottle of anointing oil around; you must put it to work. Moses never parted with his rod, as it was his only weapon of defence.

Whenever you sense evil around you, stand to your feet and pour the oil on the ground. Speak to the situation and let it know you are in charge.

Any day you are on your way out and you've left your oil at home, go back for it. Somebody might need your help on the way, and you will be able to manifest your glory.

Secondly, he claims that the substances have magical characteristics, which if used thus will yield magical result.

7.7 Incantations

Sermon 9 'Deliverance from Repeated Unpleasant Circumstances and Situations' by Pastor Tunde Aremu under the Demon Possession paradigm shall be compared with the Yoruba primal religion, and the element tagged Incantations shall be traced here.

Incantations involve the chanting or uttering of words purporting to have magical power,⁸⁵¹ the words which go with some medicinal preparation which is carried in the form of substances like rings, amulet, girdle, animal horns etc. The difference between these words and words of prayer is parallel to the difference between religion and magic as described above. Prayer is a means by which human makes a devout

⁸⁵¹ Margaret J. Field, *Search for Security*, North-Western University Press: London, 1962: 35; H.B. Alexander, 'Primitive Worship,' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburgh:, 4th Edition, 1959.

supplication to, and enters into communion with the deity in an attitude of adoration, praise and thanksgiving.

On the other hand, in words of incantation, a process of exploiting the elemental forces, in procurement of a technical knowhow is depicted, since he/she knows that he/she has needs which he/she cannot procure on his/her own, and seeking aid to be able to cope with them. He/she is convinced that there are supernatural resources in the universe for his/her benefit and that these resources can be obtained by incantations, like magic, which involve the esoteric knowledge of certain resources fathomable only to those who have learnt the words, usually by rote. When these words are uttered, they are believed to carry powers that can make things said or commanded to happen.

7.7.1 The Text

Matthew 11:12

And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Christ, having finished his instructions to his disciples, departs to preach in different cities, (verse 1). John sends two of his disciples to him to inquire whether he was the Christ, (verses 2-6). Verses 7-15 feature Christ's testimony concerning John. He upbraids the Jews with their capriciousness, (verses 16-19). Verses 20-24 feature the condemnation of Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum, for their unbelief and impenitence. He praises the Divine wisdom for revealing the Gospel to the simple-hearted, (verses 25, 26). Christ shows that none can know God but by the revelation of his Son, (verse 27), and he invites the distressed to come unto him, and gives them the promise of rest for their souls, (verses 29-30).

7.7.2 The Context of the Preacher (Yoruba Religious Concept)

Words coupled with charms have mysterious powers that are frequently used by the Yoruba. Such words have been uttered by 'those who know how', to escape death, to vanish at the approach of imminent danger, to escape a ghastly accident, to destroy an enemy or wild animal, to stupefy thieves, to shorten the distance

one has to travel, and so on.⁸⁵² Sometimes, the incantations accompany medicinal preparations that are worn in the form of a ring (*oruka*), amulet (*ifunpa*), girdle (*igbadi*), small gourd (*ado*) or needle (*abere*).⁸⁵³

A substance called *Gbetugbetu* consists of an enchanted small gourd covered with a red and white cloth that the owner keeps in his pocket or hangs around his neck. All that the wearer of the charm concerned does, is to say the right word and whatever instruction he utters into the substance will be carried out.

The use of incantation can involve that of a medicine-man and *Babalawo* (Ifa priest) teaching a client how to utter certain words, after some herbal preparation or preparation of some substances is made for the particular situation. According to general belief, whoever uses the preparation together with the incantations in the appropriate manner will surely secure what he/she seeks.⁸⁵⁴

During annual festivals in different parts of Yorubaland, there is an unlimited use of incantations. There is much display and the use of charms and incantations, and it is believed that they can effectively bless those who offer them gifts as their processions file by and that they can equally effectively curse those who spy on them or who act contrary to traditional practices.

By evil incantations evil things had been effected on people.⁸⁵⁵ On the other hand, by means of good incantations, people have escaped danger and acquired good jobs and important positions in society. Thus, along with divination, medicine, and magic incantations can be employed to harness mysterious powers.⁸⁵⁶

⁸⁵² Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:74-79.

⁸⁵³ Awolalu. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:74-79. It is remarkable that in Christianity as practised in Yoruba land, worshippers utter words while praying and quoting the scriptures just like the medicine man or woman does while preparing medicine for his/her clients. This will be further discussed in the next chapter. Some churches also use objects such as candles, oil, etc in prayer.

⁸⁵⁴ This way of facing the challenges in one's life is rife among Yoruba Christians. 'Say the words the way they should be said, and thing happening will favour you.' There are ways in which certain psalms of the Bible are said and problems are solved. Preachers teach that if psalms are read into water in a bowl, the water could be used for the protection of one's house by sprinkling it on its floors and in the surroundings. This will be discussed in depth in the last chapter.

⁸⁵⁵ Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:74-79.

⁸⁵⁶ Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:74-79.

7.7.3 The Appropriation

Matthew 11:12

And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Between the 5th and 8th of March, 1995, I was preaching at a meeting in Abuja. It was a programme organised by the First Baptist Church, Garki. When I finished preaching, I told the brethren to pray targeted, and specific spiritual warfare prayers, and the atmosphere changed. The brethren prayed like their lives depended on it, and they got their desired results. There were lots of testimonies to the glory of God. Jesus Himself said,⁸⁵⁷

We have to be violent and specific when we pray against the host of hell. This is called balanced deliverance prayer. This balanced deliverance prayer of being violent, and praying targeted, strategic and specific prayer, works faster than all methods known today. From experience, once the individual is fully fired by the word of God, and fully understands the authority he has as a believer, the balanced deliverance prayer will just cut across the soul and marrow of any demonic affliction.⁸⁵⁸

Each time we are to hold our night vigils (second and last Fridays of the month in Lagos and Ibadan respectively), we usually fast and pray, and in most cases sanctify the hall of meeting, and pray over each bench or chair that whoever comes to the meeting would receive a measure of God's touch and miracle. Many have come back to testify that the moment they entered the hall of meeting, their sicknesses or problems disappeared. This is done in most Churches and Ministries.⁸⁵⁹

In the same vein, juju priests and priestesses usually prepare themselves before their god; they arm themselves with incantations to release on their clients. A specific demon called

⁸⁵⁷ Appendices: 75

⁸⁵⁸ Appendices: 76

⁸⁵⁹ Appendices: 80

Baal follows such people home to ensure that the agreement signed in the priest's shrine holds. When anybody decides to follow Jesus, it is mandatory to go for deliverance to be free from all such contaminations and get purified. Even if that agreement was signed 50 years ago, it makes no difference. There are trillions of demons in existence so several demons can be assigned to follow an individual for life and the devil will see to it that this work lacks no demonic backing. So everyone who has been to juju houses need to be delivered from Baal demons.⁸⁶⁰

Knowledge has a major role to play when we want to receive our blessings from God. One lady in the meeting started shouting, "Come out. You are an idiot. No compromise at all. No dialogue." It was so loud that in a congregation of about 800 people her voice was heard, and I was forced to look towards her directly. She ran around, shouting and pointing to an object or somebody which she alone saw.⁸⁶¹

You deaf and dumb demon, jump out of my life by fire in the name of Jesus and come back no more in Jesus' name. I reject every spirit of stealing in my life (conscious and unconscious). Come out of my life by fire in the name of Jesus. I reject every spirit of blindness (physical and spiritual blindness) in my life; be flushed out by fire in the name of Jesus. Let every evil root of poverty be destroyed out of my life in the name of Jesus. Any problem arranged for the future for me, receive total destruction in Jesus' name. Human beings have the will to either accept a situation, if it is good, or reject it, if it is bad. The things we want to reject are usually dealt with in deliverance ministrations.⁸⁶²

I decree destruction upon every household enemy that is resisting my breakthrough in the name of Jesus.⁸⁶³

⁸⁶⁰ Appendices: 80

⁸⁶¹ Appendices: 76

⁸⁶² Appendices: 73

⁸⁶³ Appendices: 72

I command that any part of my body in the custody of my enemy be-released now in the name of Jesus.⁸⁶⁴

Every satanic power binding me with sicknesses and diseases, I overcome you by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 12: 11). You spirit of hardship, loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus. Let every unseen hand working evil in my life wither in the name of Jesus. I frustrate every power frustrating my life by fire in the name of Jesus. I reject every spirit of failure in every area of my life and family in the name of Jesus. I reject, bind and cast out every spirit of acute poverty in my life in the name of Jesus. You that demon of Mammon, loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus. I reject and cast out the spirit of Asthma in the name of Jesus.⁸⁶⁵

I reject you spirit of unforgiveness in my life and I command you to come out of me in the name of Jesus. I reject you, spirit of bitterness, loose your hold of my life in the name of Jesus. I challenge every strongman of anger in my life by fire, loose your hold of my life in the name of Jesus. You spirit of lust and immorality, come out of my life now in the name of Jesus. I command every lying spirit to come out of my life in the name of Jesus.⁸⁶⁶

7.7.4 Comment

In the first place Pastor Tunde Aremu in his sermon above displays the concept of words uttering with a purpose of producing a desired result as the case obtains in his Yoruba traditional religious context. Secondly, he claims that knowledge has a major role to play when we want to receive our blessings from God. This is in congruence with the Yoruba belief that incantations are words uttered by ‘those who know how.’ In other words, there is an esoteric aspect of learning certain words or having particular knowledge before one could be able to utter the right words which will produce the desired result.

⁸⁶⁴ Appendices: 72

⁸⁶⁵ Appendices: 72

⁸⁶⁶ Appendices: 73

The preacher also says that they sanctify the hall of meetings and ‘pray over each bench or chair that whoever comes to the meeting would receive a measure of God's touch and miracle.’ This means that the words of prayer spoken upon the hall and seats produce the result of blessing upon those who will sit on them. This is using the words of prayer positively. On the other hand, he claims that a Christian will have to be violent and specific when he/she prays against the host of hell. This deliverance prayer of being violent, and praying targeted, strategic and specific prayer, he says works faster than the normal session of prayers.

Finally, it will be noticed that certain sentences which start with the pronoun ‘I’ are also culled from the body of the sermon. These are words taught the worshippers during such deliverance prayer sessions by the preacher. It is also striking that this is a concept among the Yoruba traditional worshippers.

7.8 Taboo

Sermon 4: Release from Curses by Pastor Sola Akorede under the Demon Possession paradigm shall be compared with the Yoruba primal religion, and the element tagged Taboo shall be showcased in both.

A taboo is a strong moral judgment and religious belief based sets of social proscriptions relating to any area of human activity or social custom that is sacred and forbidden. Breaking the taboo is usually considered objectionable or abhorrent.⁸⁶⁷ The relevance here is that as explained above, human can enter into a cautious relationship with the benevolent spirit-world and so share in its powers and blessings and receive protection from evil forces. The caution is exhibited in the acknowledgement of certain dos and don'ts if the goal of achieving results in the human-spirit relationship would be a reality. The catalogue of these requirements has been tagged Taboo in this research.

Taboos can include restrictions on sexual activities and relationships, diet, clothing, restrictions of bodily functions like urinating in certain ways, restrictions on the use of psychoactive drugs, restrictions on state of genitalia such as (trans-sexual gender identity, circumcision or sex reassignment), exposure of body parts and restrictions on the use of offensive language.

⁸⁶⁷ Robert M.W. Dixon, *A Grammar of Boumaa Fijian*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2002, p. 368

7.8.1 The Text

Genesis 2: 16 & 17

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

In the passage from which the two verses emerge, the seventh day is consecrated for a Sabbath, and the reasons assigned in verses 1-3. Verses 4-7 recapitulate the six days' work of creation. The Garden of Eden is planted in verse 8 with its trees, (verse 9), its rivers, and the countries watered by them, (verses 10-14). The next verses feature the pericope of the sermon in focus. Adam is placed in the garden, and the command is given not to eat of the tree of knowledge on pain of death, (verses 15-17). In verse 18, God purposes to form a companion for the man. The different animals are brought to Adam that he might assign them their names, (verses 19, 20). Verses 21-25 show the creation of the woman; the institution of marriage; the purity and innocence of Adam and Eve.

7.8.2 The Context of the Preacher (Yoruba Religious Concept)

The Yoruba view is that the action of a single person in the community is sufficient to affect all the other members for good or for evil. In order to prevent people from becoming rebellious and endangering the desired welfare of the society, there are set patterns or codes of behaviour to which every individual and the community as a whole must adhere. Standards or norms have to be observed. If one does so faithfully, it will be to the benefit of one and all, but if not, disaster will befall the community.

In considering taboos, covenant comes into focus. Covenants made with a divinity usually involve sanctions and demands. The participant has to obey all the regulations of the cult and observe its taboos which are dos-and-don'ts usually associated with divinities. For example the worshippers of Orisa-nla, the arch-divinity, must not drink palmwine because Orisa-nla forbids it. The basis for this taboo is provided by the tradition that Orisa-nla once became intoxicated after drinking palmwine. Since then he never drank it again nor would he allow his worshippers to drink it. The same divinity is the symbol of purity and divine holiness among the Yoruba. He enjoins his worshippers to be perfect. Palmwine as an intoxicant has a negative influence on man's character and purity and is therefore forbidden as is any other thing that may affect man's morality adversely.. These are Orisa-nla's taboos.

In Yoruba primal religion men and women who play leading roles as cultic functionaries are believed to be sacred. So are their functions sacred as the worship they lead is aimed at holiness. They have to maintain close and happy relationships between people and the divine beings. As this requires dealing with the mystery of the unseen world and its perceived unpredictability, it is regarded as demanding expert knowledge and training,⁸⁶⁸ most important is that one must not risk offending the spiritual beings. By approaching them too closely or carelessly, one may break a taboo and bring the guilt of having done so as an infection among one's fellow men.⁸⁶⁹ In order to protect themselves from such risks, and promote at the same time the communication with the sacred, the Yoruba use a mediator who can deal with the divinities on their behalf without risking destruction. That mediator is the priest who stands between the worshippers and the object of worship.⁸⁷⁰

There also exist taboos pertaining to people of the same vocation. For example, people who trade in iron, such as hunters, warriors, and blacksmiths, have to follow certain prescribed behaviour in order to enhance morality in the community. They must for example not make false statements using the emblem of Ogun, the god of iron.

Also ancestors are custodians of morality among the Yoruba. They see to it that moral conduct is maintained so that orderliness and peace reign in the society. They function as the spiritual administrators of family affairs and dereliction of filial duties is believed to be seriously punished by them, even after they have passed to the great beyond. But, as in the case of divinities, taboos connected with ancestors apply strictly within their own family. For example, in one family it may be taboo for a woman to eat a particular food after giving birth whereas in another family a woman is obliged to consume such food.

⁸⁶⁸ Awolalu. Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites. 1979:97-102.

⁸⁶⁹ Awolalu. Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites., 1979:97-102.

⁸⁷⁰ Awolalu. Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites. 1979:97-102.

7.8.3 The Appropriation

Genesis 2: 16 & 17

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Curses Act like A Kind Of Shield:

They protect evil spirits and give them legal grounds to operate.

God was the first person to place a curse on a person in the Bible. He placed it upon Adam and Eve when they ate the forbidden fruit. It is still the same thing today. Every disobedience invites curses from God and only He can remove them.⁸⁷¹

Curses Have Long Lasting Effects:

They can run from generation to generation.⁸⁷²

The curse on Jericho was not broken until 300 - 500 years after it was issued. When Prophet Elijah, the man of God came, he identified the problem, and broke the curse. And so shall all evil curses be broken, in Jesus' name.⁸⁷³

Sins allow curses to stay. Where sins remain, curses remain. For complete freedom there must be complete repentance.⁸⁷⁴

A curse cannot affect a child of God, who is walking in obedience.⁸⁷⁵

When you break the vow and covenant of a marriage, you set a curse in motion. This is the reason why many are suffering today. When a woman leaves her husband and marries

⁸⁷¹ Appendices: 17

⁸⁷² Appendices: 17

⁸⁷³ Appendices: 17

⁸⁷⁴ Appendices: 18

⁸⁷⁵ Appendices: 18

a rich man, or a man leaves his wife and marries a younger woman, a curse is set in motion.⁸⁷⁶

Young girls who go around with married men are placing themselves under curses; because when the angel wants to bring their own husbands, they will turn back when they see the married men they are illegally hooked to.⁸⁷⁷

Married men running around with married women are under a curse. All curses from married women against husband snatchers work like fire. It does not matter whether the women are born again or not.⁸⁷⁸

If you are going out with a married man and the wife at home is a witch, any curse she issues against you will surely thrive, whether you are born again or not.⁸⁷⁹

When you refuse to obey your elders for whatever reason, curses come into place. When you disobey a rightful leader, the same thing happens. If a woman that comes from a rich family tries to disparage her poor husband, curses will come in place. Women should not look down on their husbands.⁸⁸⁰

You may have forgotten about it. That is why the Bible has two words for sex, i.e. 'laid' and 'knew his wife.' While the first one (laid) is negative, the second word (knew his wife) is positive. When the Bible says, "laid with him", it means fornication or adultery. When the Bible says, "knew his wife", that is the right thing. All the wrong kinds of sex bring curses.⁸⁸¹

⁸⁷⁶ Appendices: 19

⁸⁷⁷ Appendices: 19

⁸⁷⁸ Appendices: 19

⁸⁷⁹ Appendices: 103

⁸⁸⁰ Appendices: 19

⁸⁸¹ Appendices: 19

A man using his money to buy sex is under a curse. Girls releasing themselves to be used as objects of satisfaction to men in order to get a job, promotion, accommodation etc., come under curses.⁸⁸²

A woman permitting herself to be abused sexually because of money comes under a curse.⁸⁸³

A father sleeping with his daughter, or a mother sleeping with her son, comes under curses.⁸⁸⁴

People sleeping with animals, their brother's wives or their sister's husbands come under curses.⁸⁸⁵

A man places himself under a curse when he sleeps with his father's wife.⁸⁸⁶

Fathers sleeping with their step-daughters or parents entertaining guests with their daughters or using their daughters to get contracts, or husbands using their wives for business also remain cursed.⁸⁸⁷

Leviticus 19:29, says, "Do not prostitute thy daughters."

Pasting pictures of naked women on the wall, or buying calendars and magazines with such pictures puts a person under a curse.⁸⁸⁸

Curses from sexual immorality are the strongest curses and very difficult to break. They can take weeks to break during the deliverance of such a cursed person. That is why the

⁸⁸² Appendices: 19

⁸⁸³ Appendices: 19

⁸⁸⁴ Appendices: 19

⁸⁸⁵ Appendices: 19

⁸⁸⁶ Appendices: 19

⁸⁸⁷ Appendices: 20

⁸⁸⁸ Appendices: 20

Bible says that God is not too worried about sins outside the body as He is worried about sins in the body, i.e. fornication and adultery.⁸⁸⁹

The Bible says the blessing of the Lord "*maketh rich without adding sorrow to it.*" That means there is a wealth you can get that will add sorrow to it. All wealth by unrighteous means puts people under a curse. Bribery or stealing the wealth of the dead invites curses. There are so many relatives who let the wives and the children suffer, because as soon as a husband dies, they just come and cart away his property. Such in-laws come under a curse. If you are here and you want to share the property of the dead, you have to be very careful not to get involved.⁸⁹⁰

When you murder someone by witchcraft, you come under a curse.⁸⁹¹

SHEDDING OF INNOCENT BLOOD.

All abortions invite curses of frustrations.⁸⁹²

Purchasing stolen items on which a curse has been placed. This is why any Christian who buys any second hand material must anoint and pray over it. For example, a car was stolen in Belgium from somebody who sweated for 15 years to buy it. When that car was stolen, he removed his clothes and placed a curse on whosoever will use the car. The car was brought to Nigeria and the curse will be transferred to whoever buys it.⁸⁹³

People curse themselves every day without knowing it. A woman used to say, "my poor legs, my poor legs" and eventually those legs developed problems. Negative words directed at oneself are a curse.⁸⁹⁴

TOUCHING UNCLEAN THINGS, OR ANYTHING DEDICATED TO SATAN

⁸⁸⁹ Appendices: 20

⁸⁹⁰ Appendices: 20

⁸⁹¹ Appendices: 20

⁸⁹² Appendices: 20

⁸⁹³ Appendices: 21

⁸⁹⁴ Appendices: 21

All things that the Bible lists as unclean should not be touched by a believer. When things are like this, there can be mental and physical illness; there can be failure, profitless hard work, defeat, poverty, and family breakup. Even when there is plenty of money coming in, the cursed person is broke.⁸⁹⁵

7.8.4 Comment

Pastor Akorede in his interpretation of the Genesis 2: 16 & 17 acknowledges the fact that God placed a curse upon Adam and Eve when they ate the forbidden fruit, and the curse still runs till today. Similarly among the Yoruba, there is the view that the action of a single person in the community is sufficient to affect all the other members for good or for evil. Therefore people are prevented from becoming rebellious and thereby endangering the society. Through Adam and Eve the human race is cursed

The preacher also echoes the concept of the ancestors, who according to the Yoruba are the invisible leaders of the society (although with a tinge of difference). He says when a person refuses to obey his/her elders for whatever reason, curses come into place. When a person disobeys a rightful leader, the same thing happens. He give the illustration of a woman that may come from a rich family trying to disparage her poor husband, curses will come in place. Women should not look down on their husbands. This is consistent with the Yoruba context which sees ancestors as custodians of moral values. They see to it that moral conduct is maintained so that orderliness and peace reign in the society, even after they have passed to the great beyond. The tinge of difference between the preacher and his context is that the punishment of the erring member of the family does not come from the ancestor, but from God who allows the curse to come upon the person of error.

The preacher emphasises on sexual immorality as the harbinger of misfortune. Through this he confirms the Yoruba belief that covenants made with a divinity ‘usually involve sanctions and demands.’ The adherents have to obey all the dos and don’ts of the cult usually associated with divinities. He claims that ‘the Bible says that God is not too worried about sins outside the body as He is worried about sins in the body, i.e. fornication and adultery.’ In other words, sexual immorality is disdained by God, and whoever will worship Him must eschew it. The other wrong doings that could mar the worship of God he iterated as including shedding innocent blood through abortion, and touching or purchasing cursed objects.

⁸⁹⁵ Appendices: 21

7.9 Totemism

Sermon 2, Ancient Ancestral Covenants and Strategic Warfare by Prophet (Dr.) Samson Ayorinde under the Demonic Possession paradigm shall be compared with the Yoruba primal religion.

Totemism is a system of belief in which every human is believed to have a spiritual link or kinship with a certain physical being, like as an animal or plant, often called a "spirit-being" or "totem." The totem is considered to interact with a given kin group or an individual and to serve as their emblem or symbol. It is the relationship of social groups or specific persons with animals or natural objects, or spirit beings the so-called totems, in which they share some basic characteristics with different emphases and in different specific forms. For instance, people generally view the totem as a companion, relative, protector, progenitor, or helper, ascribe to it superhuman powers and abilities, and offer it some combination of respect, veneration, awe, and fear. Most cultures use special names and emblems to refer to the totem, and those it sponsors engage in partial identification with the totem or symbolic assimilation to it. There is usually a prohibition or taboo against killing, eating, or touching the totem.

7.9.1 The Text

Genesis 17⁸⁹⁶

In the ninety-ninth year of Abram's life God again appears to him, announces his name as God Almighty, and commands him to walk perfectly before him. He proposes to renew the covenant with him. Abram's posture on this occasion was that of prostration.

The covenant was specified: that he should be the father of many nations (Gen 17:4,6), and, in token of this, his name was changed (Gen 17:5); that God would be a God to him and his seed, and would give them the land of Canaan, (Gen 17:7,8), and the seal of this part of the covenant was circumcision, (Gen 17:9-14); that he should have a son by Sarai, and, in token thereof, her name was changed, (Gen 17:15,16). Abram received this promise, (Gen 17:17), and his request for Ishmael (Gen 17:18) was answered, to his satisfaction, (Gen 17:19-22).

The privileges of the covenant were enumerated, and the conditions of the covenant were to be observed, not only by Abraham, but all his posterity. Circumcision was appointed as a sign or token of the covenant,

⁸⁹⁶ The whole text of the chapter cannot be displayed here as the case in other sections above because of space.

and the age at which and the persons on whom this was to be performed was put at eight days. The danger of neglecting this rite was highlighted: that person shall be cut off from his people, because he has broken the covenant.

The birth and blessedness of Isaac was foretold, and great prosperity was promised to Ishmael. Although the covenant to be established was not in the latter, but in Isaac's posterity, nevertheless Abraham, Ishmael and all the males in the family were circumcised.

7.9.2 The Context of the Preacher (Yoruba Religious Concept)

Among the Yoruba, *orile*, which is one of the tokens of totemism denotes the foundation or the origin; and is of an immense importance in the tracing of a pedigree.⁸⁹⁷ It is not a name, it only signifies the family totemic origin, and each one denotes a parent stock. The substance, object or animal with which the person is branded is believed to be the ancestor, the ancient god of the family, the giver of the children and other earthly blessings, or that the family is in some way connected with it.

A married woman cannot adopt her husband's totem, because they would have come from within the same degree of consanguinity.⁸⁹⁸ Therefore intermarriage within the same totem was not allowed. As pointed out earlier in chapter two, the totemic ancestor had given the blood of the family to each member of the stock, therefore according to the Yoruba; two persons with this same blood cannot be compatible in marriage.

Children, both boys and girls take their father's totem, except in rare cases where the father has lost his, or more usually when the mother indicates a higher or nobler rank. Some girls of noble birth will marry below their ranks, but would have their children brought up in their own home, and among their fathers' children, and adopt his totem. Also, an illegitimate child, if not acknowledged by the supposed father cannot adopt his totem but the mother's especially if a female.⁸⁹⁹

7.9.3 The Appropriation

The preacher applied the text above (Genesis 17), by asserting that:

⁸⁹⁷ Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2010: 85 - 87

⁸⁹⁸ Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yoruba*: 86

⁸⁹⁹ Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yoruba*: 87

Carrying of incisions on different parts of the body is a sign of an ancient covenant. These things are stolen by the devil from the Bible. God said in Genesis 17, when He called Abraham that he would make His covenant with him and that it would be in his flesh. Every male child born unto Abraham and his seed was to be circumcised on the eighth day. God said, “Once you are circumcised you belong to me. My covenant is in your flesh.” In the same way, the devil makes sure that there is a covenant in the flesh of many people that belong to him. This is in form of tribal marks or incisions.⁹⁰⁰

In many pagan and traditional societies, children are usually initiated into some family cults. In some places, it is done just a few days after their delivery. By this act, ancient covenants are maintained through those children. Some of those cults are *Oro*, *Osugbo*, *Egungun* and other tribal cults. In some riverine communities of Africa new babies are sometimes left in the river or sea for days to be initiated by water spirits.⁹⁰¹

There are some communities that have specified tribal marks or tattoos they give their children to wear. When you see an Oyo (Nigeria) man, you recognize him immediately. The same is true of a Nupe, Masai, Kanuri, Zulu, Fulani, Ogbomosho, or a Swahili person. Those marks are not just ordinary identification marks. They are spiritually determined and implicative.⁹⁰²

The god of a locality i.e the territorial spirit usually dictates what kind of mark (covenant tokens) he wants to have amongst the children of such a community, so that wherever they go, they can be “protected” by him. Each time the evil spirit or the territorial spirit sees those marks on an individual, he claims ownership. That is why people from certain localities have strange but peculiarly common behaviours like anger, immorality, stinginess, drunkenness, stubbornness, etc. They are all under the influence or control of

⁹⁰⁰ Appendices: 7

⁹⁰¹ Appendices: 6

⁹⁰² Appendices: 7

their local territorial spirits. Therefore, they manifest negative territorial behaviours or characters.⁹⁰³

They do not know that wearing these tribal marks makes one come under the direct or indirect influence of these territorial spirits. If you have a traditional mark on you, I want to suggest that you subject yourself to some cleansing ministrations, so that the hold of the territorial spirit of your locality over you can be broken.⁹⁰⁴

7.9.4 Comment

There are four notions that can be found in the Yoruba primal religious context on totemistic concept which are traceable in the sermon, which he also read into the biblical passage, Genesis 17. Firstly, the concept of origin and pedigree of members of the family or social group is exhibited in the sermon in the fact that tribal marks are tokens of the ownership of the deity of the family or society. He asserts ‘Each time the evil spirit or the territorial spirit sees those marks on an individual, he claims ownership.’

Secondly, another concept analogous in both subjects is the fact that the totem is the giver of blessings for the family; this he exhibits in the sermon, even though he interprets bondage into the influence of the spirit as the condition of the blessings received. ‘Once there is a mark on your body, you must ask questions from your parents. They may say, “Well, for your protection; you used to be very sickly when you were young, you used to faint.” The real fact is that they have given the enemy a foot-hold in your life. You are under a covenant.’

In the third place, all born in the family are in covenant with the token, therefore cannot claim another family. He associates the covenant of the family with the totem to a mark given to the family members to distinguish them from others. All these are traceable from both the biblical passage and the Yoruba concept of totemism.

⁹⁰³ Appendices: 7

⁹⁰⁴ Appendices: 7

The preacher had read the above meaning in to the text, and the Yoruba concept of totemism had determined this meaning. Even though it is a Yoruba Pentecostal Christian engaging with the text, therefore the element of the Yoruba primal religion is traceable in his appropriation of the text.

7.10 Rites

Sermon 6, 'The Trap of Blood Covenant' by Pastor Isaiah Olatunji under the Demonic Possession paradigm shall be compared with the Yoruba primal religion. The element of primal religion that shall be traced in it is Rites.

In primal religions adherents believe that if worship is given to the divine beings regularly and in the right manner, all will be well with human beings. Contrariwise, failure to perform the customary rites and ceremonies, or the adoption of wrong modes of worship is resultant to serious consequences to the individual or to the community.⁹⁰⁵ Worship, is expressed by word as well as by action. These take the form of rites and ceremonies which involve prayer, music, and dancing; offerings for different purposes; the officials and attendants at worship; the place where worship is carried out like shrines, temples and altars. These rites take definite forms, depending upon the divinities to whom the offerings are made. These ritual actions are not mere emotional performances, but symbolic reenactments of something sacred.

7.10.1 The Text

Leviticus 11: 44 - 47

'For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. 'For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. This is the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, 'to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.'"

⁹⁰⁵ J. Omosade Awolalu, *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*: 95; O. Ogunba, *Ritual Drama among the Ijebu*, Ph. D thesis, University of Ibadan, 1967: 67.

This passage is culled from the chapter of Leviticus that deals with laws concerning clean and unclean animals.

Quadrupeds: Those are clean animals which divide the hoof and chew the cud, verse 3; those to be reputed unclean which do not divide the hoof, though they chew the cud, (verses 4-6); those to be reputed unclean also which, though they divide the hoof, do not chew the cud, (verse 7). Whosoever eats their flesh, or touches their carcasses, shall be reputed unclean, verse 8.

Fish: Those are clean, and may be eaten which have fins and scales, verse 9; those which have not fins and scales to be reputed unclean, (verses 10-12).

Birds: Those that are unclean are revealed in (verses 13-21).

Insects: The following may be eaten: the bald locust, beetle, and grasshopper, (verse 22). All others are unclean and abominable, neither their flesh should be eaten, nor their bodies touched, (verses 23-25).

Reptiles: Verse 29 & 39 show reptiles and some small quadrupeds which are unclean; all that touch them shall be unclean, (verse 31); and the things touched by their dead carcasses are unclean also, (verses 32-35). Large fountains, or pits of water, are not defiled by their carcasses, provided a part of the water is drawn out, (verse 36). They do not defile seed by accidentally touching it, provided the water which has touched their flesh do not touch or moisten the seed, (verses 37, 38). An animal that dies of itself is unclean, and may not be touched or eaten, (verses 39, 40). All creeping things are abominable, (verses 41-44). Verse 45-47 give the reason for these laws and that is to distinguish between the animals that may be eaten and the animals that may not be eaten.

7.10.2 The Context of the Preacher (Yoruba Religious Concept)

The Yoruba respond to their spiritual world in different ways and they may accord worship, not only to the Supreme Being, but also to His functionaries - the divinities and spirits.⁹⁰⁶ The people believe that, if worship is given to the divine beings regularly and in the right manner, all will be well with humankind. On

⁹⁰⁶ Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:97-102; O. Ogunba, *Ritual Drama among the Ijebu*, Ph. D thesis, University of Ibadan: 176 – 186.

the other hand, failure to perform the customary rites and ceremonies and the adoption of wrong modes of worship may have serious consequences for the individual or the community.⁹⁰⁷

Worship, seen as a total response to the Ultimate Reality, is expressed in word as well as deed. These words and deeds take the form of rites and ceremonies and may include prostration, prayer, invoking and hailing the spirits of the objects of worship, making offerings, sounding the bell or gong, singing, drumming and dancing, as the occasion demands. Worship may be private and offered by a single person in a house or shrine, or corporate. Whatever form worship takes, it is expected to be done in reverence and in an appropriate manner and mood for the desired effect to be achieved.

One observes that on social occasions in Yorubaland, when drummers and musicians single out individuals and sing their praises, such individuals feel happy and tend to dip their hands into their pockets to spend lavishly on the able musicians.⁹⁰⁸ Similarly, in almost all Yoruba palaces, kings have *onikakaki* (buglers) who sing the *oriki* (praise-names) of the kings and blow their bugles. Such praises gladden the souls of the kings who hear them.⁹⁰⁹ This secular practice has become part of the religious life of people as well. The Yoruba thus sing the praises of their objects of worship.⁹¹⁰ They believe that when one praises the divinity well and gladden his/her heart, which will result into generous benevolent attitude from the part of the divinity.

Another important element in this discussion of rites among the Yoruba is prayer. It is a means by which man enters into communion with, and makes a devout supplication to, the object of worship. Adoration, praise and thanksgiving are offered to the deity.⁹¹¹ The mind is fixed on the Supreme Being and what He is able to do for mankind. His attributes and His acts of kindness are recalled and enumerated. The people firmly believe in the efficacy of prayer uttered by an individual in private, or by a priest at corporate,

⁹⁰⁷ Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:97-102. O. Ogunba. *Ritual Drama among the Ijebu*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of Ibadan:176-186, Michael P. Adogbo. *Comparative Historical and Interpretative Study of Religions*. Malthouse Press Ltd: Lagos. 2010:100.

⁹⁰⁸ Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:221, F. Abiola Irele, Biodun Jeyifo. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of African Thought*. Two-Volume Set. Oxford University Press: Oxford. 2010:68.

⁹⁰⁹ Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:221, F. Abiola Irele, Biodun Jeyifo. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of African Thought*. Two-Volume Set. Oxford University Press: Oxford. 2010:68.

⁹¹⁰ The praises of the divinities reveal, not only the attributes of the divinities, but also the beliefs of the devotees.

⁹¹¹ Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:221, F. Abiola Irele, Biodun Jeyifo. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of African Thought*. Two-Volume Set. Oxford University Press: Oxford. 2010:68.

worship.⁹¹² Prayers may be said whenever and wherever the occasion demands it, but formal worship takes place at a consecrated place.

Prayers are usually long and tend to include any spirit force that may help.⁹¹³ Ordinary greetings can turn into a series of prayers that go on and on, usually asking for the good things in life, for health and general well-being.⁹¹⁴

Dancing is as prominent during worship as singing. The dances have definite forms, depending on the divinities to which offerings are made. The ritual dances are not mere emotional responses to the rhythm of music. They are symbolic, often reenactments with a sacred character.

Finally, sacrifice is a *sine qua non* in Yoruba ritual and in African traditional religion in general. Whereas prayer is a vocal or silent appeal to a divinity with a view to achieving certain ends, sacrifice is an additional and concrete method serving the same purpose. No believer comes forward to worship without bringing an offering, however simple: water for libation, kolanuts or gin. Offerings may be given daily, weekly or as occasions demand.

7.10.3 The Appropriation

Leviticus 11: 44 - 47

'For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. 'For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. This is the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, 'to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.'"

⁹¹²Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:221, F. Abiola Irele, Biodun Jeyifo. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of African Thought*. Two-Volume Set. Oxford University Press: Oxford. 2010:68.

⁹¹³Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979: 97-102.

⁹¹⁴Also among the Yoruba Christians prayers take usually the form of greetings. The preachers do not conclude their sermons without leading loud and long prayer sessions. This will become clear in the next chapter, where sermons are presented and analysed.

When Adam fell, blood had to be used for the remission of sin. The person who could make that covenant had to be both man and God. He had to be a person whose blood did not come from his father and mother, which was polluted. This is why Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, his blood was not from man. And so it was that kind of blood that could make atonement for us.⁹¹⁵

All those who always say that a prophet tells them to slaughter a chicken or fowl and distribute, are forming blood covenants. All those whose parents kill something for them every birthday, are thus renewing contracts with demons.⁹¹⁶

The disciples in Acts 13 ministered to the Lord in praise, worship, adoration and fasting. God responded in that passage, giving a word of direction concerning what the church should do about Barnabas and Saul.⁹¹⁷

STEPS TO RELEASE YOURSELF

Repent from all known sins particularly those concerning evil covenants. Renounce the sins of your forefathers. Accept God's forgiveness and forgive yourself. Forgive all those who have ever offended you. Do not bear grudges. Renounce all contacts with any cursed or false religion. Destroy all evil and polluted materials. Release yourself from the curses with aggressive prayer. Cast out the demon behind the curse by saying, "I command every demon of the curse to leave me now in Jesus' name." Claim blessings to replace past curses. Give thanks to God for setting you free.⁹¹⁸

Please, put all your strength into praying the following prayer points:

I refuse to drink from the fountain of sorrow, in Jesus' name. I take authority over all curses issued against my life, in the name of Jesus. Ask God to remove any curse he has

⁹¹⁵ Appendices: 34

⁹¹⁶ Appendices: 37

⁹¹⁷ Appendices: 5

⁹¹⁸ Appendices: 22

placed on your life as a result of disobedience. I command any demon attached to any curse to depart from me now, in the mighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁹¹⁹

You are going to withdraw seven things from every evil altar. Please, lay your hands on your head. I withdraw my name from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. (Transfer the hand to your chest.) I withdraw my blessings from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. (Take the hand back to your head.) I withdraw my breakthroughs from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. I withdraw my glory from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. (Transfer the hand to your chest.) I withdraw my prosperity from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. (One hand on the head, the other one on the chest.) I withdraw anything representing me from every evil altar, in Jesus' name. Mention the organ that you know is not behaving the way it should. When you have done this begin to say, I withdraw you from every evil altar. Say this seven hot times.⁹²⁰

Therefore, you have work to do. The work may not stop with praying once. Some people may spend quite some time because some covenants take time to break.⁹²¹

Put one hand on the head, and the other on the stomach. All prayers to renounce covenants, whether consciously or unconsciously entered into, are to be said aggressively, vigorously and loudly because you might be fighting a battle that is two thousand years old. The Bible says, "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*" (Hosea 4:6). Say this with holy aggression.⁹²²

I apply the blood of Jesus to break all curses. Sing this song: "There is power mighty in the blood (x2). There is power mighty in the blood of Jesus Christ. There is power mighty in the blood."⁹²³

⁹¹⁹ Appendices: 22

⁹²⁰ Appendices: 30

⁹²¹ Appendices: 40

⁹²² Appendices: 40

⁹²³ Appendices: 193

7.10.4 Comment

As I have earlier informed, the section of appropriation does not consist of the whole texts of the sermon. This can be found in the Appendix. Only the tagged incidents where elements of primal religion are identified are presented in this section.

There are four main concepts to be identified and compared in both the sermon and the primal religious context of the preacher. Among the Yoruba, sacrifice, prayers, and dance are the ritualistic approach employed to demonstrate devotion to a deity. Then, in the fourth place these rituals are demonstrated by techniques identified with each deity.

In the sermon, one is able to pinpoint on one hand that the blood of Jesus had to be used for the remission of sin (or sacrifice), because the person whose blood could do had to be both man and God. He had to be a person whose blood did not come from his father and mother, which was polluted. Among the Yoruba the acceptance of the sacrifice brought to the deity is pre-conditioned to its quality. On the other hand, the preacher acknowledges the notion of sacrifice among his people, the Yoruba, even though this is condemned by revealing the repercussion of such act. ‘All those who always say that a prophet tells them to slaughter a chicken or fowl and distribute, are forming blood covenants. All those whose parents kill something for them every birthday, are thus renewing contracts with demons.’ This is a proof that he understands the concept of sacrifice among his people. And it is apparent that this is the factor that enables him to interpret the scriptures or certain concepts of Christianity adaptation.

Secondly, prayer is shown in the sermon as a way of receiving deliverance and blessing from the spiritual. He is quoted saying ‘Please, put all your strength into praying the following prayer points...’

Also one can trace the idea of methods in his sermon. Statements like ‘Put one hand on the head, and the other on the stomach. All prayers to renounce covenants, whether consciously or unconsciously entered into, are to be said aggressively, vigorously and loudly...

‘I apply the blood of Jesus to break all curses. Sing this song: "There is power mighty in the blood (x2). There is power mighty in the blood of Jesus Christ. There is power mighty in the blood.'”

This shows that the preacher believes that to effect deliverance or to be able to receive blessing from God, prayers are to be said with certain techniques like the ones shown above.

7.11 Initiation

Sermon 10, 'Deliverance From Occult Practices' by Pastor Mrs. Toyin Okehi under the Demonic Possession paradigm shall be compared with the Yoruba primal religion. The element of primal religion that shall be traced in it is Initiation.

Among the people of primal religion, the society is the society of every member of the community, and each member contributes to its general well-being. But besides this type of society, there are other societies within the corporate society referred to as secret societies in the sense that membership is usually restricted, and they often engage in mysterious activities. Consequent on this, no one, except those who are initiates can say with any degree of certainty what they stand for and practise.

Basically the secret societies were instituted for the purpose of self-preservation and for the preservation of the community's traditions, customs and beliefs.⁹²⁴ They determined ritual behaviour and regulated social attitudes. In this way, they held sway in the community where they functioned. Furthermore, their members usually claimed to possess esoteric knowledge and mysterious power denied to the other members of the community, to the extent that the non-members were impelled to seek admission to the societies so that they might be protected against surrounding dangers.⁹²⁵

7.11.1 The Text

Isaiah 28:18

Your covenant with death will be annulled, And your agreement with Sheol will not stand; When the overflowing scourge passes through, Then you will be trampled down by it.

⁹²⁴ J. Omosade Awolalu & P. Adelumo Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, Onibonjo Press & Book Industries (nig.) Ltd: Ibadan. 1979:220.

⁹²⁵ J. Omosade Awolalu & P. Adelumo Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*: 221.

This chapter begins with a denunciation of the approaching ruin of the Israelites by Shalmaneser, whose power is compared to a tempest or flood, and his keenness to the avidity with which one plucks and swallows the grape that is soonest ripe, (verses 1-4). It then turns to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who were to continue a kingdom after the final captivity of their brethren; and gives first a favourable prognostication of their affairs under Hezekiah, (verses 5, 6); but soon changes to reproofs and threatening for their intemperance and their profaneness, (verses 7, 8). They are introduced as not only scornfully rejecting, but also mocking and ridiculing, the instructions of the prophet, (verse 9, 10). To this God immediately retorts in terms alluding to their own mocking, but differently applied, (verses 11-13). The prophet then addresses these scoffers in verse 14; who considered themselves as perfectly secure from every evil, (verse 15); and assures them that there was no method under heaven but one, by which they could be saved, (verse 16); that every other vain resource should fail in the day of visitation, (verses 17, 18). He then further adds, that the judgments of God were particularly levelled against them; and that all the means to which they trusted for warding them off should be to no purpose, (verses 19, 20); as the Almighty, who, on account of his patience and long-suffering, is amiably described as unacquainted with punishing, had nevertheless determined to punish them, (verses 21, 22). The prophet then concludes with a beautiful parable in explanation and defence of God's dealing with his people, ((verses 23-29).

7.11.2 The Context of the Preacher (Yoruba Religious Concept)

Yoruba communities usually have a general society that is concerned with issues affecting both the daily lives of individual Yoruba and the welfare of the community as a whole. In addition to this type of 'umbrella' society, there are other societies that can be described as closed associations, guilds, cult groups, or simply secret societies. One can only speculate: some people claim that they are good and others think they are evil.

The officials that function in secret societies have each of them specific tasks and their positions are highly graded. Before a member can rise to the highest rank, he has to demonstrate a deep sense of responsibility, loyalty and capability. He also needs to be proficient in traditional healing and in the use of magic.

Certain festivals are connected with the secret societies. The festivals are occasions of general rejoicing when masked 'spirits' come out from their 'spiritual' domain and rituals are performed. Some festivals last only a day, while others may continue their celebrations for a week, or a month, up to three months.⁹²⁶

The religious instruction of these societies includes teachings about the Supreme Deity, the divinities and the ancestors. Their ethical instruction is closely connected with the moral obligations of individual members of the community as discussed under the subheading Taboos above. The societies teach about adultery, theft and murder and they punish those guilty of these offences. In the past, the death penalty would be inflicted on the culprits.⁹²⁷ Among the Yoruba, the *Ogboni* society would pass such a judgement while the *Oro* society, an arm of the *Ogboni* society, was responsible for its execution.⁹²⁸ Today, the *Ogboni* society has no longer such power because of the different administrative set-up in Nigeria.

Nearly all secret societies admit members by initiatory rites. Initiation can be very simple, lasting several hours or a day. But there are societies where the process of initiation is more elaborate, lasting from a few days to several months. The initiates take an oath to be loyal to the society and to keep its mysteries absolutely secret. Divulging the secrets of the society is always severely punished, in the past with the death penalty.⁹²⁹

The *Ogboni* society is found in every part of Yorubaland. Nearly all the chiefs and other leaders in the community used to belong to *Ogboni*.⁹³⁰ Admission was however limited to free born men and membership did confer a measure of honour and' dignity. Besides serving political ends, *Ogboni* also performs tasks of a religious nature. In the past human sacrifices were made at the initiation of new members. The initiation rites are performed in the *Ogboni* houses (*Iledi*) or in the sacred groves.⁹³¹

Oro, another secret society in Yorubaland is purely a male organisation. It boosts male prestige, enhancing the superiority of men over women. In the past, *Oro* was the executive arm of the *Ogboni* society. An evil-doer condemned by the *Ogboni* was taken into the bush (the sacred grove) and executed by members of the

⁹²⁶ Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:221.

⁹²⁷ Williams, P.M., 1960, 'Ogboni Cult,' *Africa*, xx.

⁹²⁸ M.A. Odukoya, 'Okosi Festival at Epe Town', *Odu*, 7; Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:225.

⁹²⁹ M.A. Odukoya, 'Okosi Festival at Epe Town', *Odu*, 7; Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:225.

⁹³⁰ M.A. Odukoya, 'Okosi Festival at Epe Town', *Odu*, 7; Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:226.

⁹³¹ M.A. Odukoya, 'Okosi Festival at Epe Town', *Odu*, 7; Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:226.

Oro society.⁹³² They would say: ‘*Oro gbe e*’ (‘The *Oro* carried him away (into the spirit world))’. Members of the public would not know what had happened to the victim as there would be no trace of his execution. That is why the Yoruba have the saying: ‘*A ki I ri ajeku-Oro*’ (‘We never see the remains of an *Oro* victim’).⁹³³

Women are forbidden to witness the ceremonies of *Oro*. Even if a woman has an idea of what is going on there, she must not talk of it and keep secrets to herself. As the Yoruba state: ‘*A mo sinu l’obinrin n mo Oro*’ (‘A woman’s knowledge of *Oro* is kept to herself’). And another statement: ‘*B’obinrin foju kan Oro, Oro yoo gbe e*’ (‘If a woman sees *Oro*, *Oro* will carry her away (into the spirit world’)).⁹³⁴ Thus, when *Oro* comes out, women stay in their rooms with the doors closed and the lights off. However, during an epidemic or national disaster, or when a king dies, *Oro* comes out by daylight and at such times women are day and night strictly confined to their houses.

There are other cults that have one function or the other (religious and political) among the Yoruba, but the two mentioned above are the most significant to the concept of initiation.

7.11.3 The Appropriation

Isaiah 28:18

Your covenant with death will be annulled, And your agreement with Sheol will not stand; When the overflowing scourge passes through, Then you will be trampled down by it.

Many Christians were ignorantly dedicated to the devil when they were born. This is apparent in the type of names some people bear, names ascribing praises or glory to the devil and his works. Some have marks on their faces and incisions on every part of their body. All such people dedicated, to the devil may find things extremely difficult unless they go for deliverance.⁹³⁵

⁹³² M.A. Odukoya, ‘Okosi Festival at Epe Town’, *Odu*, 7; Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:227.

⁹³³ M.A. Odukoya, ‘Okosi Festival at Epe Town’, *Odu*, 7; Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:227.

⁹³⁴ Oyeronke Olajubu. *Women in the Yoruba Religious Sphere*. State University of New York: Albany. 2003:91, Awolalu & Dopamu. *West African Traditional Religion*. 1979:228.

⁹³⁵ Appendices: 79

All the children of a former or present priest or priestess of the devil have been dedicated to the devil. It is like what obtains in Christendom when a child is dedicated in the church at the end of 40 days. For instance, in 1991 when my wife was pregnant, I laid hands on her tummy regularly and dedicated the twins unto God. I did this regularly until they were born. When they were eventually born, I laid hands on them; spoke in tongues, prophesied over them and again decreed that they should be filled with the Holy Spirit. After 30 days, we took them to our church and our Pastor officially dedicated them to God. A child dedicated to God this way can never be compared with the one dedicated to the devil.⁹³⁶

Just like I dedicated my twins to God, majority of juju priests or priestesses if not all, dedicate their own children to their own gods in whom they believe. All such children dedicated to the devil have a measure of satanic presence which is supposed to guide and protect them just as the Holy Spirit does for those dedicated unto the Almighty God.⁹³⁷

When such potential satanic agents turn to God for salvation, they must consciously renounce these demons if they want to experience progress in their lives. If they don't and they eventually pass on, they will still go to heaven, but the devilish covenants and things deposited in them, could delay their miracles and make things very tight and difficult for them while on earth.⁹³⁸

When such people repent and become born again, it is not sufficient for them to only invite Jesus into their lives but also to break every link and contact they had had with the devil.⁹³⁹

Most Muslims have an anti-Christ demon. So if an individual or his parents have been Muslims before, they may have a demon of anti-Christ by virtue of their former religion.

⁹³⁶ Appendices: 79

⁹³⁷ Appendices: 79

⁹³⁸ Appendices: 80

⁹³⁹ Appendices: 78

With the activities of that demon, they just hate Christianity with passion. When anybody repents from following Islam, he or she needs deliverance. Whether he has been a Christian for a long time or not, as long as he has not formally renounced that demon and been ministered to, it sometimes affects his relationship with God.⁹⁴⁰

All those who have served demons at any time as priests or priestesses need serious deliverance after they receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. Burning the shrine charms etc., although shows a genuine, willingness to serve the Lord, but the things that demons have planted in the body of the person, the satanic powers and the authority the person had in the spirit realm, should be destroyed.⁹⁴¹

I reject every anti-Christ demon in my life, and I command you to come out now in the name of Jesus. Any evil thing planted in my life by the spirit of antichrist, loose your hold and come out in the name of Jesus. I flush my conscience of all evil knowledge I had about Christ by the blood of Jesus, in the name of Jesus. I reject and break every covenant with the spirit of anti-Christ and its works in the name of Jesus.⁹⁴²

I renounce and nullify my priesthood to any strange god or Baal, in the name of Jesus. I flush out by the blood everything working contrary to the love of God in my life by the blood of Jesus. I destroy every work of Baal in my life by fire in Jesus' name. I renounce every authority given to me against the will of God by the blood of Jesus. Jesus is my authority. Every position that is exalting itself against the knowledge of God I relinquish you in the mighty name of Jesus. Ecclesiastes 8:4. I apply the blood of Jesus to my foundations and flush out evil mark working against me. I blot out very effect of satanic marks in my foundation by the blood of Jesus.⁹⁴³

I reject every evil dedication of my life in the name of Jesus. Every mark of incision (occultic or satanic), be erased by the blood of Jesus in Jesus' name. I challenge every

⁹⁴⁰ Appendices: 78

⁹⁴¹ Appendices: 79

⁹⁴² Appendices: 78

⁹⁴³ Appendices: 79

monitoring spirit assigned against my life by fire in the name of Jesus. I rededicate my life to the Lord God in the name of Jesus. I terminate every satanic rite, I renounce your effect and break your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus.⁹⁴⁴

I revoke every satanic incantation working against my life in the name of Jesus. I challenge the activities of Baal spirit in my life by fire in the name of Jesus. You Belial spirit and you associate, loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus. I clear off every evil cloud following after my life by fire in the name of Jesus. I reject and break every blood covenant existing between me and demons through incision by the blood of Jesus.⁹⁴⁵

I reject every occultic material in my life and I destroy you by fire in the name of Jesus. I renounce my membership of any occultic group (mention the name) I belong to in the name of Jesus. I redeem my life from the grip of every occultic power by the blood of Jesus in the name of Jesus. Any blood covenant between me and any agent of the devil, break now by the blood of Jesus (Isaiah 28: 18). I release myself from every covenant working against my breakthrough in Jesus' name (Isaiah 28:18). Any abnormality programmed into my spirit, soul and body through evil covenants, be evacuated by the blood of Jesus. I reject and renounce membership of any group I had been involved within the past with the blood of Jesus. Blood of Jesus, speak protection on my behalf (Revelation 12: 11).⁹⁴⁶

The reason these threats must be neutralised by fervent prayers is that anyone who has ever been a member of an occult church unknowingly enters into satanic covenant and a doorway is therefore opened for baal and religious demons to enter.⁹⁴⁷

Also in the case of a former member who has undertaken the more serious covenant of bathing in the river, during deliverance ministration, the person should be cleansed with

⁹⁴⁴ Appendices: 80

⁹⁴⁵ Appendices: 80

⁹⁴⁶ Appendices: 81

⁹⁴⁷ Appendices: 82

the Blood of Jesus. He should also say, "I cleanse myself externally by bathing with the Blood of Jesus Christ," there is no ointment, power or principality that can resist the power in the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. The Blood of Jesus Christ will neutralise and destroy all the effects of poisons taken in these occult churches. The word of God says, *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Revelation 12:11) Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. (Hebrews 13:12)*

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7.11.4 Comment

The basic characteristic of initiation is that it is the gateway into secret societies because membership is usually restricted, and because they often engage in inexplicable activities. This is the sense that pervades the sermon of Pastor Mrs Okehi. This is exhibited in two ways. Firstly she acknowledges the fact that a person may have been initiated into an occult group or a particular deity, even from birth. The person needs to renounce such affiliation and get delivered, even if he/she had become a Christian.

Secondly she also believes that a person can also be initiated into Christ even from pregnancy, just as juju priests or priestesses dedicate their own children to their own gods in whom they believe.

The following prayer offered within the text of the sermon really brings out the basis of her interpretation. She took the Isaiah 28: 18 out of context to mean that God is saying He will annul the covenant of death the Israelites have made with death (representing the dark spiritual world).

‘Any blood covenant between me and any agent of the devil, break now by the blood of Jesus (Isaiah 28: 18). I release myself from every covenant working against my breakthrough in Jesus' name (Isaiah 28:18). Any abnormality programmed into my spirit, soul and body through evil covenants, be evacuated by the blood of Jesus. I reject and renounce membership of any group I had been involved within the past with the blood of Jesus.’⁹⁴⁹

⁹⁴⁸ Appendices: 82

⁹⁴⁹ Appendices: 81

7.12 Conclusion

I am reiterating here once again that the paragraphs in the appropriation section are identified and tagged incidents using Grounded Theory. They are only brought out here for the purpose of comparison with the Yoruba traditional beliefs. The paragraphs therefore may appear not to be coherent as a single sermon text. Albeit I also submit here that one of the characteristics of the data is that they do not follow normal hermeneutic the pattern or form. But the focus in this section is on the interpretation given to selected biblical texts in the data.

In this comparison, we are able to exhibit the analogous elements in both the Yoruba traditional or primal religious context and the sermons of the Pentecostal preachers. One might have naturally thought that the three sermons that fall within the pattern of the Faith Gospel paradigm would feature fewer or indeed no primal elements. This is because the Faith Gospel paradigm preachers are characterized by the Western inferences in their outlook.⁹⁵⁰ It might be thought that it is the Demonic Possession pattern that concerns itself with demons and the tendency of interpreting all dimensions of life in terms of spiritual forces of every kind, so that the latter might appear to be more ‘African’ in their characteristics. Therefore the fact that we can trace in abundance elements of primal religion even in the Faith Gospel paradigm sermons is a litmus test that African preachers draw on these intrinsic African concepts. More reflections shall be highlighted in the next chapter.

⁹⁵⁰ Niels Kastfelt (ed.). *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003:16–35.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMATIVE REFLECTIONS ON THE YORUBA CHRISTIAN SERMONS

8.1 Introduction

The agenda of the thesis as set forth from the beginning is to study the way religious concepts of the ANE brings to bear upon the Old Testament and show it as a pattern of how the Yoruba primal religious concepts also exert influence on the biblical interpretations of certain Yoruba Christian preachers. This reflection is with a view of carefully scanning and thinking through the process of showcasing the religious elements in the four subjects.

On one hand, the Ancient Near East and the Old Testament had been subjects of research works for many years and by many scholars. One way their research had been greatly helped was through the objective and extra-biblical evidences provided through the study of archaeology, which is the discovery and study of things which remain from earlier times. It has been developed during the last century as an important way to verify and supplement written history. There is extensive work too on Yoruba primal religious concepts through the works of scholars on Yoruba people and their religious philosophy. On the other hand, the sermons, which collection is the fourth area of examination in this thesis, have not been subjected to any scholarly work before. It is therefore the crux of this thesis to examine their structure alongside the analysis of the other three subjects mentioned above.

Ten sermons were analysed by Grounded Theory in the thesis. Although there are other elements of primal religion identifiable in them, but I traced one element of Yoruba primal religion in each of the sermons in the comparison, to show that all the preachers are influenced by their primal religion in one way or the other, and also, to minimise the size of the thesis.

The analysis of each sermon in relation with the correlating primal religious element is in four parts. Firstly, the primal religious element is briefly described as a reminder. A more comprehensive delineation had been done in chapter three. Secondly, brief sketch of the context of the text being interpreted by the preacher is presented. Thirdly, the context of the preacher (Yoruba religious concept), that is the primal religious background, is showcased. This showcasing features simply one of the Yoruba primal religious concepts comparable to one of the concepts traceable in the sermon. And the fourth part presents how the preacher

appropriates the text. The result is that two ideas conflate in the appropriation: the text (though with little or no exegesis) and the Yoruba primal word-view. This conflation produces the third conception, which the research calls appropriation, using the third pole of the tri-polar exegetical theory. The appropriation is a brand of biblical interpretation which the thesis has called the fabric of biblical interpretation by Africans, specifically Yoruba Pentecostal preachers.

8.2 Construct of the Thesis

The sermons analysed have been grouped into two patterns, which are the two paradigms (as identified by Paul Gifford) common to African Pentecostal preachers. These are also realities of the context in focus. Among the Yoruba, it is noted that the Pentecostals steer their biblical interpretations along the two patterns: the Faith Gospel and the Demon Possession paradigms.

Furthermore, the foundation upon which the thesis is based suggests that apart from these two paradigms, the nature or characteristic feature of the sermons is created by a reaction generated between the three phenomena that African biblical hermeneutical theory refers to as distantiation, contextualization and appropriation.

As asserted at the beginning of this research, the thesis is based on the construct that most African biblical scholarship uses the African contextual hermeneutic model of biblical interpretation: including the tri-polar theory of interpretation and the African biblical scholarship comparative pattern. Delineation of these has been done in the early part of the research.

Exegesis, which is the socio-historical and literary analysis of the biblical text, is the platform on which the reader or preacher pays attention to the text's specific needs or problems in its own context. As observed, it is the general characteristic of the sermons analysed in the research that there is a lack in this aspect of biblical hermeneutics.

Contextualization accepts that a text's meaning is determined in part by the person reading it and his or her situation. The Yoruba preachers whose sermons were analysed here have demonstrated through their biblical interpretation something about who they are as Africans in their relation to the Bible. In this section,

I want to return more fully to a juxtaposition of their sermons with the Yoruba primal religion with a view to bringing out the intrinsic effect of their primal religion as Yoruba people on the way they read the Bible.

In examining the relationship between distantiation and the context of the Bible reader the third aspect of the tri-polar hermeneutic theory emerges. It is discernible when the literary analysis of the Bible and the context of the preachers connect. I want to say here quickly that even though the preachers whose sermons are examined in the thesis hardly did exegesis on the texts of their sermons, but their basic knowledge of the narratives or the texts they used was what interacted with their innate knowledge of concepts of Yoruba primal religion which produces the appropriation of the biblical texts or stories. The preachers enabled the text and their conceptual context to engage in conversation. The result is that certain Yoruba primal religion concepts are traceable to their sermons.

There are other two factors that should be noted in examining the contextualization of the Yoruba preachers' interpretation of the biblical texts, and in relation to their appropriating the biblical texts. The first is the aspect of harsh economic and social challenges of their physical and social contexts. The second is that among the Yoruba, the well-being of the person is a paramount factor in his/her relation with the supernatural. Though this ideology is not the focus of this research, but it is significant to understand that it is also a factor in how the Yoruba relate with the divine. They tend to focus on the primal deity, not necessarily for worship but for the succour it may offer. As earlier asserted, in the primal religion of the Yoruba even sacrifices are made to appease, or to curry favour with the deity, but not necessarily to worship. In the Yoruba traditional setting the adherent approached the deity for empowerment, protection and fortification of oneself against enemies that could confront one in the form of negative circumstances, which could be brought about through the ill will of witches and wizards, or even the very god one is appeasing. Many Yoruba Christians have this mind-set even in the church. The second other factor is that every situation, be it of an economic, social or personal nature, is viewed against the backdrop of the spiritual. For example, a Yoruba Christian, especially of the Pentecostal denomination blames misfortunes on enemies who have succeeded in their plot against him/her. This factor plays out also when the preachers interpret the biblical texts.

In spite of this, basically, the Yoruba Christian preacher's context consists in his/her experience of spirituality which is informed by the Yoruba primal religion in his/her background. The enduring presence

of aspects of the primal religion is a characteristic of the Yoruba mind-set. Therefore making it is obviously an authentic part of the Yoruba context.

8.3 The Analytical Tools

Various methods of analyzing data abound, but general use of Grounded Theory in data analysis led ultimately to the insight that these sermons that employ features of primal religions could be analysed by the same tool. The theory is used in analyzing the sermons collected in this research, in order to identify, mould, and tag the incidents of primal religious elements, which are the essentials in proving that the same could be found in the sermons.

Grounded theory and that which is adopted from the tri-polar model are employed together in the research as analytic tool. The latter have been employed as the platform or base to put on the research thesis, which Grounded Theory had helped to form into the theoretical code, that Christian Yoruba preachers position certain biblical ideas through employing concepts that can be identified with aspects of their primal religions, and this means that they are weaving a new fabric of biblical interpretation in Africa. The theoretical framework of the thesis, adopted from the tri-polar model, supports that, through the context and mindset of Christian Yoruba preachers, the birth of a certain biblical interpretation occurred. The fabric weaved, or the biblical interpretation birthed reveals who and what they are in the world.

8.4 The Juxtaposition

I presented a comparison between the Ancient Near East and the Old Testament (Ancient Israel) employing the elements of primal religions, which I tagged with the nomenclature of anthropologists of the concepts. Ten of such were selected. It was observed that the concepts within the two subjects were similar. This inspired the idea that the ANE had had a significant influence on the OT (Ancient Israel) as many scholars had perceived before. A similar process was carried out between the Yoruba traditional (primal) religion and ten sermons (biblical interpretations) collected as data from the publications of the preachers (using the same ten elements of primal religion above). This was after I have analysed the data (sermons) and identified and traced the same elements identified in the Yoruba traditional religious concepts. Putting side-by-side the two processes produces a correlation. In other words The Ancient Near East is to the Old Testament what certain Yoruba primal religious ideologies (that have been categorized in this thesis) are to the sermons of certain Yoruba Pentecostal preachers.

8.5 Overview of the Thesis

The *Aladura* churches emerged from the missionary churches because of their inclusion of characteristics that are analogous to elements traceable in African traditional religion such as magic, divination, medicine, incantation, rites, and other features that have been discussed and that all originate in the primal religion of the Yoruba. These factors have also been brought to play in the biblical interpretations of Pentecostal preachers among the Yoruba, as made clear by the analyses of examples of their sermons.

Aladura churches emerged among Yoruba Christians. The Pentecostal preachers discussed above are also Yoruba. There is thus a common factor of contemporary Christian churches in Yorubaland being influenced by elements of the Yoruba primal religion. It is this influence that distinguishes the churches from their European counterparts and that earlier led to the emergence of the African Independent Churches.

Therefore, the present research claims that, contrary to what many scholars believe (these had been mentioned at the early part of the thesis), the emergence of the African Independent Churches did not result from an exodus of Africans from missionary churches in search of freedom from the oppression of European missionaries and colonizers at the time. Instead it was the awareness of African people of the enduring influence of their innate primal religion that led to the establishment of the African churches. The incidents of the Pentecostal preachers' interpretations of the Bible occurred a century later, well after the colonial period and yet, their Christianity displays the same features of Africanness.

This is in tandem with Gillian Bediako's view that primal religion has the potential to persistently maintain a harmonious relationship with the Christian faith, a fact that early European arrivals in Africa such as Robertson Smith were unaware of. She believes that the primal religion of Africans is crucial to the fulfillment of Christianity in the society. J.D.Y. Peel mentions that, although admittedly Islam arrived in nineteenth-century Yorubaland before Christianity, it has spread considerably faster because many Muslim religious conceptions did not clash with primal Yoruba beliefs. The scenario presented by Yoruba preachers today confirms that this process is continued in the relationship between Christianity and primal religion.

The Demon Possession Syndrome preachers outnumber those whose sermons are based on the Faith Gospel. Under the first coding (open coding), more sermons emerged as defined by the Demon Possession paradigm. This appears to indicate that most Yoruba preachers, even if well educated or exposed to Western

ways of life, interpret the Bible on the basis of their perceptions of life as the setting for spiritual warfare with the devil. The traditional Yoruba man or woman interpreted everything from the point of view that the spirit world controls the physical world and, hence, he or she has to act in such a manner as to curry favour with the spirits.

The present analysis is a rejoinder with scholars like Alister McGrath who see African Christianity as only ‘a celebration and affirmation of black African identity in the face of official hostility.’⁹⁵¹ It is not that the thesis does not share this view, but the Demonic Possession pattern is in congruence with the traditional Yoruba’s idiosyncratic position as regards deity and issues of life. The Yoruba traditionally tend to seek an external rather than an internal cause or explanation for misfortune. The cause of a problem is usually sought in some outside agency, either directly from the spiritual world or through evil human mediation. For example, there is a palpable link between the traditional healer and the leader or prophet of the independent churches, especially churches of the *Aladura* genre and, later, the Pentecostal ministers. Therefore African Christianity goes beyond an attempt of Africans to establish a parallel kind of Christianity alongside the European type in a bid ‘to prove something’. Instead, their primal religion is the major dynamic in this matter. This provides also an explanation for the following assessment of the analyses above.

To conclude this reflection, I want to bring out the following deductions that were formed in the research journey, through the analysis that was provided by my study from the data.

Firstly, no matter their orientation, primal elements are evident in the interpretation of the preachers. Most of the preachers of these sermons are located in the metropolis of Lagos and Ibadan, but their sermons reveal an enduring association with many elements of primal religion and with the Demonic Possession paradigm as shown in the analyses. Apparently therefore, education and exposure to the Western way of life have not disconnected the preachers from their roots. In the ten sermons analysed in the main body of this thesis 402 features of primal religions have been identified and tagged. 155 of these are traceable to the Faith Gospel paradigm preachers. One may tend to take it for granted that Christians who embrace Paul Gifford’s perception of the Faith Gospel have a totally different religious outlook from those who follow the Demonic Possession pattern. However, the Faith Gospel sermons of Yoruba Pentecostal preachers may

⁹⁵¹ Alister E. McGrath. *The Future of Christianity*. Wiley Blackwell: London. 2002, p. 4.

contain up to 39% of the overall range of primal elements. Thus, no matter their location, primal elements are evident in their preaching.

Secondly, Christianity is shaped by the contexts and cultures wherever it goes. For example, in the discourse on Pentecostalism, Ogbu⁹⁵² is of the opinion that the survival and the flourishing of Pentecostalism worldwide is caused by the fact itself of its globalization. When Pentecostalism reaches other milieus it is shaped by the contexts and cultures it finds there and the outcome is unexpected healthy growth. The fusion with new contexts as it spreads among peoples on different continents feeds it and makes it strong. This is history as it concerned the African Independent Churches' emergence during the nineteenth century Yorubaland repeating itself in the twenty-first century in the same milieu. Therefore in Nigeria, especially among the Yoruba of the South Western part of the country, the genre of African Christianity practised there reveals a thriving pattern through the years.

Thirdly, Faith Gospel Pentecostal preachers draw large crowds of the *crème de la crème* of society and their churches keep growing. In these sermons, the titles and main themes are for ninety per cent concerned with the general wellbeing of followers. A glimpse at the ten sermons collected shows that the preachers' emphasis, are on prayer, deliverance and prosperity, focussed mostly on issues of physical, spiritual (empowerment for victory over spiritual darkness and life's problems), financial, marital, social, etc wellbeing of their audiences. As has been pointed out earlier in this research, this emphasis is associated with the Yoruba view of religion, and is displayed among the Yoruba Pentecostals. Hence this could be the reason for the large membership the churches record. I guess also that by making an in-depth analysis of the African practice of Christianity it would be possible to identify that in African Christian sermons there is a tendency to focus on those passages in the Bible that are not concerned with suffering and trials of faith, but rather with how to avoid suffering. And this enlists great interests from the people.

In the fourth place, it is noted that there is in the interpretations of these preachers lack of exegesis of the scriptures from which they are preaching. Exegesis has been identified as distantiation in this thesis. Distantiation refers to the platform from which the reader or preacher pays attention to the text's problematic points or specific requirements in its own context. It is, in my view, it is this lack of distantiation that helps bring out the intrinsic elements of the preacher's primal religion. The preachers are not guided by any structured method

⁹⁵² Kalu. African Pentecostalism: Global Discourses, Migrations, Exchanges and Connections. 2010:27.

of exegesis. They do not engage analytically with the biblical texts. They associate the text directly with everyday life around them. Although this researcher has done no research into the training of Yoruba preachers of mainline churches; it is evident from the sermons of the latter that they preach from a lectionary that has been provided for the purpose of ministering on structured themes chosen for each period, and that they spend much effort on analytic examination of, or distantiating from, the Bible texts they use. This fact, I believe, keeps in check their innate tendency to interpret the Bible on the basis of elements of primal religion.

Finally, the situation showcased by this thesis corroborates Gerald West's opinion that the encounter between the Bible and Africans has not always been in the direction 'from the Bible to Africa.'⁹⁵³ He cites Kwame Bediako's argument which points to the significant role the Bible has played in the formation of African Christianity. But the former opines that the impression had always been given that the relation of Africans with the Bible had formulated the theory that the Bible had always been the subject (wielding influence), while the peoples of Africa reading it had always been the object (receiving the impact or influence of the Bible). In his view the Bible is no longer the agent but has become the object of the actions of those who read it in the African societies. This research is supporting such conclusions of scholars as him who engage in the methods and history of African biblical hermeneutics

8.6 Conclusion

The conclusion that Christian Yoruba preachers position biblical concepts by employing ideas that can be identified with their primal religions connotes that they are weaving a specific fabric of biblical interpretation in Africa. That fabric reveals who they are and what their location is in society and history. In my view they are enabled to do so by the primal religious ideologies that are a part of their being, even if such influences are denied by the practitioners themselves. Their sermons demonstrate the enduring presence of aspects of their primal African religion.

⁹⁵³ Gerald West. "Mapping African Biblical Interpretation: A Tentative Sketch," in G.O. West and Musa W. Dube (eds.), *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*. Brill: Boston. 2000:29.

CONCLUSION

9.1 The Significance of the Interpretation Borne out of the Primal Influence in the Church in Yorubaland

The Bible as a sacred book of the Christian religion exercises a tremendous influence on Christians. This influence may be explained broadly in both external and internal terms.

In external terms, the Bible wields the power of tradition, custom, and creed. Religious groups confess to being guided by the Bible. In a sense the religious community is the author of scripture having developed it, cherished it, used it, and eventually canonized it (that is, developed lists of officially recognized biblical books). It is officially written for example in the thirty-nine articles of religion of the Anglican Communion⁹⁵⁴

that the Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to Salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or to be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

Many synods in the history of the universal church have engaged in the discourse on the authenticity and influence of scriptures in relation to the growth of the faith. In fact, some Christian scholars cannot be more apologetic in their presentation of their views of the Bible. They believe for instance that the Christian view of the Old Testament must be Christ's view. It is quite clear that Christ accepted its authority and its validity. The church has for long held the traditional view that the Bible is the authentic authority of the Christian faith.

In internal terms however, the influence of the Bible must be explained by what many Christians continue to experience as the power of the contents of the biblical books themselves. The biblical books were cherished and used because of what they said and how they said it and they were canonized because they had come to be used and believed so widely. The Bible truly is the foundation document of Christianity. It has been able to influence countless communities in all their complexities and varieties. How could all these communities,

⁹⁵⁴ The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments: The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). Nanjing Amity: Jiangning. 2007:498.

each with its own peculiar character and problems, use the same Bible? Many questions along similar lines have in recent years been posed by scholars. But a more germane question is the following. Is it the Bible that has impacted on communities of Bible-readers or is it those communities that have impacted on the Bible? One way to answer this question is by examining various instances of encounters with the Bible and to consider the results these have produced.

Paul Gifford⁹⁵⁵ writes that the Bible appears to not have one single position on issues. A single biblical view on anything is hardly possible because the book has been produced over a period of more than a thousand years by innumerable different authors, speaking from a variety of contexts. In addition, how the Bible has been interpreted in the course of Christian history may be at considerable variance with what biblical passages were intended to convey in their own time and place. This is true of all writing produced in any epoch and at any place. According to Gifford the impact of the Bible on societies and contexts at different times and in different places cannot be overemphasized. Gifford provides some examples of Bible texts and their interpretations at various periods that had a considerable impact at the time.

He mentions firstly the ‘theocratic’ paradigm, according to which the basic norms and structures of political society have been laid down by God Himself. In this model, God was the one who decided what birds or animals humankind could eat, or what should be done if a dead body was found in the fields or in a city.⁹⁵⁶ These laws were disclosed through Moses or the biblical lawgivers.⁹⁵⁷ Secondly, he presents a more dualistic paradigm in which ‘not all is seen to be regulated by the command of God, at least directly.’⁹⁵⁸ This attitude is based on texts such as Luke 12: 13f. Jesus, when asked ‘Master, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me,’ answers, ‘Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?’ According to Gifford this seems to mean that there are certain human disagreements that God, or Jesus, does not intend to settle. Such things are the business of humankind and they are not regulated by anydivine directive.⁹⁵⁹ The third example Gifford calls ‘prophetic’. This thinking has been important in much recent ‘progressive, reformist, politically active Christianity.’⁹⁶⁰ One can go over the head of legitimate authority to establish the mind of God Himself. Gifford presents the fourth paradigm as the one of the migrating nation (a frequent occurrence

⁹⁵⁵ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*, 2003: 28.

⁹⁵⁶ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*, 2003: 28.

⁹⁵⁷ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*, 2003: 28.

⁹⁵⁸ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*, 2003: 29.

⁹⁵⁹ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*, 2003: 29.

⁹⁶⁰ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003: 29.

in the Old Testament, e.g. Heb. 13: 14).⁹⁶¹ According to De Klerk⁹⁶² this view has been particularly significant in countries where reformed theology is influential - in Scotland, New England, for Afrikaners most of all, but also for Mormons and, of course, Zionist Jews. A fifth paradigm is by Gifford called 'millennial or eschatological', according to which the political system at the time is corrupt and oppressive and condemned to be swept away and replaced by a completely new order where peace and God's justice will reign (Isa. 2 – 4 – 11; Isa. 2 – 9; Rev. 21: 1 – 5).⁹⁶³ Another paradigm presented by Gifford is the one based on the notion of freedom or liberation that has been rather influential in recent times.⁹⁶⁴ The Exodus (chapters 3 – 15) is often considered as the basic text for all the varieties of liberation theology. The last paradigm mentioned by Gifford is that of covenant, or agreement, between God and his people. This image has been particularly relevant for the political understanding of North Americans and South Africans.⁹⁶⁵ As pointed out above, the factor that is responsible for the diversity of paradigms can only be that the Bible has as many voices as there are groups and societies of Bible readers in the world who read or have read into the Bible what they want to.

The Yoruba society has its own paradigm to contribute. What is the context that gave rise to the factors which contribute to the Yoruba-Christian preachers' motifs of biblical interpretation? The context is, in the view of Gifford,⁹⁶⁶ determined by the way in which Africans understand themselves. According to him, Africa's traumatic encounter with the West led, not only to a loss of political control, but also to a damaged self-understanding. Independent Africa's preoccupations were to resist continued Western economic domination and to assert an African identity, especially by affirming its link with Africa's traditional heritage and by resisting Western intellectual hegemony.⁹⁶⁷ This has in some contexts led to a rejection of the Bible to the degree of creating a new scripture, especially for Africa and intended to replace the Bible that is considered as the scripture for Europeans. May be Kofi Amede's Bible, devised for the 'West African Afrikania faith', or *Ka: the Holy book of Nater*, was an attempt to raise the African religion to the status of

⁹⁶¹ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003:35.

⁹⁶² W.A. de Klerk. *The Puritans in Africa: The Story of Afrikanerdom*. Pelican: London. 1975.

⁹⁶³ Norman Cohn. *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*. Pimlico: London. 1990.

⁹⁶⁴ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003:35.

⁹⁶⁵ Walter Scott. *Old Mortality*. Penguin: London. 1986.

⁹⁶⁶ Paul Gifford. "The Bible in Africa: a Novel Usage in Africa's New Churches." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 71, 2. 2008:203-219.

⁹⁶⁷ Paul Gifford. *Bulletin of SOAS*. 2008: 204.

world religion. However, in the meantime a safer tendency has emerged, namely the pursuit of interpreting the Bible in ways that relate to the African culture.

The perception has been that the Bible has, one-sidedly, influenced the society with its teachings and doctrines. However, there is a growing realization that society itself wields power over the Bible. Gerald West⁹⁶⁸ re-positions Kwame Bediako's idea that the Bible has made a profound impact on Africa. The encounter between the Bible and Africa had been in one direction: from the Bible to Africa. West suggests a new formulation whereby the Bible is object and Africa subject. He accentuates the role that Africa has played in the interpretation of the Bible. Africa is no longer acted upon, but is itself actor. The Bible is no longer agent, but is the object of actions of others. This research has lent support to such scholarly views. Questions asked in the research were, if 'further developments in African Christianity will test the depth of the impact that Africa has made upon the Bible,'⁹⁶⁹ what are these developments and how have they produced the impact?' In the process of attempting to answer this question I have studied one example of the many and varied developments in African Christianity. My example proved to have had strong bearing on African conceptions of the Bible, thereby producing a genre of African Bible interpretation. This has truly revealed the depth of the impact of Africa on the Bible. As a consequence, many paradigms of Christianity were and are being formulated. As the typical example that I have set out in this research is part of an ongoing significant development in African Christianity, it is correct to state that these paradigms being created by African Christianity may continue to emerge as long as the church continues to be a living entity, drawing its strength from the activity of powerful phenomena, namely the Bible, its readers, and their contexts. The paradigm identified by this research may in the future take its place among other emerging concepts of Christianity.

Focussing on the significance of local contexts in the shaping of paradigms of interpretation in Africa, two paradigms have been presented that emerged as being prominent in the encounter of African Bible readers with the Bible. These are the Faith Gospel and Demonic Possession. These two constitute the main and the most visible motifs. They were as such applied in the present thesis in a case study of sermons and biblical interpretations by Yoruba Pentecostal preachers. By analyzing the sermons collected for the study, I found that they fall without exception within the ambits of the two paradigms. The paradigm of the Faith Gospel

⁹⁶⁸ West and Dube (eds.). *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*. 2000.

⁹⁶⁹ West and Dube (eds.). *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*. 2000.

holds that Jesus has already won for Christians all the blessings of health and wealth and a Christian only has to claim what is his or hers by right.⁹⁷⁰ The basic text is Deuteronomy 28 – 30 where God offers Israel a choice: ‘If you obey the voice of the Lord your God...all these blessings shall come upon you.’⁹⁷¹ The blessings are spelt out: material prosperity, success, abundance of every kind. In churches where sermons follow the Faith Gospel, testimonies center on the blessings that result from faith. In this genre of interpretation, religion is about financial wealth, health, fertility, abundance and longevity and it is disseminated through electronic media, literature, and conferences.⁹⁷² The idea that faith automatically brings God’s blessings is most often linked with ‘spiritual laws’ of increase or sowing, according to which God repays us if we give and to the extent that we give.⁹⁷³ The thesis also makes clear that there is a practical reason for the appeal of the Faith Gospel in Africa.

The second paradigm of Bible interpretation in African Christianity is that of Demonic Possession.⁹⁷⁴ This involves Bible interpretations by African preachers who are preoccupied with demons and who have the propensity to interpret all dimensions of life in terms of spiritual forces of every kind.⁹⁷⁵ Sermons of this kind are based on texts where Jesus performed exorcism and on texts such as Ephesians 6:12 or II Corinthians 4:4.⁹⁷⁶

There is no gainsaying that these two biblical motifs are common in Africa, especially in West Africa. Other motifs may be especially evident in particular areas in Africa but the Faith Gospel and Demonic Possession are without doubt the most prominent themes of preachers in the area of my case study in Nigeria among the Yoruba. The vital patterns of these two types of interpretations are rooted in the patterns of African religious traditions. The attractiveness of both paradigms lies in their fusion of religion and materialist values. To the preachers the purpose of religion, apart from preparing one for entry into the hereafter, is the actualization of a good life here on earth. This is one of the main philosophies of the Yoruba. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the Yoruba approaches the divine because the transcendent has the ability to provide the mundane things that he/she desires. All that is needed is to fulfil the requirements of sacrifice which basically consist

⁹⁷⁰ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003:36.

⁹⁷¹ Deut 21: 1f.

⁹⁷² Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003:37.

⁹⁷³ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003:37.

⁹⁷⁴ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003:37.

⁹⁷⁵ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003:37.

⁹⁷⁶ Niels Kastfelt. *Scriptural Politics: The Bible and the Koran as Political Models in the Middle East and Africa*. 2003:37.

in prayer and faith. The stronger one's faith, the more of the good life one will be granted by God. It is one's faith that will enable one to pay the children's school fees, to buy and drive a good car, to secure a good and well-paid job; to marry the right spouse, and to conceive pregnancy and give birth safely.

Furthermore, the deliverance motif sees spiritual forces pervading the everyday world. Satan is the god of this world and hence a Christian needs to acquire a powerful status to be able to live successfully in this world. Any negative experience of a Christian believer may be blamed on one curse or another, either inherited from an ancestor, or acquired by him/herself. Negative experiences may also be imposed by an enemy who is a witch, wizard, or sorcerer. The enemy may have solicited the help of any of the mediums mentioned in chapter five. The Appendices of this research where all the collected and analyzed sermons are presented shows the dominant presence of the deliverance motif.

Other scholars have examined African expressions of religion using hermeneutics for their own specific goals. The objective of the present work is to fathom the factor(s) responsible for the particular Yoruba-Pentecostal Bible interpretations. The conclusion is that there is an intrinsic factor in the African that is a reality in his/her life and that determines the way in which he/she sees the world. This world-view is rooted in the effects of the primal religion that he/she has been exposed to.

In African mainstream churches (for example the Catholic and the Anglican churches) most preachers operate using lectionaries and their use of biblical texts is not all that different from its use in Western Catholic and Anglican churches. In the mainstream churches in Africa, the text is supposed to be the launch pad for rumination on ideas. In the Africa's independent and neo-Pentecostal churches most sermons develop from a theme (or a series of events based on a theme), not necessarily connected to the Bible. But during the sermon the preacher will feel bound to refer to biblical texts, often quite frequently. I believe this is also an area that further work needs to be done; to examine the nature of and comparison of sermons preached in the churches: the African independent and neo-Pentecostal churches with the mainline churches (for example the Anglican and the Catholic churches).

Among the Yoruba, this typical way of sermonizing is the product of an encounter between the African and his intrinsic self that is determined by elements of his primal religion. The encounter is, contrary to a fairly common perception, not the result of the African quest for independence, political or otherwise, but is born

from the intrinsic nature of the African. It has little to do with his or her external experience of European missionaries and colonists or with political struggle. Therefore a paradigm to be added to those already identified by scholars is that of the need to perceive the peculiar Yoruba version of Christianity in the light of an enduring influence of Yoruba primal religion.

In order to categorize this type of Christianity as practised in the contemporary Yoruba-African context I have made a historical survey of general Near Eastern primal beliefs and ideologies that are analogous with those of the ancient Israelite beliefs and as such traceable in the Old Testament. The aim was to demonstrate an effect of the former on the latter. In my view the African encounter between Yoruba primal religion and contemporary Yoruba Bible interpretation can be juxtaposed. I have done a critical examination of Old Testament narratives, tracing the primal religious elements in the texts. Similarly, I have reviewed Yoruba traditional or primal religion so as to be able to establish which of its elements survive in contemporary Yoruba preachers' interpretations of the Bible. This has been done mainly on the basis of publications on the subject. Furthermore, a delineation of the concept of African Christianity was provided, and the role of African primal religion in its derivation and practices was discussed so as to locate my research within the existing conversation on the subject. Among the methods applied by the research is 'grounded theory' the development of which by experts has been discussed. An empirical survey of biblical interpretations or sermons by some Yoruba preachers, characterized by features of Yoruba primal religious philosophies, was given. This involved the use of sermons collected from the relevant publications of preachers.

A careful juxtaposition of the findings from the Near Eastern part of the research with those concerning the Yoruba including the analysis of twenty collected sermons, has led to the discovery of a typical biblical model or foundation for aspects of contemporary church life and practice in Africa. In the research there are four areas of focus:

1. Ancient Near East
2. Ancient Israel and Old Testament narratives\
3. Yoruba primal religion
4. Yoruba Pentecostal Christian sermons

The primal elements to be identified in these four subjects were first synthesized using Harold Turner's six feature analysis of primal religion. This was done by modifying Turner's his features of primal religion and tagging them with anthropological terms for easier identification. The terms are: Animism, Animatism,

Divination, Magic, Medicine, Incantation, Taboo, Totemism, Rites, and Initiation. It is the inclusion of primal aspects that played a major role in the successful emergence of African Christianity among the Yoruba, beginning with the inception of the African Independent Churches in Yorubaland.

My findings based on the above explorations have added another factor to existing explanations of the affinity of Africans with the Bible and that is the role that primal religion plays in African perceptions of the Bible's content. The Africans whose sermons have been examined in this research have done nothing, as far as I am concerned, that contradicts the 39 Articles of religion of the Anglican Church as mentioned above. Their interpretation of the sacred book (sacred because of the role of inspiration in its composition), is itself also born of inspiration, namely the inspiration given to them at creation, to enable them to understand what God planned for them.

Finally I want to assert that the sermons are 'hot commodities' in the context where they are preached, as is evident from the kind of patronage the preachers enjoy in their churches. The buildings are always packed with believers drawn, I believe, by the innate elements of primal religion that are at work in the preachers as well as their followers. However, the question I wish to ask here is whether these preachers should capitalize on their success and build themselves a personal empire. Or should they, as has happened in other African contexts, use their sermons to improve the quality of their society?

9.2 The Significance of Yoruba Christianity in Reshaping the Nigerian Social and Political Profile

In concluding my study I want to ask a larger question, namely whether the churches in Yorubaland fulfil any useful role at all in solving the political and economic conundrum of Nigerian society. I begin by offering two scenarios.

The first scenario is presented by a daily newspaper.⁹⁷⁷ A 78-year-old woman claims that the noise emanating from a neo-Pentecostal church in Ikeja, Lagos constitutes a threat to her life. Her residence and the church share a fence. The newspaper gathered that the church started in 2000 to operate on the premises on a rental basis and bought the property in 2007. The old woman who is a retired chief matron in a hospital accuses the church of ignoring a notice to quit that was issued in 2009 by the Lagos State Physical Planning and Development Authority after the authority condemned the church's activities as constituting a nuisance

⁹⁷⁷ The Punch, Thursday, December 1, 2011.

in the neighbourhood. According to the woman, ‘The level of noise generated by this church is unimaginable and I have complained to them several times to no avail. When my son approached the church on the issue, he was rounded up and accused of trying to set the church ablaze. He was even charged in court and later discharged for lack of evidence.’⁹⁷⁸ She wondered why a church should flout orders from constituted authorities and deliberately make life unpleasant for others. ‘At my age I think I deserve some rest after labouring all this while. But they wouldn’t allow me to have a moment of rest. Their speakers and musical instruments are always sounding very loud. It is always terrible whenever they hold vigil as I don’t get a wink of sleep on these occasions.’ When she approached the church leadership asking them to reduce the noise levels they resorted to calling her names rather than empathising with her. She said: ‘They now call me a witch for championing a legitimate cause. I have medical challenges. Once my sleep is distorted; my blood levels rise and I don’t want to die now. Government should enforce its orders and save me from dying before my time.’⁹⁷⁹ A male resident who stays adjacent to the church disagreed and said that the amount of noise produced during church activities was largely kept within acceptable limits. He added that, ‘...the only way one might say the church constitutes a nuisance is the way the members park their vehicles, which sometimes makes residents unable to access their compounds.’⁹⁸⁰

The foregoing is a typical occurrence wherever neo-Pentecostal churches are established in Lagos and Ibadan. The reason for bringing this up is that it is an example of the church’s failure to uphold the sanctity of the society on account of vigils and prayer meetings. There have been times when the church rose to the occasion and for example brought down unpopular regimes in order to install governments that were more acceptable to society at large. But among the Yoruba Christians, anything that prevents prayer from taking place is demonic, Satanic and working against God’s plan. That is why the old woman could be called a witch. The concept of the witch, we have seen earlier, is traceable to Yoruba primal religion. When a person is sacrificing to appease the *orisa* certain spiritual entities (*elenini*) may interfere with the sacrifice, making it unacceptable to the *orisa*.⁹⁸¹ *Elenini* can take on the form of any creature: human, animal, vegetation, or even circumstances.

⁹⁷⁸ The Punch, Thursday, December 1, 2011.

⁹⁷⁹ The Punch, Thursday, December 1, 2011.

⁹⁸⁰ The Punch, Thursday, December 1, 2011.

⁹⁸¹ Awolalu. *Yoruba beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. 1979:79-86.

In the second scenario, I wish to make the point that, although the average Nigerian is very religious, this does not imply that he or she will in any way contribute positively to finding lasting solutions for the country's problems. The former president of the country, General Olusegun Obasanjo, was worldwide acclaimed for being the first president of a nation who publicly declared his religious inclination while in office.⁹⁸² The south-Western part of Nigeria is rife with Christians who profess their religion publicly while holding a government post. It is common to see government officials gathering in government buildings to pray before the start of work in the morning. Such prayer meetings bear the hallmark of Pentecostalism. Yet one hears how the place reeks of corruption. Corruption is endemic and has affected every aspect of governance in Nigeria. It clouds the understanding of government officials of their role in protecting the well-being of citizens. Nigeria, the world's sixth largest crude oil producer, cannot provide its people with basic amenities such as good roads, good health facilities, good education, and good retirement packages for senior citizens. The majority of the people continue to suffer extreme poverty as much money as the nation generates.

According to Gifford,⁹⁸³ African states have failed to approximate a 'rational-legal mode of operation' which he describes as the exercising of governance through legally defined structures for a publicly acknowledged aim. Such structures should be operated by officials who treat other individuals impersonally, according to criteria that the structures demand. This rational-legal ideal (admittedly nowhere achieved in its fullness) has proved to be the most efficient and legitimate way of running a complex modern state.⁹⁸⁴ The way in which African officials function is by Gifford referred to as patrimonialism,⁹⁸⁵ based on the kind of authority a father has over his children. Those lower in the hierarchy, are not subordinate officials with defined powers and functions, but retainers whose position depends on a higher placed person to whom they owe allegiance.⁹⁸⁶ The system is held together by loyalty or kinship ties rather than by a hierarchy of administrative grades and functions. Africa's modern patrimonial systems manifest themselves in two ways: corruption and clientelism.⁹⁸⁷ Corruption is the use of public office to achieve private goals. In the classic patrimonial system, the idea of corruption makes no sense because there is no distinction between public

⁹⁸² This acclamation was presented on CNN in 1999.

⁹⁸³ Paul Gifford. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. Hurst & Company: London. 1997:87.

⁹⁸⁴ Paul Gifford. *African Christianity: Its Public Role* 1997:87.

⁹⁸⁵ Paul Gifford. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. 1997:87.

⁹⁸⁶ Paul Gifford. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. 1997:87.

⁹⁸⁷ Paul Gifford. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. 1997:87.

and private interests.⁹⁸⁸ In a ‘neo-patrimonial’ system however, the system is formally constituted along the principles of the rational-legal model. African states function with the apparatus of modern nation states, but officials tend to exercise their powers, not in the service of the public, but of self-enrichment.⁹⁸⁹ In Africa the distinction between public and private interest has been hardly recognised.. Public office is seen as the route to personal wealth and power.⁹⁹⁰ This attitude is expressed in proverbs such as, ‘The goat eats where it is tethered’ and, in the Yoruba adage coined from the Bible, ‘*Eniti n se nibi pepe, lo n je nibi pepe,*’ which means literally: ‘He who works at the altar eats at the altar.’

When the debate on the removal of the oil subsidy broke out, critics of the government’s move wondered why Nigeria as the sixth largest crude oil producer in the world, could not address the supply side of the refined oil products’ local market by putting the nation’s refineries in good order or privatising them for proper management and maintenance. They argued that, what the government claims to be subsidising, is corruption and inefficiency. The submission here is that the Petroleum Products Prices Regulatory Agency’s pricing template is not based on the importer who offers consumers the best price. Instead, the government, through the Nigerian National Petroleum Company, relies on spot markets and greedy middlemen who source refined fuel from such markets. According to the government,⁹⁹¹ the subsidy denies it the much-needed funds to invest in renewing decaying infrastructure and to embark on socio-economic projects that will impact positively on the lives of the common people. The Nigeria Labour Congress, the Trade Union Congress, the opposition parties and some concerned Nigerians have from their part been harping on the pains that the average Nigerian will suffer as a result of the scrapping of the subsidy.⁹⁹² They warn that it will cause inflation and lead to loss of jobs in an economy where the rates of unemployment and poverty are already high. They fear that social unrest will ensue and threaten the fragile stability of the country. The government in its turn offers palliatives to cushion the citizenry from the pains that could arise. But the government’s arguments and promises have become a recurrent singsong, too familiar to the ears of many Nigerians who are getting bored with it. Promises of the government to create safety nets that will counter the negative impact of the subsidy withdrawal, such as building more refineries through private-public partnership, building and rehabilitate roads, and expanding the rail networks along with other measures

⁹⁸⁸ Paul Gifford. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. 1997:87.

⁹⁸⁹ Paul Gifford. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. 1997:88..

⁹⁹⁰ Paul Gifford. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. 1997:88.

⁹⁹¹ Tell November 7 2011, p. 17. Tell is a news magazine in Nigeria.

⁹⁹² Tell November 7 2011, p. 17.

disclosed by government's spokespersons, are a repeat of what former military heads of state and former President Olusegun Obasanjo have promised on the 20 occasions or so that they have raised fuel prices. Some Nigerians lost their lives in the ensuing protests.⁹⁹³ What grieves the people is that the government invariably fails to fulfil its part of the bargain. Past increases in fuel prices have brought no relief. Over the years, Nigerians have been short-changed by their leaders and they consider them no longer worthy of trust or even respect..

More infuriating is the fact that, while Nigerian leaders are quick to call for sacrifices on the part of the people when faced with economic challenges, they don't join in the making of sacrifices but stay in their comfort zones. Nigeria is a nation where much money is wasted on paying the wages and emoluments of leaders (politicians and civil servants) many of whom do nothing more than pushing files around and sleeping during parliamentary sessions. The average lawmaker in the national Assembly, for instance, takes home about \$1.2 million per annum, excluding a severance package of millions of naira.⁹⁹⁴ In fact, members of the Nigerian Senate and the House of Representatives, on the face of it, earn more than the President who takes home over N1 million a month,⁹⁹⁵ an amount considered very high in a country where the minimum pay for workers has just been grudgingly raised to N18, 000 (a little above \$100) a month. Billions of naira is spent on salaries of numerous presidential aides, ministers and their aides.⁹⁹⁶ The situation is replicated at state and local government levels and politicians compete in spreading government largesse for the benefit of their families and cronies.

Elected politicians waste resources on hiring jets for travels in and outside the country, enjoying obscene allowances in the process while governors and even councillors, local government chairmen and their spouses, roam about in convoys of dozens of state-of-the-art cars, all in the name of service to the people. In saner countries political office holders board commercial planes and fly economy class to save costs. In January 2011 a Presidential Advisory Committee was set up by President Jonathan to audit all federal government projects. The committee submitted its report last January, noting that the federal government has, since 1999, spent N15.6 trillion on public servants alone.⁹⁹⁷ The former chairman of the Revenue

⁹⁹³ Tell November 7 2011, p. 17.

⁹⁹⁴ Tell November 7 2011, p. 17.

⁹⁹⁵ Tell November 7 2011, p. 17.

⁹⁹⁶ Tell November 7 2011, p. 17.

⁹⁹⁷ Tell November 7 2011, p. 17.

Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission, disclosed early this year that the country spends N1.3 trillion yearly on the emoluments of political, public and judicial officeholders in the the federal government, 36 states and 774 local government councils.⁹⁹⁸ The committee strongly advised that the bureaucracy be pruned to free resources for other necessities. This advice has so far been ignored by the federal government.

Considering the huge cost of governance as a result of waste and the increasing cost of corruption and other vices that politically exposed persons in the country engage in, the common man in Nigeria is not likely to feel any sympathy for the government or to champion its cause if the need would arise. Even in capitalist countries, efforts are made to ensure government promotes measures to secure a decent life for the majority of its people. It is sad that in Nigeria a system is in operation that lacks a social conscience and that applies a sort of primitive, beggar-my-countryman capitalism where the average citizen is preyed upon without sharing in the country's wealth.

Another aspect of the matter is that the practitioners of contemporary African Christianity find those who govern the country under their audience. Immediately after the present President was elected, he was in attendance at one of the Holy Ghost Nights of the Redeemed Christian Church of God along the Lagos-Ibadan express way, obviously for prayers. I think that he got a large dose of it because the photograph of Pastor Adejare Adeboye laying hands on him and praying for him filled almost all the daily newspapers that week. In fact it has been observed that Nigeria has more churches and mosques than it has factories and businesses. Yet our nation is one of the top ten most corrupt nations in the world. Perhaps it is not the pastor or the Imam who is to be blamed for the high levels of corruption, greed, and avarice in Nigerian society. But the fact remains that the Nigerians, both the leaders and the citizens, regularly attend worship where prayer and scriptures are interpreted in ways that appeal to the intrinsic religious values of the Yoruba.

In the sermons analysed in the last chapter the themes in almost all cases focus on the well-being of the believers. A brief consideration of the sermons reveals that the preachers' emphasis, even when preaching on themes related to prayer and the Holy Spirit, is on issues of physical, spiritual (triumphing over spiritual darkness and problematic situations in life), financial, marital, and social well-being of their followers. This individualistic focus of ministries in Nigeria poses a danger. There is in sermons little concern with national

⁹⁹⁸ Tell November 7 2011, p. 17.

issues and, needless to say, many Yoruba Pentecostal preachers are using their success among Yoruba Christians to enhance their personal financial and social status. It is the fervent wish of this researcher that the self-enrichment should cease, and that there should be more of a focus on the larger systemic and structural dimensions of the Nigerian context.

Another concern that this research raises, which is related to the above concern, is that preachers may benefit from a more detailed study of the Bible. Many Pentecostal preachers fail to pursue a critical exegetic involvement with the Bible texts, because they overlook the difference between the context of the Bible and their own. That there is little or no engagement with text exegesis is the reality of most Yoruba Pentecostal preaching in Nigeria today. Another factor responsible for this lack of in-depth engagement with the Bible is that the Yoruba are cruelly affected by harsh economic and social challenges and in this context – their context - they tend to revert to their innate mind-set of approaching the deity not necessarily for worship, but for the succour the deity can offer. However, in order to embrace the advantages of listening to God through the scriptures and for the betterment of society, the Bible should be allowed to speak in its own voice. To attain this, distantiation is needed.

In spite of the prevailing harsh economic and defective political situation, most Pentecostal preachers amass such wealth that they can afford to buy helicopters and private jets and have a fleet of sleek automobiles in their garages. Men and women abuse the Nigerian situation to get wealthy in the name of church. Yoruba Christians, influenced by their primal ideologies, will attend church because they want to better their lot. If they get a chance they may steal money from their working places and believe it is ‘God’s doing’ and it is marvellous in their eyes. The tithe of the stolen money might be given to the church and serious prayers will be said, asking for such an individual to be even more successful in his/her endeavours. Thus, despite the large number of churches and praying congregations in Nigerian society, corruption defines almost every aspect of life. The measure of one’s triumph in spirituality is commensurate with the amount of wealth you can display in the church. Thus, misdemeanour increases and the pastors themselves set the pattern by flaunting the material ‘outcome of their spirituality’. And for the young who are the life-blood of the neo-Pentecostal churches, the examples are there to see, and perhaps to follow.

In my view the primal elements that continue to be active in Yoruba Christian practice could function as a catalyst in modifying the present ways of the Nigerian nation. How to make this happen? Yoruba Christian

preachers, especially the Pentecostals, draw sizable crowds to their churches. It has been established in this thesis that the factor responsible for the appeal of these churches is the presence in their practices of elements of Yoruba primal religion. Yoruba preachers' sermons contain familiar, traditional features and arouse a powerful response in the audience that also consists of Yoruba and those shares in the traditions. It is in the hands of the practitioners of this strain of African Christianity to achieve solidarity among people, because they already have the tool in hands. Preachers and believers should make use of the appeal that draws them to the Bible while affirming their common roots and allow this consciousness to model their lives so that they become responsible leaders and citizens. The Bible possesses an awesome transforming power. The submission of this thesis is that the distinctive nature of Africans (the Yoruba as case study) has had an impact on the voice of the Bible as it is heard in Africa. I believe however that Nigeria, in its engagement with the Bible, would benefit from turning the process around by allowing itself to listen to the word of God with the purpose of finding the inspiration to transform Nigeria into a corrupt free nation and a good place to live.

Perhaps the comments of Pastor Tunde Bakare, founder and senior pastor of the Latter Rain Assembly, one of the thriving neo-Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, who is a major player in the Save Nigeria Group, a group of prominent Nigerians such as Prof. Wole Soyinka, Prof. Pat Utomi and Revd. Fr. Matthew Kukah, do summarize what the role of African Christianity should be in building of the nation of Nigeria. Unlike many other pastors, Bakare has successfully blended religion with politics. To him they are two sides of the same coin. He decries the corruption and the looting by politicians calling the lawmakers in particular 'legislotters.'⁹⁹⁹ He also says that many religious leaders abet looting and corruption. In his words: God didn't start any religion; religion is a man-made attempt to reach God. I am not a religious person at all, I am a practical person. I love God, I love people and I will do whatsoever I need to do, regardless of whether I am a plumber or a painter or a preacher to steer our nation in the right direction. Preaching is not my occupation, by training I am a lawyer, I am a businessman, Preaching is my calling, I have done other things before I came into preaching. I am not a religious person, I am not promoting religion and Jesus did not come to die for religion either. He came so that we can have relationship with God. If you look through biblical history, you will see the roles prophets and priests played so that those in power do not oppress the people. Samuel and so many others, Jeremiah, Elijah, they checkmated tyranny and excessive oppression in

⁹⁹⁹ Tell July 19, 2010, p. 59.

their nation. They steered their nation in the right direction that is not religion but accurate intervention in situations that may have become national chaos.¹⁰⁰⁰

Bakare's congregation is one of the largest among the Pentecostal churches in south-Western Nigeria. I believe he is able to draw large numbers of people because of the appeal of his preaching. He uses his platform to convey his belief that it is not by praying and fasting alone that the nation will change, but by Christians getting involved. 'We must get involved; salt that is not involved is in the salt shaker. We must get involved; we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world...'¹⁰⁰¹

¹⁰⁰⁰ Tell July 19, 2010, p. 59.

¹⁰⁰¹ Tell July 19, 2010, p. 59.

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**THE EFFECT OF SEMITIC PRIMAL RELIGION ON ISRAELITE RELIGION: A
PATTERN FOR A CONTEXTUAL BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IN NIGERIAN
CHRISTIANITY**

FOLUSO OLUGBENGA BABATUNJI

(STUDENT NUMBER: 207510574)

SUPERVISOR

PROFESSOR GERALD WEST

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INTRODUCTION

The Appendices are the sections of the thesis where the Grounded Theory is used to analyse the sermons collected as data for the research. The outcome of this analysis shall establish the fact that primal religious elements are traceable in the sermons, and this will enable the researcher to do a comparison between the latter and the Yoruba context of the Pentecostal preachers. The primal religious elements discovered in these sermons shall be similar with that of the Yoruba primal religious concepts.

Twenty sermons were collected initially, out of which ten were selected for this analysis to avoid massive Appendices. The identification of the core categories, which are ten also: Animism, Animatism, Divination, Magic, Medicine, Incantation, Taboo, Totemism, Rites, and Initiation to which every single incident belongs, involves three basic actions: Open Coding, Selective Coding and Sorting. All are done in the Appendices.

In the first appendix, the collected sermons are arranged from one to ten as the data for analysis, as they are published. Each sermon is picked from one preacher. The first step of analysis which is called the open coding can also be found in the first appendix. Selective Coding which is the second step of analysis is in the second Appendix. There incidents that are analogous to features of Yoruba primal religion are identified by conceptualization. After abstracting the characteristic incidents, identification is done by underlining them. The third Appendix is where the underlined incidents are sorted and modelled. Each of the modelled incidents are then labelled with the categories used in tagging Harold Turner's six points on features of primal religion (the ten listed above) identified in Ancient Near East; Old Testament; and Yoruba primal or traditional religion. With this tagging, it is established that these concepts are also traceable in the sermons of the Pentecostal preachers

APPENDIX I TEN SERMONS COLLECTED

Brief Introduction to Appendix I

Appendix I consists of two sections. The first includes the ten sermons to be analyzed in full as culled from the preachers' publications. The second is the presentation of the first step of analysis called open coding.

Sermon One

Title: Prophetic Prayer Works by Pastor Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola¹

Everything has its own principles of operation whether physical or spiritual. The same applies to prophetic prayer

1. It works by faith. When prophetic prayer is released by faith, it is as potent as if God Himself had spoken.
2. All things were made by the word and the voice of the Lord and they must respond to His command directly or indirectly. Psalms 33:6-9; Colossians I: 16, Hebrews I 1:3; John 1:3.
3. All created things have ears at their own level of existence. This includes both living and non-living matters.

(a) For example, these non-living materials were addressed in prayer

(i) Earth:- Jeremiah 22:9, Numbers 17: 29-14

(ii) Altar:- I Kings 13: 1-5

(iii) The sun and the Moon:- Joshua 10: 12-14 .

(iv) Lazarus: John 11I

(b) Some of the living things addressed in prayers of command include:

(i) The fig tree Matthew 21: 18-20

(ii) Lazarus: - John 11:43-44

(Hi) Jairus' daughter: - Luke 8:41, 49-56.

These objects were made by the word of the Lord, therefore they must obey the same word. This is the mystery of creation. The occultists and spiritualists understand this very well.

4. If all things have ears, therefore the material elements from which they were made can hear and respond to the word and voice of God.

5. Prophetic praying releases the forces and mysteries of life into action.

A notable prayer leader and a prophet shared this wonderful testimony with me not too long ago. It was about a situation in Nigeria, himself and other intercessors dealt with. It was the Tiv and Jukun war in the middle belt of Nigeria. For so many years this vicious ethnic war raged on unabated.

The Christians from both sides unfortunately were siding their own ethnic groups. While the Christians in one ethnic group were praying that God would fight against the other ethnic group.

¹ Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola, *Advanced Level Prayers*, Lagos, 2004

The other ethnic group was also praying the same prayer to God. But thank God for some intercessors who had knowledge of prophetic praying. They took up the challenge of ending this local ethnic misunderstanding that had developed into a full scale war fought with modern weapons. There was also a very terrible demonic complication in the skirmishes. The local people consulted the powers of darkness so much that a typical old woman would stand facing riot policemen armed with automatic rifles and amazingly collecting all the bullets with a wrapper without a single bullet hitting her. The policemen in fear and terror would stop shooting and run for their dear lives. In fact, each of the ethnic groups send only such women with demonic powers to battle while their men stayed behind watching and waiting for the other group to be exhausted in order to capture them.

These intercessors from both ethnic groups were so disturbed at these wanton destruction of their people that they decided that rather than take sides, they would stand in the gap to fast and seek God's face for what to do in order for the civil strife to come to an end. So they came together and repented of the bloodshed, forgave themselves and waited on the Lord. Then, the Lord began to speak prophetically to them on what to do.

Armed with the word of God they had received, they went to the battle front when there was a brief cease-fire. They began to address the trees, the leaves, the roots and the earth never to cooperate and obey the natives any more. They held those objects and scooped the earth in their hand and spoke to them never to respond to the incantation of the warriors again. After a long period of prayer walk and prophetic praying over the battle front, they had a spiritual release and gave God thanks for victory.

Few days after this, the battle resumed again. These women came as usual to the battle ground, plucked some leaves, chewed them in their mouths and spewed them out, while chanting incantations. Then they faced the armed soldiers and policemen with their wrappers hoping to collect the bullets again. Contrary to their expectation, the first volley of bullets ripped through the bodies of first line of the demonic women, felling them. When their men saw this, they took to their heels. The other side also tried their fetish, but it ended in disaster. So the battle stopped permanently and peace was forged between the warring factions. The government was overwhelmed with joy.

From the foregoing, we, as God's children, must know that we can command creation, especially leaves, trees, roots, fruits, parts of animals, feathers, liquids, etc used in making charms and talisman not to work against us by neutralizing and deprogramming these elements by prophetic prayers. We can also render the works of spirits and occultists useless by serious prophetic prayers.

We need to examine the conditions for prophetic prayers, asking these questions: Can any child of God or intercessor pray prophetic prayers? And what price must be paid for one to operate in prophetic prayers? There are 8 major conditions that we will mention here.

1. Open heavens condition as a result of a robust prayer life.
2. Ability to expressly receive God's word. Luke 3: 1-2.
3. Ability to see the visions of the Spirit. Ezekiel 1: 1 - 3

4. The presence of the anointing of God on one's life and work.
5. Constant waiting in God's presence.
6. Ability to minister unto God in deep worship. Acts 3: 1 - 3
7. Possession of ears that hear God clearly. Rev. 2:7
8. Submission to spiritual authority II Cor. 10: 4 – 6

Open Heaven Condition Luke 3:21

The heavens over Jesus was opened as He prayed in Jordan when he was baptized by John. Throughout His ministry, the heavens over His life remained widely opened as a result of constant and deep communion with God the Father in prayer. As a result, there was nothing He asked in prayer that was not given to Him. There was nothing He commanded that heavens did not back with quick answers. A robust prayer and healthy life will keep the intercessor's heaven opened in order that whatever he demands will be carried out. This is a very necessary prerequisite for prophetic praying

Ability to expressly receive God's word. Luke 3: 1-2.

We have seen that it is the word of God that is used in prophetic praying, hence, a man who wants to operate in this realm must be able to receive God's word without any ambiguity or confusion. The word of God came expressly to Ezekiel and John the Baptist hence, they carried out their ministries with precision, having nothing undone or done amiss.

Ability to see the visions of the Spirit. Ezekiel 1: 1 - 3

In addition to open heavens, the ability to see the visions of God is another condition for operating prophetic prayer. Anyone who wants to work with God must be able to see things of the Spirit very quickly. He must be a man who constantly receives revelations from God about different situations and circumstances. A spiritually blind man will not be able to do, what God wants him to do because he sees only in the physical. Ezekiel saw the visions of God

The presence of the anointing of God on one's life and work. Ezekiel 1:3; 8: I; I Samuel 16: 13

All the men of God from the Old and New Testaments had the hand or Spirit or anointing of God upon them, This in essence, is the approval of God on their ministries. Nothing of eternal value can be done for God without the divine presence upon one's life. The presence of God's Spirit brings upon a man an extra-ordinary vigor and power to do what could not be done naturally. Nehemiah succeeded in his task of wall building according to the good hand of the Lord upon him, (Nehemiah. 2:8).

Constant waiting in God's presence. Ezekiel 3: 15 - 16

This is waiting before God in quietness for hours and for days without saying anything until God speaks. Ezekiel was in this condition with the others by the river of Chebar. He sat where the people sat, he was also in their condition. But amazingly at the end of seven days, it was only him alone that the word of God came to. Habakkuk too determined to wait upon God to see what he would say to him. God responded by answering and instructing. (Habakkuk. 2: 1 – 2).

Ability to minister unto the Lord in deep Worship Acts 3: 1 – 3.

The disciples in Acts 13 ministered to the Lord in praise, worship, adoration and fasting. God responded in that passage, giving a word of direction concerning what the church should do about Barnabas and Saul. Anyone who will operate in prophetic praying therefore must develop an habit of ministering to the Lord privately in praise, worship, adoration and even fasting in order to obtain clear guidelines and direction from the Lord.

Possession of ears that hear God clearly. Rev. 2:7

The book of Revelation 2:71 says, "he that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit is saying unto the churches.' It is not enough that the word should come expressly, one should also be able to hear that word. Faith to carry out prophetic praying comes by hearing the word of God. One who is dull of hearing will be a causality in spiritual battles. One who will like to operate in prophetic praying should develop a good hearing capability.

Submission to Authority 2 Corinthians 10: 4 – 6.

The totality of a man's being must be fully submitted to the Lordship of Christ who created all things. Even Jesus Himself was a man under authority. He was fully submitted to God's authority in order to effectively carry out prophetic praying. Demons, elemental entities, and all created objects will obey us only when our own obedience is complete. Disobedient, proud and self-willed Christians cannot operate in prophetic praying. They will be stoutly resisted and possibly afflicted by forces they are praying against.

Sermon Two

Title: Ancient Ancestral Covenants and Strategic Warfare by Prophet (Dr.) Samson Ayorinde ²

Several covenants have been made by men of the old over several nations and territories and even though we may think we are now living in a very civilized time and they are no more effective. It's a deceit. The power and influences of the devil is still very pervasive in many areas of the world today. Those covenants are still very active, potent and effective because they are regularly serviced and thus perpetuated from year to year and from generation to generation.

Some covenants were made some 300,400 or 500 years ago through the altars and groves our ancestral fathers have built on various portions of the land. Therefore, despite the gospel influence, the manifestation of the power and the life of God in the land, many of the people are still not responding to the gospel. A lot of our people are still spiritually impoverished and impervious to the gospel. No matter what you say, they don't just understand. Their mind is under the lock and grip of the enemy. There are several communities in Nigeria, for instance, that up till now, cannot boast of a single born- again Christian.

Although a lot of Christian activities have been going on in such places for a long time, up till now there is hardly any Church of 500 members in such places. In fact, most pastors who go to those places do everything possible to evangelize and convert people, but they usually end up burned out and retreat due to frustration and defeat. Many of them eventually pack up and go to some other places.

² Kayode Ojo, *Ancient Ancestral Covenants and Strategic Warfare*, Ibadan, 2004

When a land that has been covenanted to Lucifer is delivered, a lot of things happen such as: Conversions, physical healings, social and economic developments and so on.

Ancient covenants are maintained by traditionalists. They know how to do it. The devil taught them the principle and they practice it with zealous devotion.

How Ancient Covenants are maintained.

1. Religious Festivals and Pilgrimages

These are times and seasons of negotiations with the powers of darkness. Many of us come from villages and we've known about *Egungun* (masquerade) festival or the *Eyo* festival- all in Yorubaland of Nigeria. There are similar other festivals all over the world. All these ceremonies are highly symbolic. They are seasons of negotiations territorial deities spirits. Before a festival takes place, the ancient men and pagan priests would have to go to the caves or shrines (altars) for several days, sometimes up to a whole month. For example, before the *Olojo* festival in Ile-Ife (Nigeria) takes place, the Ooni of Ife (king) would have gone to a lonely place to commune with his "ancestors" and make negotiations for a new year about what would happen in his domain and in the whole of Yorubaland.

This is how new pacts and agreements are made. There are now various towns and cities in Nigeria, particularly in the Southern parts where they have what they call "town's days" e.g *Obanta Day*, *Akure Day*, and so on. The devil has just brought these things in the past 15 years. The enemy knows that except these things are maintained, the Christians' presence and the anointing of God upon the gospel will soon break his controlling influence. People call this cultural revival, so every town and village place now has its days of cultural celebrations. Many of the sons and daughters of such towns come back home at this time for the festivals. The village priests go back to the village gods and shrines to make new covenants. Because these things happen from year to year, there is therefore a continuity of hold of the power of darkness over the land. The intercessors and gospel ministers must therefore begin to deal with the issue of cultural reawakening in prayer. Israel's covenants with God are usually serviced, activated and maintained by the practice of the seven feasts (festivals of God from the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Feast of Tabernacles (Numbers 23: 1 – 44).

2. Traditions

Traditions and customs are powerful and irresistible forces that prevent people from coming to Christ. What are these traditions and what role do they play? Examples of such include:

a. Initiation of children:

In many pagan and traditional societies, children are usually initiated into some family cults. In some places, it is done just a few days after their delivery. By this act, ancient covenants are maintained through those children. Some of those cults are *Oro*, *Osugbo*, *Egungun* and other tribal cults. In some riverine communities of Africa new babies are sometimes left in the river or sea for days to be initiated by water spirits.

b. The Use of Tribal Marks and Body Tattoos

There are some communities that have specified tribal marks or tattoos they give their children to wear. When you see an Oyo (Nigeria) man, you recognize him immediately. The same is true of a Nupe, Masai, Kanuri, Zulu, Fulani, Ogbomosho, or a Swahili person. Those marks are not just ordinary identification marks. They are spiritually determined and implicative. The marks differ from place to place in Africa, and they came from the inspiration of evil spirits. The god of a locality i.e the territorial spirit usually dictates what kind of mark (covenant tokens) he wants to have amongst the children of such a community, so that wherever they go, they can be “protected” by him. Each time the evil spirit or the territorial spirit sees those marks on an individual, he claims ownership. You know the Bible says “*When I see the blood I will pass over (protect) you*” So also when a territorial spirit of Ondo sees the Ondo mark on a person he knows him immediately and his role is to “protect” that person and have control over him. The same goes for all the natives of other towns. The Kanuri or Nupe territorial spirits know that an individual belongs to them and that his fathers were under a covenant and the tribal mark was the identification marks by which they would know their children. That is why people from certain localities have strange but peculiarly common behaviours like anger, immorality, stinginess, drunkenness, stubbornness, etc. They are all under the influence or control of their local territorial spirits. Therefore, they manifest negative territorial behaviours or characters.

The younger generation does not understand how these things have come to be. They do not know that wearing these tribal marks makes one come under the direct or indirect influence of these territorial spirits. Thank God, people are getting more civilized and rejecting these marks. But in recent times, I have seen some four and five year-old kids wearing these marks. If you have a traditional mark on you, I want to suggest that you subject yourself to some cleansing ministrations, so that the hold of the territorial of your locality over you can be broken.

c. Incisions on the body

Carrying of incisions on different parts of the body is a sign of an ancient covenant. These things are stolen by the devil from the Bible. God said in Genesis 17, when He called Abraham that he would make His covenant with him and that it would be in his flesh. Every male child born unto Abraham and his seed was to be circumcised on the eighth day. God said, “Once you are circumcised you belong to me. My covenant is in your flesh.” In the same way, the devil makes sure that there is a covenant in the flesh of many people that belong to him. This is in form of tribal marks or incisions.

Once there is a mark which is not a circumcision mark on your body, you must ask questions from your parents. They may say, “Well, for your protection; you used to be very sickly when you were young, you used to faint”. The real fact is that they have given the enemy a foot-hold in your life. You are under a covenant.

Sermon Three

Title: Dealing with Territorial Strongholds by Pastor Sola Folaranmi³

Spiritual warfare is divided into two broad categories and we engage in spiritual warfare for these major reasons:

³ Sola Folaranmi, *Breaking the Satanic Horns of Oppression*, Lagos, 2006

1. For human emancipation
2. For territorial possession, deliverance and enlargement.

In bringing deliverance to our towns, cities, communities and nations, we need to fully understand how the enemy has penetrated, how far he has gone and the present effects of his activities. In using the term stronghold, we shall be applying it to a human entity Pharaoh, who symbolically represents vicious territorial powers and strongholds that keep multitudes in darkness and in involuntary captivity.

DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF THE TERM STRONGHOLD

According to II Corinthians 10 verse 4, the term stronghold (Greek: *Ochuroma*) means a fortress, a castle or a fortified place. Satan and his demons stay in fortified places against the invasion of the gospel.

Strongholds are the mindset of people in a particular territory. These mindsets are fortified places that keep out the truth and hold in lies.

A stronghold is also forceful stubborn argument, rationale, opinion, ideas of philosophy that is formed and resistant to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Mind-sets on the other hands is a combination of both mind and set. In other words, the mind is already settled on a set of beliefs and therefore resistance to change. The mind is fixed and rigid thereby becoming a stronghold.

This concept can also be defined as the thought processes of people groups who have developed way of thinking over centuries of time. For example, communism is a mind-set, capitalism and materialism are mind-sets. Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism are mind-sets. But strongholds and mind-set can be broken by a strong anointing and spiritual warfare.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF STRONGHOLDS

PERSONAL STRONGHOLDS

Personal strongholds are things that Satan builds to influence one's personal life: personal sin, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behavioural patterns. The Word of God warns us in Eph. 4:27 not to give the devil any foothold, but we do by allowing him to operate in our lives through things we love and do not want to get rid of. These strongholds are "holes in our armour" which can be closed by being humble and repentant. Watch out for things like bitterness, pride, etc. (Eph 4:13). When these things persist in our lives, we are to go for counseling and sometimes even for deliverance.

STRONGHOLDS OF THE MIND

Ed-Silvoso says that a stronghold of the mind is a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes the believer to accept as unchangeable something that he or she knows is contrary to the will of God. This can also be applied on a national level to nations.

From experience I have found that many black people are of the opinion that they cannot achieve anything, but this is contrary to the Word of God in Phil 4 : 13 that says that we can do *"all things through Christ who strengthens me"*.

OCCULTIC STRONGHOLDS

Occultic strongholds refer to satanic activities like witchcraft, Satanism, new age religions, etc; which invite evil spirits to operate. They work as power boosters to the territorial spirits that rule over geographic regions. In Acts 17: 21 & 32, it becomes clear that Diana at Ephesus influenced the whole of Asia, but her power was eventually broken by prayer, truth encounters and evangelism. In this case, the occult and a spirit of religion were very closely connected. In Africa, many of these Occultic strongholds exist, e.g., in Venda, young girls are offered in the "Holy Lake" and on high mountains.

SOCIAL STRONGHOLDS

A social stronghold refers to the oppression over city or designated areas in which social injustices, racism and poverty cause people to believe that God does not care about their needs.

TERRITORIAL STRONGHOLDS

These are caused and formed by idols and altars people of different communities raise to them

NATIONAL STRONGHOLDS

These types have to do with a collective or corporate belief in an entrenched lie that a false deity is the real God. E.g. Pharaoh of Egypt was referred like a god.

PHARAOH, KING OF EGYPT AS A STRONGHOLD

We shall be tackling this subject in the context of strategic level prayer warfare. To me, strategic level warfare is simply a deliberate and sustained offensive prayer battle aimed at certain crucial targets (strongholds) the overthrow or destruction of which will bring an enormous release and breakthrough to individuals, communities, cities and even nations. In the military, targeting of strategic targets is very crucial to winning a war very quickly. This possibly informed the reason why God, as a Man of war Himself had to instruct Moses to use the strategic weapons of prophetic prayers and prophetic actions to deal with the strategic targets (the gods and the power bases) of Egypt.

And afterward, Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. (Exodus 5: 1)

We know that Israel is the inheritance of the Lord. Israel as the possession of the Lord has been enslaved for 400 years in Egypt by Pharaoh, but at the fullness of time, God sent his men, Moses and Aaron to the court of Pharaoh to demand for their release. The Lord said He now wanted them for Himself. Enough of involuntary servitude and captivity. This bold demand caught Pharaoh by surprise and amazed him. He vehemently objected to the demand.

And Pharaoh said, who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, the God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray the, three days journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he

fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them, wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people front their works? Get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.

(Exodus 5:2-4)

This response of Pharaoh was very clear and unambiguous. He retorted: “Who is the Lord? I don't know Him why should I obey His voice to allow Israel to go? Go back and tell the God that sent you, I don't know Him and I shall not release Israel.” Now somebody who speaks like that knows what he is talking about. When somebody is defiant like that you know he is speaking from a position of strong confidence in something. Pharaoh knew where he was coming from; he knew the ancestral powers of Egypt, and the spiritual pillars (gods) that supported his throne. The Egyptian monarchs and other kings, ancient or modern, don't rule ordinarily. You see them on the throne, but there are other thrones behind their physical thrones. The physical throne is just an ordinary decorated chair in the palace. The real rulers are unseen spiritual entities which give them power and confidence to lord it over other men. When God heard Pharaoh's reply, He knew what Pharaoh was talking about and therefore did not take the threats and the insults of Pharaoh lightly. Therefore God declared in Chapter 12 verse 12b, “... *against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgement: I am the Lord.*” Also in chapter 6 verse 1-2, the Lord said unto Moses, “*now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord.*”

Pharaoh and all Egypt served a lot of territorial deities or you call them territorial spirits that gave them power and authority. This was the reason why God decided to take on the thrones behind his throne in an unprecedented strategic spiritual warfare that lasted several months.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRIT OF PHARAOH

It is a spirit of:

1. Oppression
2. Bondage
3. Captivity
4. Servitude
5. Deprivation
6. Wickedness
7. Defiance
8. Obstinacy
9. Arrogance
10. Sorcery
11. Witchcraft
12. Idolatry

The God of Israel was aware of all these and He needed to forcefully confront them before Israel could be free. Egypt was the earthly seat of Satan

The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight everyone against his brother, and everyone against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts. And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up.

And they shall turn the rivers far away; and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither for fish.

The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and everything sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more. The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish. Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, shall be confounded. (Isaiah 19: 1-9)

The battle for Israel's release had to be fought at three levels for an effective judgement and overthrow of the gods. The battle was fought: at the level of the waters; at the level of the land (earth); finally, at the level of the heavens (cosmic level warfare).

THE JUDGEMENT OF THE SERPENTS

The Egyptians served up to ten or twelve major gods. The first power to be confronted was the serpent. Egyptians worshipped serpentine spirits. When you get to the court of Pharaoh or you see the picture of ancient Pharaohs on top of their crown, you will see the head of a serpent with its fangs sticking out indicating their submission to the serpentine spirits. It was a national symbol.

God then instructed Moses to take his divine rod, which now can turn a super- serpent anytime to Pharaoh's palace for a power encounter with Egypt's serpentine god. Moses dropped down the rod and it became a serpent. Pharaoh merely scoffed at Moses and commanded his astrologers, enchanters and the magicians to do the same. All those men also dropped their rods and they also became serpents in the palace of Pharaoh. But God always proves Himself to be the God of dominion. As those serpents moved up and down the palace, the dominion serpent of Moses opened its mouth and swallowed up the serpents of the magicians! Moses took up his own snake and it turned back into a rod! What happened was a divine judgement against serpentine spirit of Egypt. God dealt with that spirit and Pharaoh couldn't draw power from the snakes anymore.

THE MARINE BATTLE

Then God ordered Moses to go to the Nile and stretch his rod over the Nile so that the waters of Egypt could become blood. The Nile was worshipped by the Egyptians, they called it the 'Father of life', *Osiris*. The water was worshipped because Nile was the major river in the land. The Nile and other water bodies of Egypt were a haven for marine spirits.

In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt: Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee,

Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales. (Ezek 29:1-4)

At two separate instances the Lord told Moses to get up early in the morning and meet Pharaoh as he went to the waters.

Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; Lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. (Exodus 7: 15)

And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; 10, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (Exodus 8:20)

One may ask, "What was Pharaoh going to do at the river?" Certainly not to bathe, because there were several swimming pools and baths in the palace; rather, he got up early in the morning to draw power from marine spirits at his marine altar. When Pharaoh did not bulge, Moses went to the river and stretched forth his rod upon the river and everything became blood. For about seven days, all the waters of Egypt became blood. A type of the blood of Jesus had been employed to poison and suffocate all the marine lives that inhabited their water bodies. The blood of Jesus judged all of them. Thus, the marine power-base of Pharaoh was neutralized.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. (Exodus 7: 19 – 21).

One after the other, in a systematic but strategic way, the Lord began to take out all the other gods of Egypt from the frog to lice, flies, cattle, boils to locusts. All these symbols of Egyptians gods were employed to destroy the gods themselves. At one time, the Egyptians tried as usual to duplicate that which Moses was doing by invocation and high-level enchantments, but they couldn't do it. Then, they turned to Pharaoh and said to him: "now this is the finger of God". Because of this, Pharaoh then began to think of and believe the existence of a bigger and stronger God somewhere. He then started to make concessions. He began to feel the pressure. It is just like the former President of Yugoslavia who insisted that Kosovo would not have independence. He vowed "I cannot sign any agreement, I don't want any foreign troop on my soil, NATO will not come to Yugoslavia. God forbid." He was resolute. But after 87 days of heavy bombardments, he capitulated. Kosovo was liberated.

A LIVING TESTIMONY

A younger brother of mine who is a pastor shared with me a most fascinating story of how this principle of strategic level prayer warfare was applied to deal with an age long problem of

sudden and mysterious deaths of people in a river in his station in one of the towns in Nigeria. The river was not quite deep as to be able to easily drown people, but yet people drown and disappear in the river from time to time. So himself and other intercessors and pastors took up the challenge in prayer and fasting. The Lord then instructed them to go and anoint the river and pour Holy Communion wine inside it to judge the wicked marine spirit causing the death of innocent people. They obeyed the Lord to the letter. A few days after this secret operation, a big, black entity like a man furiously came out of the water very early in the morning, hissing and humming to the king's palace to lodge a complaint of serious disturbance of his water domain, and that he was relocating to another place! He angrily left the palace never to return to the river again. Since then, no death had been reported in that river again. The blood of Jesus is a very potent weapon in dealing with marine spirits.

THE BATTLE AT THE LAND LEVEL

And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. (Exodus 9:22-27)

This was a very crucial stage of the battle against the territorial strongholds of Egypt. The Lord employed the strategic weapons of hail, thunder and fire for the total destruction of all land, forest and mountain-based altars and the spirits that lived in them. This divine 'military' action effectively neutralized the territorial power base of Pharaoh.

COSMIC LEVEL WARFARE

The next god to be judged was *Ra* - the sun god. The Egyptians for centuries and from ancient times have spiritually explored the heavens through diabolical means. This gave them an unusual, but early knowledge of astrology, mathematics and certain sacred sciences. The sun, the moon and the stars were the major sources of this unusual advanced knowledge. So the Egyptians worshipped and served them. God was very well aware of this. Therefore in a battle strategy never known in history, God employed the weapon of "thick darkness that can be felt" to deal with astral altars of the Egyptians.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. (Exodus 10:21-24)-

By this action the satanic transmission and network between the heavens and the earth of Egypt was broken. The astral altars and their information spirits were dislodged. Pharaoh became totally isolated and vulnerable. Fear and desperation set in.

THE KILLING OF THE FIRST BORN

This last stage of the battle shifted from dealing with inanimate objects to the killing of real human beings. God, as we know always have strategic reasons for all His actions.

And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger. (Exodus 11: 4-8)

And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, go swerve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men... And the children of Israel of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians. (Exodus 12: 29 – 36).

THE RELEASE

Every first born of Egypt was worshipped as an inheritor of family inheritance. There in the first born was deposited all the familiar and ancestral spirits of different generations. The first-born was literally worshipped and counted as a god. The first born was regarded as very sacred and God knew this because He had said, “I will kill all the first-born of Egypt”. In the middle of the night, the Bible says the angel of death went forth and smote the entire first-born of Egypt. There was a great cry throughout the length and breadth of Egypt. There was not a house where there was not a dead person. From the first born of Pharaoh on the throne to the first born of the prisoner in the dungeon, all were dead. Pharaoh got up to mourn and all the elders of Egypt came to him and said, ‘we are all dead. Let these men go.’ The king sent for Moses in the middle of the night and said, 'You people can go.' Finally, there was freedom. Reason? Because all the territorial strongholds were judged. This principle still applies in today's spiritual warfare for territorial emancipation. Israel left Egypt in pride, loaded with plenty of silver and gold. When strongholds are destroyed people have freedom, joy, progress, silver and gold.

THE POWER OF STRATEGIC PRAYER

To close this chapter, I'll like to share one wonderful testimony of a notable victory that came as a result of strategic prayer warfare. In the year 1986, I was in Amsterdam, Holland, for Amsterdam '86 evangelistic conference organized by Evangelist Billy Graham for itinerant evangelists. About 10,000 of us from all over the world attended. After two weeks of intensive training, Billy Graham gave everyone a sachet of 100 gospel tracts and asked buses (coaches) to take us to different parts of Holland for evangelism. I was to go to a beach town with a lot of seaside resort. In my team was a friend, Rev. Francis Wale-Oke of the Sword of the Spirit Ministries, who I think was the only other Nigerian in that team. We were under strict instructions not to return with a single tract. The 100 tracts must be given out to unbelievers.

We prayed as the buses took us to the place. On arrival, our musical team set up their instruments near the sea. There, some people were sunbathing and doing all sorts of things. We entertained them with different tunes. They didn't even look at our direction because when you go to Europe and America, it is another story for evangelism. We left the place and went to the shopping malls to distribute our tracts. I met the first person, and said, "Jesus loves you, we are from different parts of the world, I'm from Africa, and this is about Jesus." She looked at me and said, "I don't want Jesus! I don't want Jesus!" Then she started running away. I located another man and told him, "Jesus loves you, have this tract". He took the tract, looked and saw, 'The Name of Jesus, the Way to Salvation', he threw the tract back on my face as if I gave him a letter-bomb and started running. I went inside the shopping mall and said, 'Good day ladies and gentlemen, I am an evangelist, have this, it is about Jesus and all that.' "No! No! No!" they screamed at me, and threatened to call the police. I had to quickly hurry out!

For about 30 minutes, I was roaming around, no one accepted my tracts. I then remembered Africa. If you gave a tract to somebody even if he doesn't want to read it, yet out of respect and courtesy, he would collect it, when you turn your back, he may then tear it. But here are people who run away from tracts! What do you do? I didn't know that territorial spirits and marine spirits were in operation. So, I prayed for what to do. Some of our team mates who experienced what I was experiencing either tore their tracts or just threw them off and were ready to go back. You know not all Christians are faithful, but I was eager to obey the man of God. As I was thinking about what to do, tears rolled down my eyes. I said to myself in pity: "100 tracts, in 30 minutes, nobody has collected a single one. What's the guarantee that I will give the 100 out?" As I looked up, I saw Rev. Francis Wale-Oke coming towards me crest - fallen. I asked Rev. Wale, what the matter was. He replied, "Moses, have you given anyone your tracts?" I said not a single one has been accepted. His story was the same. Suddenly, he said, "we are Africans and Nigerians, we are prayer warriors, you know what you used to teach about territorial spirits. Let's do the practical here". It clicked in my spirit. Instantly, I remembered that this was a marine environment, and that marine spirits were interfering with the gospel.

The heaven was closed. The atmosphere was blocked. Men were hardened because of the influence of territorial spirits. We dropped our bags, joined our hands together and exercised authority. We prayed like crazy men, African kind of prayer in a European environment! We screamed in that cold winter. After some minutes of strategic warfare over the marine waters, the marine spirits, and other territorial elements, we opened the minds of men to the gospel. After we had a release in the spirit we took our bags and went back to places we were coming from.

Unbelievable! The first woman I talked to about the love of Jesus, retorted back, “You mean Jesus loves me?” “This is the first time somebody is telling me that. What do you have for me?” I gave her a tract which attracted about three other people who even demanded for more. I went back to the same store where they had earlier driven me out and said, “I have come back - Jesus loves you.” They said in unison “what do you have for us?” I opened my bag, and several people joyfully accepted many of my tracts. Within 20 minutes, all my 100 tracts were gone! As I was leaping back to base, Rev. Wale-Oke was also returning back smiling, and laughing. He said, “Rev. Moses, all my tracts are gone. Glory be to God!” What happened? We dealt with the influence of marine spirits of that environment and then the heavens were opened for men to be saved. Men who looked cold, impervious, hardened and adamant suddenly opened up because the influence of these spirits over them was broken. The same people, the same place, the same tracts, the same evangelists. The difference was that we targeted our prayers accurately. Now, if we had joined our hands and prayed like this religiously: “O Lord, we want all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of Jesus. O Lord, these people are perishing, let them take our tracts.” If we pray like that, nothing would have happened. Strategic prayers will work wonders.

Sermon Four

Title: Release from Curses by Pastor Sola Akorede⁴

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

INTRODUCTION

Curses are usually issued as a repercussion to breaking of covenants. A lot of people who have unconsciously entered into evil covenants sometimes break the covenants thus releasing themselves from the attendant, curses. How do such people receive freedom? The evil covenants should be broken and they should obtain release from the attendant curses.

Curses are the direct opposite of blessings. When you curse, you utter a wish of evil against a person, a thing or a group of persons.

To curse is to cause mischief or injury to come upon a person. To curse is to bind a person with a spell, like witches do. To curse is to engage in violent expression of evil against others.

Curses are words put together to torment a person with great calamity.

When we look at curses and study their evil effects on mankind, we find that they have been vehicles of many problems.

A curse is an invisible barrier that keeps people away from what God has for them.

You know that no one wants to be cursed, but we all desire to be blessed. This is why men quickly give approval when blessed and quickly withdraw when cursed.

⁴ Sola Akorede, *Release from Curses*, Sphinx: Ibadan, 2004

When hidden curses are in place, you find yourself taking the wrong decision, and the spirit of failure will go into operation. The heart will become polluted, even as unexplainable sorrow begins to happen. Strange thoughts and desires will come into place. The person will go from one problem to the other and things will go wrong at the edge of success.

HOW CURSES OPERATE

A person operating under a curse is easy to recognize, because he will be struggling against something, which he is unable to overcome. At the point of success, frustration comes in because the person has been placed under a curse and it is limiting him, so he stops when he gets to a certain level.

If a curse is placed upon a person that he or she will not advance beyond secondary school education all attempts by such a person to pass university entrance examinations will prove abortive. All efforts will be frustrated because there is a force in operation which is acting as an invisible barrier to prevent the person from moving forward.

Curses bring an evil influence which could result in all kinds of evil things. They can lead to chronic frustration and problems. They can be transferred to a person's possession. They can also be transferred from parents to children.

EFFECTS OF CURSES

1. Curses Have Long Lasting Effects:

They can run from generation to generation. The curse on Jericho was not broken until 300 - 500 years after it was issued. When Prophet Elijah, the man of God came, he identified the problem, and broke the curse. And so shall all evil curses be broken, in Jesus' name.

2. Curses Have Catastrophic Effects:

A person should never hesitate to release himself from the evil effects of any curse.

3. Curses Act Like A Kind Of Shield:

They protect evil spirits and give them legal grounds to operate.

SOURCES OF CURSES

1. Curses can come from so many sources.

If a curse comes upon a person from God, then the person needs to repent and move away from what he was doing, that brought the curse which only God can remove. All curses from God are as a result of disobedience. God was the first person to place a curse on a person in the Bible. He placed it upon Adam and Eve when they ate the forbidden fruit. It is still the same thing today. Every disobedience invites curses from God and only He can remove them.

2. Curses can come from satanic agents, evil prophets, parents, etc.

LAWS GOVERNING CURSES

There are many spiritual laws in the Bible that cannot be broken.

The Bible talks about the law of faith. This law says you have to believe before you can receive.

The Bible talks about the law of life and the law of sin and death.

1. **A curse does not come without a cause.** Proverbs 26:2 says, *"As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come."* An undeserved curse will not come unless a person tolerates it. This means that when there is no landing space, no welcome, nothing to feed upon, a curse cannot come and stay in the life of a person. When there is a reason, the curse can come. This means that nothing can take root unless there is an underlying just reason. There must be a reason why the curse is staying there.
2. **Unless a curse is broken, it continues to operate.**
3. **Curses are spiritual and should be solved like that.** A curse is a spiritual problem and can only be solved by spiritual means, not by natural means.
4. **Sins allow curses to stay.** Where sins remain, curses remain. For complete freedom there must be complete repentance.
5. **Demons enforce and propagate curses.** There is no curse without a demon attached to it. It is the demon attached to the curse that will make sure that terrible things happen to the cursed person. A person under a curse may find it hard to take progressive steps. If such a person intends to secure a visa for further studies abroad, for example, the demon will ensure that he does not get it. And if the person succeeds in going abroad, the same demon will ensure the deportation of the person.
6. **Christ has redeemed us from curses by substitution.** He made himself a curse for us. A Man who knew no sin was nailed to the Cross and by His death on the cross and the blood that was shed, we are redeemed from all curses. Galatians 3: 13 & 14.
7. **An unjust curse will return to the sender.** If someone has issued a curse without a reason, it will go back to him.
8. **You cannot bless whom God has cursed.** Cursing whom God has blessed earns the person issuing the curse a divine curse in return. So, do not curse whom God has blessed.
9. **A curse does not affect a child of God.** A curse cannot affect a child of God, who is walking in obedience.
10. **A curse can be acquired unconsciously.** You may not know. When a person is under the influence of a curse, normal prayers will not break the curse. There are thousands of people for whom all known spiritual activities seem inadequate to influence a change, or bring a halt to their suffering. Many are fighting a battle they did not initiate. Hidden curses are a source of real problem. Hidden curses can arise when evil covenants are unconsciously broken.

HOW HIDDEN CURSES COME
WHEN A PERSON BREAKS THE MARRIAGE VOW

When you break the vow and covenant of a marriage, you set a curse in motion. This is the reason why many are suffering today. When a woman leaves her husband and marries a rich man, or a man leaves his wife and marries a younger woman, a curse is set in motion.

When a man has five wives, all the others except the first one are under curses. Young girls who go around with married men are placing themselves under curses; because when the angel wants to bring their own husbands, they will turn back when they see the married men they are illegally hooked to. Married men running around with married women are under a curse. All curses from married women against husband snatchers work like fire. It does not matter whether the women are born again or not. If you are- going out with a married man and the wife at home is a witch, any curse she issues against you will surely thrive, whether you are born again or not

CURSES COME WHEN YOU TREAT OTHERS UNFAIRLY

When a woman sponsors a man to school, and the man turns round to dump the woman after his graduation, the curse from the frustrated woman will blossom. When you refuse to obey your elders for whatever reason, curses come into place. When you disobey a rightful leader, the same thing happens. If a woman that comes from a rich family tries to disparage her poor husband, curses will come in place. Women should not look down on their husbands.

SEXUAL IMMORALITY

You may have forgotten about it. That is why the Bible has two words for sex, i.e. 'laid' and 'knew his wife.' While the first one (laid) is negative, the second word (knew his wife) is positive. When the Bible says, "laid with him", it means fornication or adultery. When the Bible says, "knew his wife", that is the right thing. All the wrong kinds of sex bring curses.

A man that could not get any breakthrough came for deliverance. Three girls turned up in the spirit realm carrying small glasses containing liquid materials. They said, "We trapped him when he was in the university because he was going out with the three of us at the same time." They disclosed that they collected things from his body which they kept in a container under the water. So, there was no way he could prosper. A man might be running up and down, without knowing that curses have been issued on him.

A man using his money to buy sex is under a curse. Girls releasing themselves to be used as objects of satisfaction to men in order to get a job, promotion, accommodation etc., come under curses.

A woman permitting herself to be abused sexually because of money comes under a curse.
A father sleeping with his daughter, or a mother sleeping with her son, comes under curses.

People sleeping with animals, their brother's wives or their sister's husbands come under curses.

A man places himself under a curse when he sleeps with his father's wife.

Fathers sleeping with their step-daughters or parents entertaining guests with their daughters or using their daughters to get contracts, or husbands using their wives for business also remain cursed.

Leviticus 19:29, says, "*Do not prostitute thy daughters.*"

Pasting pictures of naked women on the wall, or buying calendars and magazines with such pictures puts a person under a curse.

Curses from sexual immorality are the strongest curses and very difficult to break. They can take weeks to break during the deliverance of such a cursed person. That is why the Bible says that God is not too worried about sins outside the body as He is worried about sins in the body, i.e. fornication and adultery.

THE WEALTH OF SORROW

The Bible says the blessing of the Lord "*maketh rich without adding sorrow to it.*" That means there is a wealth you can get that will add sorrow to it. All wealth by unrighteous means puts people under a curse. Bribery or stealing the wealth of the dead invites curses. There are so many relatives who let the wives and the children suffer, because as soon as a husband dies, they just come and cart away his property. Such in-laws come under a curse. If you are here and you want to share the property of the dead, you have to be very careful not to get involved.

A man died and his relatives carried away everything he had. The wife begged that they should leave the fridge so that she could be selling iced water and minerals to be able to look after the children, but they refused to listen to her. They have all come under a curse, including those who took just bathroom slippers.

There are also curses on policemen and 'sympathizers' who search the dead and accident victims and take away their money.

All those who sell polluted drug capsules and tablets are under a curse.

Whenever the innocent is pronounced guilty, those who gave the judgement come under a curse.

When you murder someone by witchcraft, you come under a curse.

A woman thought her husband did not love her, so she gave him a love medicine which he ate and died. The woman comes under a curse.

False acquisition of land, shedding of innocent blood, building houses on lands acquired falsely, and murderous actions for quick wealth, attract definite curses.

PARENTAL CURSES. This should not be overlooked.

SHEDDING OF INNOCENT BLOOD.

All abortions invite curses of frustrations.

A woman gave birth to a child and when she met a man who wanted to marry her, she killed the child since the man did not want to see him. Such an act attracts an automatic curse. The same thing goes for people who have babies only to dump them in unholy and deserted places.

EVIL ACQUISITION

Purchasing stolen items on which a curse has been placed. This is why any Christian who buys any second hand material must anoint and pray over it. For example, a car was stolen in Belgium from somebody who sweated for 15 years to buy it. When that car was stolen, he removed his clothes and placed a curse on whosoever will use the car. The car was brought to Nigeria and the curse will be transferred to whoever buys it.

CURSES ISSUED BY SATANIC AGENTS

Such spirits are sent to do harm. The person cursed will be doing bad things, and will chase away good people who would have helped him.

UNCONSCIOUS SELF-IMPOSED CURSES

People curse themselves every day without knowing it. A woman used to say, "my poor legs, my poor legs" and eventually those legs developed problems. Negative words directed at one-self is a curse.

TOUCHING UNCLEAN THINGS, OR ANYTHING DEDICATED TO SATAN

All things that the Bible lists as unclean should not be touched by a believer. When things are like this, there can be mental and physical illness; there can be failure, profitless hard work, defeat, poverty, and family breakup. Even when there is plenty of money coming in, the cursed person is broke.

Corruption of the reproductive organs, chronic sicknesses, bad reputation, and oppression are some of the end products of an accursed life. When the situation is like this, you need to break the curse. I want you to know that God wants us to live a curse-free life.

STEPS TO BREAK HIDDEN CURSES

1. Deal with the curse.
2. Deal with the power behind the curse.
3. Reverse the curse.

STEPS TO RELEASE YOURSELF

1. Repent from all known sins particularly those concerning evil covenants.
2. Renounce the sins of your forefathers.
3. Accept God's forgiveness and forgive yourself.
4. Forgive all those who have ever offended you. Do not bear grudges.
5. Renounce all contacts with any cursed or false religion.
6. Destroy all evil and polluted materials.
7. Release yourself from the curses with aggressive prayer.
8. Cast out the demon behind the curse by saying, "I command every demon of the curse to leave me now in Jesus' name."
9. Claim blessings to replace past curses.
10. Give thanks to God for setting you free. '

When you have done all these, you must stop walking in the paths of unrighteousness. You must walk in the path where you will be blessed. God has a solution to every problem.

With God all things are possible. He has made provision for our freedom. He is the only one that applies divine solution to the sources of the problems of our life. Elisha applied the salt of heaven to the source of the river of a city that looked good on the surface but dead within. Salt is a purifier, a preserver and a seasoner. So it is important to pray that God, the salt preserver of our life, should season our life with His salt. He should also pour His heavenly salt into the foundation of our life so that all curses can be completely broken.

Please, put all your strength into praying the following prayer points.

PRAYER SECTION

1. I refuse to drink from the fountain of sorrow, in Jesus' name.
2. I take authority over all curses issued against my life, in the name of Jesus.
3. Ask God to remove any curse he has placed on your life as a result of disobedience.
4. I command any demon attached to any curse to depart from me now, in the mighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
5. Let all curses issued against me be converted to blessings, in the name of Jesus.
6. When you mention any of the under-listed curses, you will aggressively say, "Be broken, be broken, be broken, in the name of Jesus. I release myself from you, in the name of Jesus."
 - Every curse of mental and physical sickness
 - Every curse of failure and defeat
 - Every curse of poverty
 - Every curse of family break-up
 - Every curse of oppression
 - Every curse of bad reputation
 - Every curse of personal destruction or suicide
 - Every curse of chronic sickness •
 - Every curse of corruption of the reproductive organ
 - Every curse of family strife
 - Every curse of profitless hard work
 - Every curse of evil dedication
 - Every curse of sickness and infirmity
 - Every curse of witchcraft.

Sermon Five

Title: Deliverance from Evil Altar by Revd. Dr. D. K. Olukoya⁵

This message is entitled: Deliverance from Evil Altars. Please listen very carefully and as we go on pray each prayer point as if it is the last one you are going to pray.

There is this very interesting story in 1 Samuel 7:7- 11.

"And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto

⁵ D.K. Olukoya, *Release From Destructive Covenants*, Lagos, 1997

the LORD our God for us that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar.”

There was a problem. The enemies of the children of Israel had come against them. So they went to Samuel to cry to God on their behalf. Samuel immediately went to the altar. The Philistines made a great mistake and the Lord thundered with a very great thunder against them, the enemies of Israel.

The Holy Ghost has trained many of us in the school of experience. The school of experience is a very expensive school. Unfortunately, these days the deceived and the deceivers are multiplying. But thank God we can be part of that overcoming army that will go forth in overcoming power. The only way to take the kingdom is by force. Satan and his demons will not give us our benefits without a battle. And it is time we stopped the kind of prayer life which eat the meat and the bones together. God wants us to eat the meat and leave out the bones. It is time to take off the veil and know the true name and fruits of the strongman so we can paralyze them.

The first question we may ask is, "What are altars?" Altars are designed for sacrifice; that is what they are made for. An altar is just not a decorative item. You can find this in Exodus 20:24. *“An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.”*

The Bible tells us how to make it. It can be made with the earth that is from sand or with unhewed stones, stones that have not been broken to pieces. Sometimes people make it with bricks and God does not like this kind of altar. Sometimes a natural rock that nobody has touched becomes an altar. In the Bible you will find altars raised unto God and altars raised for idol worship. When people are raising altars for idolatrous worship, God hates it with perfect hatred. When a king was sacrificing at the altar, God sent a prophet to speak against the altar. The prophet ignored all the people standing by the altar and faced the altar, showing the importance of that altar and the spiritual transaction going on there which the physical eyes could not see. But in the spirit a terrible transaction was going on.

A good Bible student would not be surprised that all the important men of God built altars to God. This is because an altar is a place of communication and fellowship.

Noah built an altar; Abraham built so many altars; Isaac built altars; Jacob built altars, Moses built altars; Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, all built altars. When at Mount Carmel Elijah declared war against the enemies of God, he told them to build their own altar and call upon their gods. When it got to his turn, Elijah built the altar of the Lord that had been broken down.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ALTARS

Altars can be positive or negative. Our prayer altars are positive altars. When someone says that his prayer altar is weak, that means his prayer life is nothing to write home about. When you say someone's holiness altar is weak, it means that although the person is holy he cannot withstand much of the works of the enemy. We have Jesus who died on the cross. That cross is an altar where the Son of God was sacrificed. The cross is a positive altar. Positive altars are altars raised to the living God for good purposes. Negative altars are altars raised by the enemy to steal, to kill and to destroy.

You can raise an altar to bless or to destroy, to improve or to demote, to promote or to put down. You can raise an altar to enhance or to frustrate. You can raise an altar for a particular person or for a set of people, those you like or those you do not like.

In the Old Testament, altars are built to destroy and to frustrate the enemies. In the passage we have read (1 Samuel 7:7-11), Samuel raised up an altar in the name of the Lord against the Philistines. God became angry with the Philistines and thundered against them from heaven. The altar fought the battle for Israel and it was practically a walk-over. Israel did not fight. God looked down and fought for his people against their enemies.

Many things that God has designed in the Bible to bless, the devil has their counterfeits. He can always make his own. Just like the cross of Jesus, you will see men and women dropping sacrifices at the crossroads. This is a corruption of the cross of Jesus.

Many problems of the black people can be directly linked to dark ministrations at altars. The enemy has erected satanic altars of affliction against many and these altars have priests of wickedness ministering regularly on them. You can ask, "How did the devil get to know about all these?" Don't forget, he was with God in the beginning. He saw the order of heaven and understood how things were run. He has now corrupted that order. He has taught his own people the secret of altars they are using for destructive purposes.

We are going to pray now. The prayer against destructive altars is not something you pray sleeping. It is a traffic of evil things which have been erected against a group of people and they are going up and down for the people's sake. Somebody says, "I bring the paper of sickness: you take it. He brings the paper of tuberculosis, you take it; even the paper of demotion." It is a traffic. It goes up and down, that is the dangerous thing about the altar.

The way things are going in this country now and the terrible way people are looking for money, they can do anything with anybody. Therefore it is not the time for believers to be praying sickly prayers against the enemy. You have to pray violently, with holy madness. Close your eyes and say the following prayer points:

1. Every satanic altar erected against me and my family be demolished by fire, in the name of Jesus.
2. Every vessel submitting my name to the altar be frustrated, in the name of Jesus.
3. I refuse to be a prisoner of any local altar, in the name of Jesus.

The devil has perverted the use of the altar and can now use it to steal, to kill and to destroy. Sometimes altars are made to make contact with wicked spirits. Sacrifices are put on such altars.

WHAT ARE SACRIFICES?

Sacrifices are foods given to wicked spirits to seek for their assistance. That is why the Bible says, "Do not eat food sacrificed to idols." If you eat it you are eating on the same table with the devil. The Bible says this because it wants to educate us that food sacrificed to idols is food for demons, and when you share food with demons, you go away with them. Wicked people put food on an altar and ask wicked spirits for assistance to afflict people.

Some of the things that we call migraine and headache are sometimes a result of demonic affliction. That is why before we do anything to our body we should pray. Even if you had so much faith in drugs you had better pray. We Christians rely on the Holy Spirit and angels to fight for us in the spirit world. When names are taken to the altar to monitor and influence people's lives and they do not know what is going on, it is as if someone is following them around and destroying anything that comes.

USES OF LOCAL ALTARS

I am not saying what I am saying to scare people. Many house-helpers, nannies and in-laws are altar priests, and agents passing information to other altar priests. They should not be brought in to your house without prayers. At the evil altar the spiritual life of a person can be easily monitored and assessed. Demons try to see whether they should waste their ammunition on you or not because there is no point shooting a corpse. When someone has been eaten up, what is the point in shooting him again? They use these altars as control instruments which cause problems for people. Tying a rope to the neck of a cock and mentioning a person's name in the process, and then putting the cock at the crossroads severely limits that person. When there is something good around and you move towards it, something else will prevent you from reaching it. These evil altars can dominate a person; they can tie him down so that he cannot have a mind of his own.

The altars can be used to manipulate a person and intimidate him with all kinds of nightmares and fears. They can be used to cause stubborn afflictions. Therefore they are not the kind of thing you look at and you say gentle prayers. It is the kind of thing you face, the way that the prophet in 1 Kings 13 did. He prophesied against an altar and destroyed it. That is the only way out.

LOCAL ALTARS

What are the kinds of local altars we have here that are used to destroy people?

1. Crossroads altars

These are a perversion of the cross of Jesus. Why the crossroads? The purpose at the crossroads is to be able to summon demons from the North, from the South, from the East and from the West together against the people.

If you get to your office in the morning and find a sacrifice there; it means that demons have been summoned to that place. If a crossroads sacrifice has been offered against you, you will be bombarded by afflictions, in every department of your life.

It doesn't matter whether you are born again unless you know your rights. If you are born again you have authority but if you do not have power you are still wasting time. If you see a police man on the way, his uniform is a sign of authority. If he tells a person to stop the person will stop as he recognizes his authority. When armed robbers come, though they see his authority, if he

has no power to assert that authority invested in him by government, they will kill him. It is like that. There is a difference between authority and power. If you are born again and you have not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit there is no power to back it up. Or if you just have the baptism of the Holy Spirit but you do not have fire and the enemies are offering sacrifices at the crossroads against you, you won't die or if you die you will go to heaven, but they would have denied you so many good things on earth.

You see this kind of sacrifice in a high class neighbourhood like Victoria Island, Lagos. You would have thought it can be found only in a slum area like Ajegunle, but you will also see it in Victoria Island. You will even see university lecturers carrying sacrifices to demonic altars. So where do we go from here? You would have said, oh this is caused by illiteracy, blaa, blaa, blaa. You will be surprised that university lecturers put sacrifices on the doors of one another.

2. Tree altars

This is another local altar. Examples of this are *Iroko* tree, pawpaw tree and banana tree. Sometimes enemies wrap pieces of cloth around these trees thus transforming them into altars. The cloth is tied around the person's life and his case is handed over to the tree demons, the witches and the wizards.

3. Rock altars

A sister who had been in the demonic world, got born again. Although she was in the demonic world she was also a prophetess, laying hands on people and prophesying. She said one day in the church she sat next to a woman, a fellow prophetess, and as they were chatting, the fellow prophetess told her, "My own power is greater than yours. Do not mess up with me." She said before she could say anything, the woman crossed her legs and the two of them found themselves inside a rock. There, she saw electronic equipment, refrigerators, rooms, etc. Then the woman cooked for her. They had left from a church service. A lot of things are happening that many of us cannot see. If many of us can see them, when I say pray, they will pray until they know that something has happened in the spirit realm. There is no extent that wicked people will not go if they do not like you.

4. Photograph altars

Wicked people can take away a wedding picture, a family picture or an individual's picture, put it somewhere, form an altar around it, and through it a person can be tormented, afflicted or even killed. They can use it to break a marriage or do all sorts of other evil things.

5. Image altars

A symbol is made to represent a person and whatever is done to that symbol happens to the person in the spirit. If it is given a terrible blow on the head the person will have a terrible headache. They may decide to give the terrible blow during an examination. That is why you find some children falling ill during the examination period. They are perfectly okay till it is almost time for the examination, then they have headache, stomach ache etc. There is a symbol in the spirit world and it has been used as an altar. A small shop can be constructed to represent where somebody is selling. Whatever is done to that shop happens to the shop in the physical.

6. Reporting altars

In this case a person's name is chanted all day long or regularly at the altar. Such a person may be hearing his name but would not know who is calling him. All that is expected is for him to answer even once and he is in serious trouble.

7. Clothing altars

The enemy can do all kinds of things to someone through his clothes. They can use the clothes to put all kinds of skin diseases on a person. If at one time or the other someone tore a piece of your clothes, or stole your underwear or some things else and you do not know where they are, you need to pray hard.

8. River altars

These are altars served by river demons. They sit on people's lives and keep them submerged.

9. Forest altars

Enemies go to forest altars at night. A lot of people do not know that when they are sleeping at night their enemies are busy working and planning against them in the forest. They go there to chant people's names.

10. Altars of body parts

A person's finger nail, hair, or placenta can be taken away, and the enemy would build an altar around it and use it against the person.

11. Astral altars

There are people who speak evil words against people's stars. They programme words of destruction against a person's star and they will affect the person negatively.

12. Altars of evil transfers

Enemies transfer people's virtues using satanic priests and evil thieves that are around.

13. Family shrine

Any family that has an idol or a shrine has an altar. Through that altar the whole members of the family can be monitored.

I was praying for a sister and felt so sorry for her. Her mother-in-law brought an idol all the way from Edo State into the sitting room of the woman and her husband. She protested strongly that they were Christians and did not believe in such things. The mother-in-law told her to shut up or she would send her packing from her matrimonial home. Then she worshipped the idol for three months before she carried it back to Edo state. All that the mother-in-law did was to create a traffic of demons inside that house, so that if she needs anything from the house all she has to do is to contact her demons.

A lot of prayers and deliverance have to be done for that house to get rid of what she brought. I asked why the husband did not remove the idol. She said as soon as it was brought into the house it seemed as if the husband became a fool, as if he had never been going to church.

14. Physical altars

Someone was kidnapped and dragged to a physical altar to be killed. He did not know what happened to him that morning. He looked for his Daily Guide and found that his son had thrown it into the dustbin. He got angry and started shouting. His wife tried to pacify him, saying he should pick it out and have his quiet time. He started shouting at her as well. He did not have his quiet time and he left the house angrily. At the bus stop someone moved close to him and slapped him on the shoulder. He followed the man into a bush and there was a satanic priest there, with human parts on the floor round an altar. He called the name of Jesus, and the people began to get confused. They released him quickly. A man in a white garment appeared and shook his hand, and he then found himself in Lagos.

15. Altars of curses

Sometime ago, a man entered a bus. He was supposed to pay N15. He took the old N1 which looks like the present N10, added N5 to it and gave to the driver. Suddenly the trick was discovered but when the driver asked who gave him the money that was no longer in use, no one owned up. Everyone denied. The man too said it was not him. The driver got angry, parked his vehicle, and brought out a horn under his seat. Inside the horn was a viper's tooth. He took the viper's tooth out, mixed it with saliva, touched his mouth and said, "Before I start speaking, who gave me this money?" The man who gave the money was afraid and said nothing. The driver then began to rain terrible curses: "This person will bury his children," all kinds of terrible curses. When he finished he folded the illegal money, closed his eyes and threw it into the forest. Then he said, "Just as I have thrown this money away this man will never find prosperity." Later what the driver said began to happen. The man's first son got "F9 parallel" in the school certificate examination, that is, he failed in all the subjects. But when he was promoted to form five, he had got 'A' in all the 8 subjects in the exam. When the man realized his mistake he went to look for the driver. But the driver reminded him that he had thrown the cursed money into the forest, and he could not find it. Then this man ran to Jesus.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Christian's life is a life of spiritual warfare. If Jesus, the purest man that ever lived, had enemies, it is certain that we are going to have them.

When you talk about warfare there are different strategies. You could lay ambush for somebody, it could be a frontal attack, it could be a night attack, and it could be a constant bombardment from afar. But it can be terrible if you are fighting a war you do not understand.

I watched an American film entitled *Vietnam* and I almost cried. America brought a lot of sophisticated weapons to *Vietnam* but the Vietnamese were hiding on trees. The Americans did not understand the war. They did not know who to shoot. So they just shot indiscriminately and a lot of lives were wasted.

As a Christian if you do not understand the war you are fighting you will be rendered useless. God has the capacity to reduce our enemies to helpless creatures in seconds, and the most impossible situations we might face give us the greatest opportunities for God to show himself mightily. God can use many unusual methods to give us victory. Sometimes things may get worse before they start getting better. You might be complaining, "I don't know, instead of things getting better they are getting worse." Sometimes it has to be like that because many enemies have already entered and they have to be drained out. The more the enemy boasts

against a child of God, the greater his fall shall be. Say this confession to yourself powerfully, "The more the enemy shall boast against me, the greater his fall shall be."

WAY OUT

What are we going to do now? How do we deal with the evil altars?

- *Recognize their operations.*
- *Repent of anything you have done to make any evil altar to prosper.*
- *Renounce them whether you know about them or not.* There is no point in saying that we do not have them in our family, unless we are not black people.
- *Resist them using the word of God and prayer.*
- *Kill the priest at the altar.* There must be some wicked priests being used against you. This is what we call slay their priests or kill their prophets.
- *Withdraw your name, your benefits and your virtues from the altars.*
- *Destroy the altar by cursing it, introducing the fire of God upon it.* Call the East wind upon it. Call the divine hurricane of God to blow it away.
- *Give praises to God.*

Let me ask this question: Do you want to deal with evil altars? You should not care to know who is erecting the altars or why they are erected, what you need to know is that we have a God who can disgrace any evil altar.

PRAYER SECTION

Every prayer against evil altars has to be said loudly, with violence, with faith and with an aggressive spirit. I hope we understand this. We are working against some terrible things, which we have to paralyze. If you are not going to pray it this way it is better to keep quiet.

1. I render every aggressive altar impotent, in the name of Jesus.
2. Every evil altar erected against me be disgraced, in Jesus' name.
3. Anything done against my life under demonic anointing be nullified, in the name of Jesus. You will now issue the curse of God on every evil altar fashioned against you.
4. I curse every local altar fashioned against me, in the name Jesus.
5. Let the hammer of the Almighty God smash every evil altar erected against me in Jesus name.

If you have ever stepped on any sacrifice or you have found one outside your door in the morning you have to pray this one with double aggression.

6. Lord, send Your fire to destroy every evil altar fashioned against me, in the name of Jesus.

This next prayer point you are about to pray now is a serious one. You can pray and let God direct His hands wherever He wants to direct them.

7. Every evil priest ministering against me at the evil altar receive the sword of God, in the name of Jesus.
8. Let the thunder of God smite every evil priest working against me on the evil altar and burn them to ashes, in the name of Jesus.

9. Let every satanic priest ministering against me at evil altars fall down and die, in the name of Jesus,
When the prophet of God spoke against the altar, where King Jeroboam stood to burn incense, what happened? The king wanted to lay hold on him, and his hand dried up.
10. Any hand that wants to retaliate or arrest me because of all these prayers I am praying, dry up and wither in the name of Jesus,
Sing one song of praise to God violently, especially if you know your prayers have been answered.
11. Every stubborn evil altar priest, drink your own blood, in the name of Jesus.
12. I possess my possession stolen by the evil altar in Jesus' name. (You are going to withdraw seven things from every evil altar. Please, lay your hands on your head.)
13. I withdraw my name from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.
14. (Transfer the hand to your chest.) I withdraw my blessings from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.
15. (Take the hand back to your head.) I withdraw my breakthroughs from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.
16. I withdraw my glory from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.
17. (Transfer the hand to your chest.) I withdraw my prosperity from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.
18. (One hand on the head, the other one on the chest.) I withdraw anything representing me from every evil altar, in Jesus' name.
19. Mention the organ that you know is not behaving the way it should. When you have done this begin to say, I withdraw you from every evil altar. Say this seven hot times.

Sermon Six

Title: The Trap of Blood Covenant by Pastor Isaiah Olatunji ⁶

INTRODUCTION:

One of the worst things that can happen to a person is for him to be in a cage and not know that he is. The day a mad man begins to see that his clothes are dirty, that day he is healed. But if he is ironing his dirty clothes and tearing them, then the madness is increasing. Added to this is the fact that a man, who has been locked up in a police cell, with the key in the pocket of the police, cannot release himself without the key. The person who will release-him will have to come from outside.

THE BLOOD

I am talking about the Blood Covenant Trap, and straightaway I will read from Ezekiel 16:6,
“And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.”
Blood can be polluted.

Leviticus 17: 11,

⁶ Akin Olatunji, *The Blood Covenant*, Lagos, 2002

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”

So it is a divine decision that blood will make atonement for the soul. The Bible also says, *“Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.”* When Adam fell, God Himself had to slaughter an animal and used the skin to clothe him and his wife thus passing through the blood line again.

Leviticus 17: 14, says,

“For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.”

So the Bible says that life is in the blood. When God created man in the beginning, after he had moulded him from the clay and it was just sitting down lifeless, the Lord breathed into his nostrils. That breath made man a living soul, so that the life and the soul of man are inside the blood.

So, the blood is one of the mysterious things created by the Almighty God. Another mysterious thing created is water, and all of us reading this book, about 70 per cent of our body is water. Right from the beginning of the Bible, we find the Spirit of the living God moving upon the waters.

Another mysterious creation of God is fire. Nobody really understands how it works.

Electricity, like the blood, is also a mysterious creation. I John 5:8,

“And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”

This is a very deep and mysterious verse, as it shows the importance of the blood.

God spoke other things into being, but He created man with His own hands and the Bible says, *“We are fearfully and wonderfully made”* God breathed some of His life into man and that life is held in the blood. Therefore, man is more wonderful than the angels who have no flesh or blood.

Those who studied medicine, tell us that blood is a living liquid, it is alive. It is the blood that carries oxygen from our lungs to all parts of the body; that is, as you are breathing in and out, the air you are breathing eventually goes into your blood and your blood circulates it throughout the body. It is the same blood that conveys the food you eat to various parts of the body. It is the same blood that maintains your body temperature and that is why it is constant. It is the same blood that helps to excrete waste materials from the body. Blood is an agent of purification. It is the same blood that helps you to maintain the water content of your body.

Inside the blood, there are things you could call security agents. There are tiny tiny cells which constantly attack sickness and weakness in the blood. So, blood gives you protection. The same blood can serve as an emergency first aid material. It is the power plant of the body. Medical people tell us that each cell in the body receives new blood every 50 seconds; so the blood is a

very powerful equipment and instrument. In spite of the great advancement in medicine blood is still not yet fully understood; so if you see a person losing blood, he is dying instalmentally.

Because of this powerful nature of the blood and the spiritual materials attached to it, the Bible says the following about it:

1. Eating of blood is forbidden; Gen 9:4; Acts 15:20. So believers are expected to drain the blood off the animals they want to eat.
2. Shedding of blood is forbidden.
3. Defiling the land with blood is forbidden.
4. Any time innocent blood is shed, punishment always follows. The Jews themselves know that blood cannot be shed in vain. When that man came to David and said, "I killed Saul", he thought David would rejoice. Rather David said, "With your own mouth you have condemned yourself. Why is it that you are not afraid to touch the Lord's anointed? Kill him and let his blood be upon his own head."

When Jesus appeared before Pilate and he said, "This man has not done anything, leave him alone"; the Jews said, "No, crucify Him." He said again, "But He has done nothing." Yet they said, "Crucify Him and let His blood be upon us and upon our children." It is still so now for the Jews.

The Bible tells us that blood can speak because of the life in it; it can communicate. That is why in Gen 4: 10, God said to Cain, "*What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.*" The blood was crying out for vengeance. God Himself always talks of avenging blood. In Revelation 6:10, you will read about the martyrs who have been slain for the gospel and are crying to God.

"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

God said, "Wait, no problem, let them kill the rest of you then we will avenge in full." That is why Jesus accused the Jews with his strong statement, "You are of the generation that kills the prophets and the blood of all prophets from Abel shall be required from this generation."

So blood is very important. What I am saying in essence is that once your blood is polluted, then the totality of your life is polluted. Any wrong thing done to your blood will pollute the whole of your life. This is a very, very serious matter. So much about the blood.

COVENANTS

Zechariah 9: 11,

"As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water."

This is a positive or what you can call a good covenant. God promised to deliver the prisoners who have been put in the pit where there is no water. The positive covenant is what Jesus achieved for us by his death on the cross. There is also a negative covenant

The first thing to ask ourselves is what is a covenant. A covenant signifies a multi understanding between two or more parties. It can be designed to achieve friendship, or to procure assistance in war. It can be done for mutual protection; it can be done to establish peace. It can be done in several other ways, but it is a legal contract; a binding agreement; a solemn agreement.

In the Old Testament, when the Hebrew people talk about covenant, they give the idea of cutting an animal into two and passing between it. That is why they say, "They are cutting a covenant." So, the general purpose of the covenant is to provide a binding sense of commitment. God is the originator of covenant and whenever He wants to finally commit Himself to a thing, he enters into covenant.

When you talk about covenant, you now know that it is a strong thing binding two parties, like a contract or a treaty. The terms of the covenant are usually spelt out, and breaking them is a very serious matter. Although some physical activities are involved, it is a spiritual thing.

When you read the Bible you will find the covenants between God and men, for instance, the one between Him and Abraham, which provided that all the males must be circumcised. When a person is circumcised blood is involved. Up till date, the Jews are keeping the covenant. This is why Israel is a special nation. As long as they do not break the Abrahamic covenant they cannot be defeated by another nation. It is therefore unprofitable for any nation to be against Israel, because God has said, "Those who curse you I will curse."

There can also be a covenant between two people. Marriage is such a covenant and that is why God, is against divorce and anyone causing it., This is why the Bible warns, what God has joined together let no man or woman, or demon or mother-in-law or father-in-law, put asunder. When the priest asks you, "Will you take. . . to be your wife/husband?" and you answer, "Yes", then a contract is signed. If you come back later and say; "I was drunk when I said so", it is too late.

There could be a covenant between man and the devil. The devil can promise some people power and say, "All you have to do is to sleep in a cemetery for 200 days, and then you get the power." He can promise you wealth in exchange for a short life. People make covenants with the devil; this is why some people can never repent of doing evil because already they have entered into an agreement with Lucifer that they will do anything he wants, even if they will die doing it. If you have that kind of enemy, you have to be strong yourself.

Men can make covenants with evil spirits but the most dangerous covenant is the one which the participant is not aware of, yet it is binding. These days many people don't realize that a person can unconsciously enter into a covenant. Many of the things we don't think as serious are taken seriously in the spirit world.

Remember that Jacob and Esau only exchanged words, over a meal, and they were binding. God recognized the words and the devil also recognized them, and Esau lost his birthright. Many people make worse promises with their mouths.

Also, the word covenant translated in the New Testament has a root meaning, "to cut", and it was from the custom of cutting an animal into two and people walking between it; after that, they would sit down and eat food.

In the crude state of covenant formation, those who want to make covenants would come together, and discuss the motives and the terms of the covenants. Someone would say, "Nobody is to eat 'okro' in this village again, is that all right?" and everyone would say "Yes." Someone

can also say that every male child in the village must scrape his hairs and give them to the priest. Again they would say, "Yes." They have thus agreed on the terms of the covenant. After the agreement they would exchange gifts and usually the most precious thing owned by the other party is demanded. This exchange of gifts symbolizes that whatsoever one person owns belongs to the other. The most precious possession now is life, and people have covenanted and traded it away.

There is normally a priest to administer the covenant, a satanic priest. Each party makes a cut on his wrist and allows the blood to drop into a cup of wine. It is mixed and each person drinks. They rub their wounds with gunpowder to heal and anytime they see the scar, it would remind them that they entered into a blood covenant. Some occult people also do this.

A lot of people are in trouble today because they met a man or woman a long time ago and entered into a covenant as they fell madly in love if there is that kind of thing. They cut each other's bodies and drank their blood saying, "Promise me you will not leave me." The blood then flowed into each other. Eventually they did not get married and there is problem. Some people do not understand where the problem is coming from. Well, it is already inside the blood by a simple transfer. They cannot marry someone else and if they do, the marriage will break down. After they drank the blood, a curse was spiritually pronounced on whoever would break the covenant.

Beloved, this is one of the sources of the black man's problems. It is only the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ that can buy us back.

The Bible itself is a covenant. The Old Testament and the New Testament can be translated as the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The two parties in a covenant come together and become one.

When Adam fell, blood had to be used for the remission of sin. The person who could make that covenant had to be both man and God. He had to be a person whose blood did not come from his father and mother, which was polluted. This is why Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, his blood was not from man. And so it was that kind of blood that could make atonement for us.

THE POWER OF COVENANTS

When two people are making a covenant, they become legal representatives of their people, even the unborn children and the coming generation. This means that a covenant somebody entered into 500 years ago is still working now and will continue to be so, even among children that are yet to be born. It is already waiting for them immediately they come out to the world. This is the power of covenant and this is what we have to note carefully.

How do people enter into this blood covenant trap? I will tell you but first let us look at how you can recognize those who are already inside this blood covenant trap.

A brother came from Ilorin (a town in Nigeria) sometime ago and shared this testimony with me. During a deliverance session for somebody, suddenly two birds flew into the arena when prayers were going on, and began to fight seriously with each other. They fought until our men went there and stopped the fight by killing and burning them. Why do you think the birds appeared

and started fighting? Something had been ignited in the spirit world. Somebody was about to be released from a terrible blood covenant and the battle got so serious that the Lord put confusion between the spirits in charge and they started fighting each other. How did they know that something was happening? It is because there was a covenant. Some people may say, "If I travel to England I will escape from all of this." No, you cannot escape; your great-great-grandfather had ensured one thousand years ago that no matter where you run to, they will know.

RECOGNISING PEOPLE WITH BLOOD COVENANTS

Anti-harvest forces will be operating in their lives. They will gather but will not enjoy. When the harvest is ripe something will happen and everything will fall away.

- *Constant marital failure*, is evident when covenant is in place.
- *Constant loss of money.*
- *Inability to sustain a good thing for a long time.*
- *Inability to sustain a good thing for a long time.*
- *Inability to sustain a good thing for a long time.*
- *Constant sickness.*
- *Financial abortion or financial coffins.*
- *Failure at the edge of miracles or breakthroughs.*
- *Wrong marriages.*
- *Evil nightmares* of eating with the dead, serving people you don't know, swimming in water, playing with snakes, marrying in the spirit world, having sexual intercourse with children and adult.
- *Demonic dreams*
- *Chronic lust, confusion and loneliness.*
- *Over-sophistication, being too sophisticated to I.J.ray.*
- *Spiritual serpent and scorpion moving around the body.*
- *Hearing strange voices.*
- *Constant attack of malaria.*
- *Dreams about dead people.*
- *Difficulty in receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit.*
- *Unfruitful Christian lives.*
- *Intense hatred by people who are supposed to be helpful to you.*
- *All unruly children, unhealthy children.*
- *Spirit of failure*

All these are evidences that there are evil blood covenants in place. Beloved, the ball is in your court, because the provision to be free from all the evil effects of blood covenants has been made and unless you use it, nothing positive happens.

If you bought a soap from the market, remove its wrapper and put it on a shelf, and you admire it day and night, but you never use it, you will still have dirty clothes or a dirty body.

HOW DO PEOPLE ENTER INTO THIS EVIL BLOOD COVENANT TRAP?

1. VIRGIN COVENANT

I will ask some questions. Sister, who disvirgined you? How did you lose your virginity? Brother, have you ever deflowered anyone? If you are a man who had deflowered more than one lady, and you did not marry any of them, then don't be surprised now if your life is upside down.

Because with your reproductive organ mixed with the blood of these girls, you have made a covenant with them. It is with this your organ that you had your other offspring; so by implication, all your children too are polluted. If you are unlucky, like many sinners, and the girl you disvirgined is demonic, you have made a covenant with that girl and her demon. If nothing is now working in your life, you caused the problem. So think about it, because this might be the origin of what you are facing now.

You might have been raped and don't even know where the people who raped you are now, or you might have accompanied your friends to rape a girl; that may be your problem because you have formed a covenant.

A lady was raped-by about six men and she did not go to the police to file a report. Eventually the police found out, came to her and asked, "We hope they did not hurt or harm you?" Do you know what she told the police? She said, "Actually I was enjoying it." When I saw that she was laughing, I knew immediately she knew what she did. Those six men were finished, that is all.

2. INCISION

Incision is a strategy for a blood covenant and pollution. You open up your body for a blood covenant with the witchdoctor or demons, and you create holes through which your blood could be drawn.

3. SEX OUTSIDE MARRIAGE

Another covenant trap is sex outside marriage. When you make yourself one body with a woman, your entire system, blood, everything has been mixed together. What I am saying is this, it is possible that as you are here, a part of your body is in a witchcraft meeting, simply because you slept with a witch, or you woman, because you slept with a wizard. Your present state of holiness cannot deliver you from what I am saying now; neither can your new birth, because you did it when you were in the world. Your present state of holiness can only prevent a re-occurrence. Your new birth opens a door for total deliverance.

Take a man who travelled to England and met a 20-year old British girl. This Nigerian man was going to school while the poor English girl was working hard to support him. The girl sweated until this man was able to get a degree. However, this man never told the British girl that he was already married at home with three children. Then one day he carried his bag, told the girl that he was going to visit a friend somewhere in Scotland and jumped into an aircraft, abandoned the girl and ran back to Nigeria. Later, he crashed his car under a trailer. If you want to talk about somebody perishing, he perished; for a start his body could not be recognized again in the wreckage. A lot of people might say, "Ah, what a pity, somebody who has just come back from England!" What happened? He perished because of his sin.

If your sexual partner is your father, or your brother, junior or senior, it is even worse. So many of us will have to specifically mention the names of our sexual partners when confessing our sins.

4. ANIMAL SACRIFICE

If you have ever offered an animal sacrifice, you have made a covenant with demon spirits and they will harass you until you break the blood covenant and loose yourself from their grip. You must mention the name of the animal you used, and release yourself. If you have offered so many sacrifices and you cannot remember all of them, you have to ask the Holy Spirit to remind you, because the single one you forget, the devil will hide there.

All those who always say that a prophet tells them to slaughter a chicken or fowl and distribute, are forming blood covenants. All those whose parents kill something for them every birthday, are thus renewing contracts with demons.

5. ABORTION

All those who have ever carried out any abortion, including the doctor who did it and the man who gave the woman the money to do it have formed blood covenants. There are spirits that will enter into them and give them frustration and general backwardness. Their children will be affected later, because the blood of the aborted babies will be crying out against them.

6. TATTOO

If some of our mothers are asked to uncover their bodies, we will see strange pictures and marks there, and they do not understand why things are so rough for them. Some have these strange pictures on their right hands, some on the left, and some on their shoulders. All kinds of pictures are there; they are blood covenants. So the Bible that says, "Don't make a mark on your body", warns you because of these blood covenants. The Bible is against skin marks because in the process of making them your blood could get contaminated and covenants would be formed. When you see a man with that kind of demonic mark on the body, and he is not born again, he generally tends to be polygamous and a woman with such a mark generally has marital problems.

7. EATERS OF FLESH AND DRINKERS OF BLOOD

Blood transferred from eaters of flesh and drinkers of blood forms covenant between two or more people. You know that if you go to a quack hospital, they use needles they have used for one patient to inject another patient thereby taking the blood from one patient to another. The eaters of flesh and drinkers of blood do not sterilize their mouths. They bite sister 'A' and drink her blood; by the time they bite sister 'B' they transfer to her the blood from sister 'A'. In this way they form covenants. When people don't have fire, they are easy victims.

8. MAN AND WOMAN CIRCUMCISION

Evil agents are involved in circumcision sometimes. When they can circumcise a man or a woman, blood covenants are formed with the reproductive organ of such a person and marital problems may follow.

9. HOSPITALS

There are satanic agents operating in hospitals; they are there to hunt for blood. So if you have to go to the hospital, you have to cover yourself with the blood of Jesus and be praying while you are there because of the evil agents that are there sometimes.

10. SATANIC COMMUNION

Receiving communion from the hands of demonic pastors or priests is dangerous. Something happened sometime ago in a church near us here. They were fighting in the church, and the fight was so serious that the church was divided into two camps. Some members were holding their service upstairs and the others on the ground floor. When the sermon was being preached upstairs, those downstairs would be singing praise worship inside the same church. Yet people sat down there. In that kind of place, any type of, communion you take is an initiation into a covenant.

When you know that your priest belongs to a secret society, when you know that your priest is becoming strangely friendly with a girlfriend, and is a fornicator; and he gives you communion and you take, you have been initiated into a covenant.

11. BLOOD BATH

Some people bathe with blood because they believe their problems are too much for them. They kill a goat, put the blood-in a bucket, and bathe with it. It may sound strange to you, but people do it.

12. ANOINTING BY BLOOD

There are people who put blood on their head and pray demonic prayers on it. These people have thus made a covenant.

13. BLOOD LIBATION

When blood is poured on the ground or on objects for "praying" purposes, a blood covenant is formed.

14. UNCONSCIOUS DECEPTION INTO A READY-MADE COVENANT

When a person is wounded and blood is coming out, and an evil person comes around and puts his finger on the wound to stop the blood flow and later puts the finger in his mouth, he has formed a covenant with that person.

15. INHERITED COVENANT

Through sinful practices evil spirits can terrorize a family for generations and until there is a true repentance and a command to these demons to go, the family will continue to be afflicted. Even though members of the family have given their lives to Christ, they will still suffer because of ignorance. Those covenants our parents entered into, are still binding unless we break them specifically.

16. MARITAL COVENANT

I have described this earlier; when lovers cut themselves, lick each others blood and swear to be faithful to each other, they have made a covenant.

17. CONSUMPTION OF DEMONIC FOOD

There are some people who actually cook blood and eat it. Others to drink blood mixed with fresh milk. They are all making covenants with the spirit world.

18. EAR AND NOSE PIERCING

It is bad enough to have holes in your ears, it is even worse when you increase the ones your parents put there to three. All you have done is to triple the covenant.

19. SEX WITH MENSTRUATING WOMAN

Take for example, armed robbers entered into a house and told a woman there to remove her dress. Despite her protest and the fact that she was menstruating, they raped her. This will produce a blood covenant.

20. THROUGH THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BLOOD HUNTERS

Those who are actually hunting for blood are everywhere because the devil has a satanic blood bank, which must be supplied regularly with blood. When blood is low there, the hunters go to a country cause a war or accident to get blood. They cause all kinds of evil things; they can 'even make husband and wife to fight and beat themselves until blood starts to flow. They collect their blood and the husband and wife will reconcile, not knowing that they have already formed a covenant with demons.

THE WAY OUT

The disciples in Acts 13 ministered to the Lord in praise, worship, adoration and fasting. God responded in that passage, giving a word of direction concerning what the church should do about Barnabas and Saul.

1. *Complete repentance.* All sins must be confessed and forsaken. All of them.
2. *Renounce the covenants.* Prayers of renouncing covenants have to be done aloud, vigorously, violently and aggressively, for them to work, because some of us may be breaking something which is about a thousand years old. Some of us may be trying to escape from an evil umbrella that has already covered so many people. You want to run, but cannot run and you know that the demon holding the umbrella will pursue anybody who wants to run. That is why some people have terrible dreams of being pursued.
3. *Bind the spirit in charge of the evil covenant.*
4. *Speak destruction to their products.* The covenants can produce evil things because of their long stay.
5. *Decree what you desire, by aggressive faith.*

Beloved, we have a very serious prayer section to address. A sister was failing her school certificate exams. Her mother went to consult an oracle and was told to go and form a covenant with the river so that she could pass. So they cut the girl, took a bit of her blood, used it to write her name on an egg and threw it into a river. The girl passed the examination, and that was 22 years ago. She studied medicine and got her degree, got married, had the first daughter, the second daughter and then the demons came and said, "Well, we allowed you to pass your school certificate and other exams and you are not serving us; you are going to enter into trouble now." The woman did not understand what they meant because she was going to fellowship in a church where this kind of things were neither taught nor taken seriously. The attack started this way: one day, the husband brought a girl home and told madam, "This girl will stay in the guest room. She is my business partner." The wife said, "But you are a Christian you cannot do this, you can't do this", but the man did not answer back.

The next day, the man brought another girl, and said to the wife, "You see now they are two business partners and both of them will stay in the guestroom." After a week, the two girls started fighting and the madam said, "What kind of thing is this? You gave these people accommodation and they are fighting now." Before madam could say, "Jesus is Lord", the next thing she heard from her husband was, "Well, they are fighting because that room is too choked. Therefore one of them will have to move into our bedroom." Then the madam said, "This is very bad, I am going to report to your pastor." The husband said, "Very simple, if you report me to the pastor, I will just stop coming to the church, finish."

At first, the wife wanted to fight, but later decided to come to us, and we were able to locate that she had formed a covenant, and the demons were just warming up. She then prayed and broke the blood covenant. It took her six aggressive hours, and the two girls ran out of her house and peace was restored.

Therefore, you have work to do. The work may not stop with praying once. Some people may spend quite some time because some covenants take time to break. In case you have not given your life to Christ, you cannot break anything. So the first thing to do is to surrender your life to Jesus. Take the first step towards receiving your freedom by saying this prayer: "Father in the name of Jesus, I come before you and I claim the power of the blood of Jesus. I want you to forgive me my sins. Lord Jesus, come into my life. Thank You Jesus. Amen."

If you are a higher eagle who have been converted to a lower eagle and caged, today is your day of freedom. Amen.

PRAYER SECTION

1. If you know you are guilty of these things, repent and ask for forgiveness. If you know you sold your virginity at a cheap price or you did so unwillingly, ask the Lord to forgive you because you want to break the stubborn yoke. This evil trend must not continue.
2. Put one hand on the head, and the other on the stomach. All prayers to renounce covenants, whether consciously or unconsciously entered into, are to be said aggressively, vigorously and loudly because you might be fighting a battle that is two thousand years old. The Bible says, "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*" (Hosea 4:6). Say this with holy aggression:

"Holy Ghost Fire, boil spiritual contamination out of my blood (boil as boiling water for purification; as it boils the water vapour condenses and it becomes pure water). Say this once and repeat, "Holy Ghost Fire, boil it out."

3. I release myself from every satanic blood covenant, in the name of Jesus.
4. Grip your head with your two hands and pray very aggressively, "I release my head from every evil blood covenant, in the name of Jesus."
5. Still gripping your head with your two hands, "I dismantle every stronghold of evil covenants, in the name of Jesus."
6. When somebody enters into an evil covenant, a curse is issued on him. As he is breaking the covenant, the curse too is there; he is bombarded by two different things, the covenant and

the curse. So, pray like this. "I release myself from every covenanted curse, in the name of Jesus."

7. Let the blood of Jesus speak against every unconscious evil covenant.
8. I speak destruction unto the fruits of unclean spirits in my life, in the name of Jesus.
9. I break every evil covenant linkage, in the name of Jesus.
10. I dismantle every stronghold of evil blood covenants, in the name of Jesus.
11. I nullify the effects of evil access to my blood, in Jesus' name.
12. I release myself from every covenanted-curse, in Jesus' name.
13. I release every organ in my body from the grip of evil blood covenant, in the name of Jesus.
14. I dissociate myself and my family from every territorial blood covenant, in the name of Jesus.
15. I dissociate myself from every tribal blood covenant, in the name of Jesus.
16. I dissociate myself from every inherited blood covenant, in the name of Jesus.
17. I withdraw my blood from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.
18. I withdraw my blood from every satanic blood bank, in the name of Jesus.
19. I break every unconscious evil blood covenant, in Jesus' name.
20. Let the blood of any animal shed on my behalf loose its covenant power, in the name of Jesus.
21. Let every drop of blood speaking evil against me be silenced by the blood of Jesus.
22. I release myself from every collective blood covenant captivity, in the name of Jesus.
23. I release myself from every conscious or unconscious evil blood covenant, in the name of Jesus.
24. Let the blood of every evil covenant loose its power over me, in the name of Jesus.
25. I defy and destroy every evil covenant agreement, in Jesus' name.
26. Let the blood of the new-covenant speak against the blood of any evil covenant militating against me, in the name of Jesus.
27. I receive the mandate to disqualify the right of all evil blood covenants, in the name of Jesus.
28. Every evil blood covenant formed with any organ of my body be nullified by the blood of Jesus.
29. I recover all the good things stolen through evil covenants by the enemies, in the name of Jesus.
30. Let every evil blood covenant along my blood-line be neutralized, in the name of Jesus.
31. I release myself from every curse attached to evil covenants, in the name of Jesus.
32. I release myself from the grip of curse-covenant breakers, in the name of Jesus.
33. Let every repercussion of breaking unconscious covenants be washed away by the blood of Jesus.

Sermon Seven

Title: Believer's Power Instrument by Bishop David Oyedepo⁷

God has provided the Church with some very powerful covenant instruments for enforcing her dominion here on earth. But note that whereas He has provided the arms, it's our responsibility to

⁷ David O. Oyedepo, *Walking in Dominion*, Ota, 2006

know how to use them and actually use them, and not be like the children of Ephraim, who though armed turned and fled from the battle [Ps. 78:9). We must now how to use our God-given implements; otherwise our dominion here on earth will only be wishful thinking.

I will identify and discuss how to use some of these instruments in this sermon

The Name Of Jesus

The name of Jesus is a power tool for walking in dominion. It is an unbeatable force in the conflicts of life. The name of Jesus reigns wherever the sun shines, and at the mention of it, every knee bows - whether of things on the earth, things underneath the earth, and things in heaven. No wonder the Bible describes it as a strong tower.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

Proverbs 18: 10

The name of Jesus is a strong tower, an institution of power. Once you invoke that name in faith, a strong tower is erected round about you. Peter called upon that name at the gate Beautiful, and his dominion over sickness was established. Hear what he said, and what happened afterwards:

Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

Acts 3:6

There was an explosion of power at the mention of the name of Jesus, such that a man that was crippled from birth rose up and began to leap and jump! When all the people saw the lame man healed, they gathered around him, Peter and John. And when Peter saw this, he said to them:

... Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk!

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his son Jesus; whom ye delivered up and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go ...

And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Acts 3:12-16

The name of Jesus gets things done. It is not just a title; but a possession. That is why Peter said, "Such us I have." You need to be possessed with that name.

The name of Jesus has inbuilt power, that allows 1 nyone who possesses and uses it to walk in dominion. It is a gift to the Church, for our reign here on earth. Jesus said:

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Mark 16:17-18

That is dominion! The name of Jesus is a reservoir of signs and wonders. It unleashes signs and wonders when invoked in faith. Anointing goes forth when the name of Jesus is invoked in faith, just like when you spray a room with insecticide. The name is poison to every work of the devil. The wicked just has to bow to the power it carries. And the good news is that all who believe have the right to use that name, just as Peter did.

There are situations in which you find yourself, where you cannot easily carry the Bible or any book to encounter the Word of God. There is also probably not enough time to pray at that time, and no one around to lay hands on you, but you need liberty from the devil's oppression. In such situations, you need to remember that you carry a name that is loaded with the unction required for your rescue - the name of Jesus! With that name, every Goliath before you will come down!

There is an anointing in that name that destroys yokes, divides the flames of fire and silences death. The use of that name puts you in dominion. That is why the Bible says:

At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2: 10-11

The name of Jesus destroys challenges and brings every opposition down. Every time you are confronted with a challenge, look at it with the eye of faith, and from the depth of your heart release the name of Jesus in faith; that opposition must bow!

The Blood Of Jesus

Theologians tell us that the blood of Jesus only cleanses us from our sins. That is not the whole truth. When the blood came on the scene, see what the Bible says it also did for us:

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Revelation 5:9-12

The blood of Jesus, apart from cleansing from sin, also delivered to man power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing. The blood is also referred to as the blood of the covenant.

The blood of Jesus is the covenant stronghold of the saints. When you have a good understanding of what the blood stands for and its' potency, then you will become unstoppable and can no longer be molested by anyone or thing.

As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.

Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope; even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee;

Zechariah 9: 11-12

The blood of Jesus is like the sword of a mighty man. When you take cover under the blood (because the life of the flesh is in the blood), the Lord shall be seen over you. Triumph is impossible without the blood. Jesus came to take all power from the devil and give it back to us. All this represents dominion.

And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the LORD GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.

The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar.

Zechariah 9:14-15

As long as you are under this blood cover, you remain impenetrable and inaccessible, because the God of the blood will be seen upon you, and His arrows shall go forth as lighting on your behalf. The blood of the covenant exempts you from molestations, shame and reproach. See your covering and dignity in it, as it wraps you up in power and dominion. It's time to walk in it for your dominion.

The devil's last card is death, and death can't cross the bloodline. So, it's time to come under the canopy of the blood. Every occultic sect has blood connections, but whatever is from above is above all. No man born of a woman can be compared with Christ in any form. If there is any blood covenant hat initiates people into any occultic sect, none can he compared in efficacy with the one that connects us to heaven

The blood is a missile in heavenly places. It will always hit its' target when invoked in faith. The bold declaration of, "The blood of Jesus!" by any heavenly citizen must work. By destiny, all heavenly citizens are more than conquerors, as Satan is not permitted to prevail in this realm. So

begin to use this blood of triumph in whatever conflicts of life you are confronted with, and walk on in dominion.

There is tangible power in the blood, as it is God's last card. It was God's trump card in Egypt, when Pharaoh refused to allow Israel leave the land of captivity. But when the blood came on the scene, Israel marched out of Egypt in dominion and abundance!

The blood of Jesus is the divine provision for man's freedom from every form of satanic corruption. It is what it takes to silence the opposition. It is the ultimate for our victory when applied against the wicked plans of the enemy. You turn on a switch in heaven every time you plead the blood of Jesus, as the blood immediately begins to speak, "Passover". By the blood of Jesus, every evil will pass over you, in Jesus' name!

God revealed in Hebrews 12:24 that we have access in mount Zion, the city of refuge, to the blood of sprinkling that speaks for us. The blood of sprinkling provides a covering for us against the wickedness of Satan. Every time God's people appear in Zion, angels are present, whose only job is to sprinkle the blood of the Lamb, which speaks every good thing for the believer, It speaks healing, peace, protection, provision, fruitfulness, etc. And what's more, it is the impenetrable by the avenger of blood.

There is a continuous sprinkling of the blood, twenty-four hours of the day, in Zion. Therefore, whenever a child of God appears there, whether alone or with other believers, he gets sprinkled with the precious blood of the Lamb. So, if the devil comes to you with depression or any form of oppression, just blast the atmosphere with the blood. Declare vehemently, "The blood of Jesus is against you, Satan!" The Blood of Jesus is the seal of our victory in every conflict of life. It enables us to walk in dominion.

Testimonies

There is so much power in testimonies, which the church of Jesus is ignorant of, and so has not fully utilized it.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Revelation 12: 11

The blood and testimonies are instruments of triumph. Testimonies eradicate trials. But what do you find in the Church today? People talking only about the trials they are faced with. To walk in dominion, however, we need to talk more about our testimonies. Hear what Isaiah 8:20 says:

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Stop talking about trials; instead, talk testimonies! Locate relevant testimonies, wrap them up in the blood, and begin to shoot them as missiles at your targets. David shot testimony arrows at Goliath, and collected Goliath's head (1 Sam. 17:37)! The time has come for you to also collect the heads of all your Goliaths.

The blood of Jesus and testimonies are two powerful weapons commonly used even in heaven. They are overcoming forces that cause the saints to be more than conquerors here on earth. Whenever heavenly citizens invoke the blood and shoot testimony arrows, God's presence is released, and His arrows go into operation, causing them to become an ensign in the land. So, take the blood weapon in your right hand, and testimonies in your left, and your dominion is guaranteed, as no devil can prevail against you.

Friend, we are a people born in due season! These mysteries were hid in time past, even from kings and princes, but have been revealed in our generation, so we can walk on gallantly in dominion! We are dangerously armed saints! God in His infinite mercy has revealed great treasures to us, to establish our dominion here on earth. Wielding these weapons, we have been privileged to see many dead people raised back to life; many homes restored, and shattered lives re-moulded.

With the name of Jesus, His blood and testimonies, you're on your way to the top. No devil can prevail against you with these very powerful weapons in your hand. You're fully armed, so march on in victory and dominion!

The Anointing Oil

The mystery of the anointing oil is another blessing we have seen produced very terrific and mind-blowing results. James 5:14-15 reveals one of the tasks the oil is meant to perform for us:

Is any sick among you ~ let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

The Bible says, "The Lord shall raise him up." It is the Lord that shall raise him up, not the oil. The Lord, who authored the oil, will respond to your obedience to raise the dead, destroy cancer, AIDS, etc.

The anointing oil is not a chemical product. It is the Spirit of God mysteriously put in a bottle, and mysteriously designed to communicate the power of God bodily. It is the power of God in the person of the Holy Spirit, placed in a tangible form in the hand of man to humiliate Satan, malting an open show of him. It is God's wisdom for man's rescue! It is the might of God. No gate can be shut against it, as every gate is lifted up at its appearance.

The anointing oil carries mysterious virtue. It is what it takes to be absolutely free, as it destroys all discomforts of life. It is God's standard against every invasion of the enemy.

God introduced the mystery of the anointing oil in Exodus 30:23-31, where He gave Moses details on how it was to be mixed. In 1 Samuel 16: 13, we see that it is the Spirit of God.

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward ...

David was anointed with oil, but what came upon him was not oil, but the Spirit of the Lord. So the anointing oil is a medium through which the Holy Spirit, the power of God, is invoked to intervene on man's behalf. The Holy Spirit goes into manifestation when the oil is applied.

The anointing oil is God's standard or weapon in your hand, to put the enemy where he belongs - far from you, out of your life, home and affairs [Isa. .,9: 19). No devil in hell can resist the authority loaded 111 the anointing oil! Look at what it did in the days of the disciples:

And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

Mark 6:12-13

The anointing oil is able to end all frustrations in your life. When it touches the barren, she becomes abundantly fruitful. When it touches anyone chained by the devil, the person becomes automatically free. There is no sickness or disease of any kind that can escape the power in the anointing oil. So, discover the mystery in the anointing oil, and it will put you over always, causing you to walk in dominion!

The Church of Jesus must begin to appropriate the significance and uses of this divine instrument of power, to see the finger of God move supernaturally in the affairs of men. Many have lost grip of what the anointing oil really stands for. Look beyond that common chemical called, "Olive oil", into the mystery that it carries. The anointing oil is not mere oil; there is a person mysteriously packaged inside it. The Holy Ghost is meant to make men comfortable, eradicate hardship and erase affliction. That is what the oil does, as it is the Holy Ghost in a mystery.

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Matthew 3: 12

The Holy Ghost has a broom in His hands with which He thoroughly garnishes His floor. He will gather together all the chaff in your life, and burn them up with unquenchable fire. That bottle in your hand is no ordinary liquid, but fire! In other words, its content is highly dangerous. What natural explanation can you give that will justify its catching fire when poured on the ground? The Person inside the oil came alive! Who can shot an arrow at fire and get results? What kind of knife can you use to cut fire? Can any gun kill it? Everything inherent in the person of the Holy Ghost can be found inside the bottle.

I blessed a bottle of oil for a cousin in 1991, and he kept it away in his wardrobe. His business was about to hit the rocks when suddenly he remembered the oil. He brought it out of his wardrobe, and anointed all his signposts with it, and business immediately picked up for him! The Holy Ghost is THE comforter, not A comforter. There is no situation he cannot handle. Every hardship in life answers to his authority.

Note that we are not only to anoint people with the oil, but can also anoint things. The children of Israel anointed their tabernacle, laver, offerings, etc. with the oil.

And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, and the table and all his vessels and the candlestick and his vessels and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy.

And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.

And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations.

Exodus 30:26-31

God has given us a rod; we can't afford to sit down and watch magicians molest us. The Egyptians were rod-less at the end of the first round of conflict with Moses. If Moses had not cast down his rod, would it have become a serpent? Stop carrying the bottle of anointing oil about for fun; use it! It is not enough to be seen carrying the bottle of anointing oil around; you must put it to work. Moses never parted with his rod, as it was his only weapon of defence.

Whenever you sense evil around you, stand to your feet and pour the oil on the ground. Speak to the situation and let it know you are in charge. Let it know power from on high has taken over. Any day you are on your way out and you've left your oil at home, go back for it. Somebody might need your help on the way, and you will be able to manifest your glory.

The man Smith Wigglesworth was a man of one book and one bottle - the Bible and the oil. He died at the age of 87 and never needed to use any form of medicine. Friend, it works! So, why should you continue to suffer whereas you have power in your house? You have the Comforter at your disposal, why must you die in discomfort? There will always be a performance of the things the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

From now on, as you handle this instrument of glory, every discomfort in your life and around you shall become history, in Jesus' name.

The Mantle

It will be recalled that at the time of Elijah's departure, Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him. When he got to the bank of Jordan and could not cross over, he smote the waters with the mantle that fell from Elijah, declaring, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" and the waters parted, and Elisha went over (2 Kgs. 2:13-14).

Any material that has come in contact with the anointed of God carries the unction for manifestation. Such material is what is referred to as the mantle in our context.

God's presence is proved by the manifestations of signs and wonders. The Bible says the disciples went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the

Word with signs following (Mk. 16:20). Hebrews 2:4 also tells us: "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will" Therefore, every time you see signs and wonders, know that God is present.

Now let me show you God's wisdom at work. Mark 5:30 tells the story of the woman with the issue of blood. When she touched Jesus, He asked, "Who touched my clothes?" Also in Acts 19: 11-12, we are told:

And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

It wasn't Paul that wrought the special miracles; it was God. The virtue that healed the people did not come out from Paul, but from God. The virtue that healed the people did not come out of Paul, but from God. The virtue that operates in the mantle (the handkerchief or clothe from an anointed man of God) is God's virtue. That is why I never feel anything leave my body when miracles take place via the mantle.

One day I was walking through the congregation to the pulpit, and a man who had suffered a spinal injury for seventeen years touched my clothes (a flowing gown) and immediately heard a cracking sound in his lumbar region. That was it! He was instantly healed! And for the first time in seventeen years, he didn't need his lumbar jacket anymore. The power of God healed him instantly. It was God's virtue, not mine, because nothing left me when he was healed; unlike Jesus, who felt virtue leave Him when the woman with the issue of blood touched Him.

The virtue in the mantle is from God, not from any prophet or man of God. All we need do is to provoke Him with our obedience. Only then will we see His virtue go into action. Elisha said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah!" and God's virtue went into action. Note that it wasn't Elijah's virtue, as Elijah was already gone by then (2 Kgs. 2: 12-14). Whatever God can handle, his virtue can handle.

And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul ... "Those miracles were wrought without any special effort from Paul or the people. The aprons and handkerchiefs they brought from Paul were enough to check out the diseases and evil spirits, but it was God working. The people took notice and acknowledged Paul as a man that had the hand of God upon his life. So when he could not go to where the problem was, they knew they could take anything from him to the problem, and it would be gone.

Friend, God has not changed. He is still working by the hands of men today. These are men who carry transferable unction, and are sent for the deliverance of mankind, the liberty of the captives, the opening of blind eyes, raising the dead, and for the blessing of the people.

In 1989, a brother's wife ran mad in another town that was some distance from where I was. Since I couldn't go with him to where she was, I took my handkerchief, spoke some powerful

words into it, and gave it to him, saying, "Get down to Ekpoma with this, and the power working inside me is going with you now. Wipe her face with this handkerchief when you get there, and the madness will be gone."

He left, believing, and later testified that as soon as the mad woman saw the handkerchief, she ran to grab it, but he held her and wiped her face with it, and the madness vanished instantly! She became pregnant that same month, and nursed her baby all by herself. Till today, she's doing fine in the Lord.

Friend, the mantle of a prophet of God in your hands will work wonders! God gave me this mantle ministry for the liberation of mankind, and we have countless testimonies as proof. The mantle ministry is a ministry of transmission of unction. As I speak forth the anointing for special miracles and casting out of devils to go into the handkerchief (even as Jesus spoke to the fig tree and it heard Him), wherever it appears, the works of the devil will be destroyed. It is a mantle for exploits. It is the end-time prophetic mystery in the hand of the carrier, for amazing results, signs and wonders. It is a carrier of divine energy and heavenly virtue. It always produces signs!

The Communion

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

John 6:51-57

The communion is the flesh and the blood of Jesus. We renew our eternal life policy every time we come to the communion table, by contacting the Zoe, the very life of God. When you partake of the communion, whatever flows in Jesus (the vine) begins to flow in you (the branch), causing eternal life to swallow up our human life that is susceptible to demonic oppressions.

There is no drink, capsule or medicine that can be compared with the flesh and blood of Jesus. The communion is a supreme capsule and a supreme injection that cannot be compared with any other. I don't care who your family or specialist doctor is, Jesus said, "For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed."

In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam and Eve all kinds of shrubs and herbs. For what purpose did He give it to them? It was for food (Gen. 1:29). He never intended for these plants to be for their healing. If only men would eat what God intended for them to eat, they will not experience sickness and disease. When God created man, He never made provisions for his healing. He only gave man what to eat.

It was after man was corrupted and dethroned that Satan's wicked rule and oppression began. God then had to send his only begotten Son with another type of food, designed to make us never need drugs of any kind. What is that food? "My flesh is meat indeed, and my bloods drink indeed." If you partake of the communion table with this understanding, you will never need to take any drug for the remaining days of your life!

The breaking of bread (the communion table) is the best hospital to transfer any case to. It is the highest theatre, the office of the Greatest Specialist Jesus Himself, the Great Physician, the Balm of Gilead! The communion is God's ultimate prescription for our total health.

The apostles continued in the breaking of bread daily, so sickness was far from them.

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

Acts 2:46

Don't esteem the communion table lightly, as everything you will ever require for your total health is found in it. It will make you live like Jesus here on earth, where Jesus becomes the One working out all things for you, and you operate in His class.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

John 6:57

God said He will satisfy your mouth with good things, and Jesus said, "I am that bread of life ... that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." Nothing compares in value with the nutritious value found in the flesh and blood of Jesus! You become spiritually indestructible when you partake of it. Sickness will no longer be mentioned around you. The communion makes it impossible for you to be humiliation or molestation health-wise.

Jesus said as often as you observe this ordinance, you remember Him:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it; in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, do shew the Lord's death till he come.

1 Corinthians 11 :23-26

The communion takes care of everything that weakens you and mocks your redemptive testimony. The children of Israel ate manna in the wilderness, and as they went from nation to nation, from one people to the other, God suffered no man to manhandle them. He cursed kings for their sakes, saying, "Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm" (Ps. 105:13-15).

The communion makes it impossible for any devil to harm you. Would Jesus suffer what you're suffering right now? If your answer is no, as you take the communion, say an angry and eternal "No!" to whatever you are going through right now, and it will never reoccur in your life again.

The communion infuses God's kind of life into your blood stream, bones, marrows, mind and spirit-man. It instantly destroys whatever is contrary to life inside your system. It's a mystery, end-time wisdom of God for your dominion. It is for the saints, for the Church of Jesus Christ. So, use it!

Feet Washing

The feet washing mystery is, among other things, God's wisdom for establishing the dominion of the saints. The second Adam brought back for us what was lost through the first Adam.

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself

After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet!

Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet.

Jesus answered, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

John 13:3-8

By this mysterious exercise of feet washing, Jesus was restoring to the new generation of human race (the new creation) the dominion that was lost in the first Adam. So, as your feet are dipped into water, you step into the plan of God, through the mysteries of His wisdom, and walk into the realm of dominion. If all things given to Jesus are handed over to you, tell me what devil will ever be able to challenge you?

Jesus washed His disciples' feet so they too could enter the realm where the Father had put Him. Evidently, dominion was passed onto the disciples through this mystery of divine transference, such that when Jesus left, they represented Him, spirit, soul and body. Everything bowed to them, just as they did Jesus.

From now on, as you observe this ordinance, every evil will bow before you, and whatever part in Christ that you are yet to experience will be delivered unto you. For example, you certainly need unbeatable intelligence in the things of God, so you can run the affairs of this life. It will be delivered to you via this mystery. Jesus had such amazing wisdom that sounded in heaven and answered here on earth also. The same Jesus said to us, "The works that I do you shall do, and greater works shall you do" (Jn. 14:12). Your inheritance of the Jesus order of wisdom shall be delivered to you, in Jesus' name!

Friend, there's a part you have in Christ that Satan is out to keep away from you. Now you know it, so violently possess your possession by using this great instrument God has delivered to you. The wisdom of feet washing offers you the singular opportunity of stepping into all things delivered to Christ. Don't allow your confidence to be dampened by any devil.

The feet washing mystery is simply God's wisdom on display. What do people stand to gain from it? They will gain their complete inheritance in Christ. And what is this inheritance all about? Mysterious dominion for mysterious triumphs! It is time to resume our rightful positions in redemption.

Sermon Eight

Title: The Holy Spirit Power by Bishop Kehinde Adedokun⁸

Apart from being baptized in the Holy Ghost and growing to the anointing level, you also need the seven Spirits of God fully operating in your life to truly walk in victory. Jesus had the anointing without measure, and also had the seven Spirits of God fully operational in His life.

But what are the seven Spirits of God? Upon whom do they come?

And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Revelation 4:5

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars ...

Revelation 3: 1

We understand that Jesus is the One speaking to the seven churches here. So He is the One that has the seven Spirits of God. A careful look at the army of the Lord described in Joel 2 reveals something interesting also. Verse 3 says, 'A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth.' And by that operation, the land before them was like the garden of Eden, and behind them a desolate wilderness. "Yea and nothing shall escape them."

This great army of the Lord will operate by the power of the seven Spirits of God, because we are told in Revelation 4 that out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices, burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

⁸ Kehinde Adedokun, *Spiritual Authority of Believers*, Lagos, 2009

Also look at Revelation 5:6:

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst «the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Who is that Lamb? Jesus! He has the seven Spirits of God, which are now made available to the sons of God on earth. Those seven Spirits were fully operational in Christ - a pointer to the fact that God wants them to be operational in us too. And when those seven Spirits are at work in a man, he will be nothing but a sign and a wonder on the earth.

We are entitled to the seven Spirits of God in our lives. This is because we can't come into the fullness of the stature of Christ if the forces working in Him are not working in us as well. I see you gain access into the operations of the seven Spirits of God, in the name of Jesus!

But what are the seven Spirits of God?

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

Isaiah 11: 1-3

This is the sum total of the seven spirits of God. They are for a total disarming of wickedness, and the establishment of the peaceful dominion of the Church here on earth. Don't you know He's coming to rapture a Church without spot, wrinkle or anything of such? So He must send us help (that is, supernatural ability) to live above board.

The Spirit of the Lord

In Luke 4: 18 Jesus proclaimed:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

This was where the Spirit of the Lord opened the first chapter of the former rain. The other forces are reserved for the last days. It's interesting to note that the former rain brought gifts of the Holy Spirit. First Corinthians chapter 12 tells us that it's all by the same Spirit. That means all the gifts of the Holy Ghost (the nine gifts - faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues, word of wisdom and word of knowledge are gifts of the Spirit of the Lord. These all add up to the Spirit of power.

When the Holy Spirit came in Acts chapter 2, He came as the power from on high. The former rain was thus heralded as the power from on high, which is one of the seven Spirits of God. God is omnipotent. So inside Him must be a force that generates power. So the Spirit of the Lord, as it were, stands for the power in the former rain.

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Luke 24:49

One of the key manifestations of the Holy Ghost in the last days is power. When Jesus came on His Messianic assignment to the earth, He came in the spirit of power, to deliver the captives.

Luke 4:14 tells us:

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

Jesus began to walk in dominion as soon as the Spirit of the Lord came upon Him. He entered the synagogue in Nazareth, and read Isaiah 61:1-2 from the book that was delivered unto Him (Lk. 4:18). When you put Luke 4: 14 and 18 together, you will discover that the Spirit of the Lord He was talking about is also the Spirit of power. The Bible says He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee and announced, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." Therefore, the Spirit of the Lord is the Spirit of power.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is the power from on high. Jesus told the disciples in Acts 1: 8:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

I'd like you to be thirsty for the impartation of power. You need it to walk in dominion. Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath, anointed me ..." To anoint means to empower. That is to say, "He hath (empowered) me to preach the gospel to the poor ..."

"What is this power for?" you might ask. It is for subduing the enemy.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

Psalms 110: 1

The Spirit of power you are endued with is for subduing the enemy. It is so you can dominate the region of darkness, and say to Satan, "You are no longer in charge here. Your judgment is sealed already." The Spirit of power is to enable you rule over your enemy, Satan, so he can't bring sickness and failure to you or stand in your way when you're on the move. Satan can't stop your

progress, neither can any witch challenge your destiny. That is the essence of the Spirit of power. It is to make you walk in dominion here on earth!

We see from the above scripture that Jesus will not come until all His enemies are made His footstool. That means God will bring about the outpouring of His power in the last days, such as has never been before. That power will completely disarm all wickedness, subdue kingdoms, and wrought righteousness [Heb. 11:33). There will be strange manifestations in the last days, to totally subdue the enemies of God. Romans 8: 19 tells us that the whole creature is waiting for us, because we are in the days His power.

With the Spirit of power breaking forth on you, you will become a recognized master anywhere you are found. How can you have an All-Powerful, Omnipotent Father and still be a weakling? Where did you get your weakness? From this day, the enemy will not humiliate your destiny anymore!

To truly walk in dominion, however, you must be conscious of the fact that you are loaded with power from on high. That same power is what was at work in Peter, Paul, and other great men of exploits we have read about. If you are baptized with the Holy Ghost, then that same power resides inside you. But until you are conscious of His indwelling presence you are not yet set for exploits.

From henceforth, anywhere you see the devil trying to make noise, step in and shut him up in the name of Jesus. As you step in, he must step out, because the power of heaven (the Holy Ghost Himself) is resident in you. The whole creation is groaning and travailing in pains, waiting for the sons of God to show up and bring their deliverance. You have what they need, so go forth and manifest your sonship! By the Spirit of power, there will be a total disarming of wickedness, and an establishment of the peaceful dominion of the Church.

The Spirit of Wisdom

The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.
Proverbs 3: 19

O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.
Psalm 104:24

All the exploits of the Father God are tied to the wisdom that is operational in Him. It therefore means that for you to be a candidate for His kind of exploits also, you must be connected to His kind of wisdom. Paul the apostle prayed a very special prayer for the Ephesian Church in

Ephesians 1: 17:

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

It is God that gives the Spirit of wisdom. But what will it do?

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.

Ephesians 1: 18-19

The Spirit of wisdom enlightens your understanding, using you to know what God has in store for you. It enables you to be mentally productive by illuminating your mind, and imparting you with creative abilities for exploits. It offers strange skills for you to excel in whatever area God has placed you. That is why the Bible says:

I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

Proverbs 8: 12

God's wisdom is creative; so when the Spirit of wisdom is at work in you, you will find heaven just directing you on very mysterious frequencies, to cause you to improve continually on where you are per time. God's wisdom is the ability to form and reform, the ability to create and recreate. We are going to have waves of inventions these last days in the body of Christ, ingenious waves of creativity. Things will just be happening, by reason of God's wisdom at work in His Church. People will begin laying hold on hidden wisdom, to do outstanding exploits.

There will be such strange inventions in our time the wisdom of God at work in the Church will cause her to burst forth with countless witty inventions. The end-time Church will gain prominence by the many-sided wisdom of God, which only the Holy Spirit imparts.

The Holy Spirit is the One that connects us to the wisdom of God. He teaches us by opening us up to the deep things of God. He helps us out in our quest for knowledge, and reveals truth to our spirit-man. The Holy Spirit can't teach you and you won't understand what He's teaching you. When He teaches you, He quickens your understanding to grasp the things He's revealing to you.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him - even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

1 Corinthians 2: 10-13

God is set to bring a mental revolution to you, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There is a Spirit called the Spirit of wisdom. It is one of the seven spirits of God, and is delivered to you on request.

You can't operate the Spirit of wisdom and not be creatively productive. There's a better way of doing that job, and a better approach to that assignment. All you need do is to call on Him, to show you the better way, just as Solomon did:

Give me now wisdom and knowledge that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people that is so great!

2 Chronicles 1: 10

It Makes Stars! No one ever gains access to the Spirit of wisdom without becoming a star.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

Daniel 12:3

Their shining will command attention and bring attraction. Note that I'm not talking about the wisdom of this world here. This is not intellectual, technological or scientific wisdom. I'm talking about the wisdom of God in a mystery, which only the Holy Spirit teaches (not the universities and colleges). It is this wisdom that will bring you into the limelight without sweat!

Revelation 5: 10 tells us that by the blood of Jesus we have been redeemed unto God as priests and kings and we shall reign on the earth. He redeemed you to reign, and it is by wisdom that kings reign, and princes decree justice (Prov.8: 15). You don't have a place in the end-time army without the Spirit of wisdom, because it is a reigning army. So like 1 Corinthians 12:31 counsels, covet this all-important gift.

No one has encounter with the Spirit of wisdom without making outstanding marks in life. Joseph took over government in Egypt by the Spirit of wisdom. Pharaoh could not help but declare:

...Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet all wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

Genesis 41:39-41

The Spirit of wisdom established Joseph's prominence in a strange land. It also established Daniel in a place of prominence among his enemies. The wisdom at work in him was described as the wisdom of the gods (Dan. 5:11).

Worthy of note is the fact that everyone that operated in the Spirit of wisdom lived a clean life. This is because the Holy Spirit will not relate with filthy men, Daniel lived a clean life. He purposed in his heart not to defile himself (Dan. 1: 8). When cornered by Potiphar's wife to lie with him, Joseph said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? " (Gen. 9: 39). They lived extraordinary and very productive lives because of the wisdom of God at work in them. But first of all, they were men of pure of hearts. God said in Proverbs 1:23:

Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

You can't gain access into His wisdom until you have turned at His reproof. No filthy man will ever have access to the Spirit of wisdom. So don't block your access to the throne; leave that sin before it makes a reproach of your life. If you clean up, God promises to beautify you with His wisdom. So, place a demand on God for the release of that Spirit to you. Remember that he that asketh receiveth.

The Spirit of Understanding

Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

Proverbs 13: 15

There is a Spirit of understanding. It is the excellent Spirit that causes men to excel cheaply. It makes one become outstanding on the earth. It is the ability to intelligibly diagnose situations, put solutions together, and be able to go on to the ultimate end of obtaining practical results. It is knowing what to do to bring situations under control. It is so important that Apostle Paul prayed it for the Ephesian Church:

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

Ephesians 1: 18

Nothing becomes outstanding without understanding. See how Daniel took over in the land of Babylon. Understanding made him to stand out. He was able to disarm darkness and locate his place in God. Hear how he was described:

There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;

Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.

Daniel 5:11-12

The understanding that comes from God is likened to light. The problems of life are darkness; so when that light comes, darkness has no choice but to give way. Psalm 112:4 says:

Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness...

There's a level of understanding you walk in that every hierarchy of darkness will have no choice but to give way when you're coming. Concerning Jesus the Bible says in

Luke 2:47:

And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

Friend, there's a spirit called the Spirit of understanding. It is also known as the excellent spirit. It distinguished Daniel in the land of captivity. You are now in a free land, that same spirit will much more cheaply distinguish you, in the name of Jesus

The Spirit of understanding is a gift from God.

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Daniel 1:17

"God gave them ..." The Spirit of understanding comes from God. It was the chief reason for their outstanding accomplishments in the land of Babylon. He gave it to them then, and is still giving it today.

Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

Daniel 2:20-23

That level of understanding is not possible, except by the finger of God! The Bible says that gift knows what is in the darkness. That's unusual insight! No wonder Daniel knew what was in darkness, and light dwelled with him.

Please note that there are two levels of understanding. One has to do with your spiritual understanding, while the other has to do with skillfulness in what God has planned for you from the beginning. Here are examples of both respectively:

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Colossians 1:9

And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah;

And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.

Exodus 35:30-31

I'd like you to lay hold on supernatural skill in handling whatever assignment God has placed in your hands. It will cause others to come and learn from you. Understanding guarantees the

delivery of profit. Your result reveals the quality of the light you carry and the quality of your life is a result of the level of light available to you.

Light is what is called understanding. It illuminates so as to reveal. There's a difference between knowledge and understanding. Knowledge is discovering what exists, while understanding is insight into it. Understanding tells you how to take delivery of what exists. May the Spirit of understanding distinguish you in this ongoing move of God.

The Spirit of Counsel

This is the mother of visions and guidance. The Bible says:

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it...
Isaiah 30:21

This is the mother of guidance; and it is one of the seven Spirits of the Lord. It guides your steps. The Spirit of counsel divinely orders your steps, so you will be free from all regrets.

God's guidance guarantees greatness. When you lay hold on His counsel, your destiny is secured. This is because when God tells you which way to go, that way must prosper. When He says to you, "Go!" no evil can stop you, and when He says, "Move!" no devil can push you down either. When God leads, it makes a leader of the led. If God leads you, you'll become a leader in that path He is leading you. That is the importance of the Spirit of counsel.

We are in the days of vision, so we need the operations of the Spirit of counsel more than ever before. The Spirit of counsel gives visions to men. It says to you, "This is the way, walk ye in it." It directs your path into the realms of excellence.

God's counsel guarantees the end (Isa.46: 9-10), as His counsel cannot be cancelled. When located and pursued, the end is secured. Also, when you invoke the release of the Spirit of counsel, all wariness, frustrations and regrets come to a final end - "for (His) counsel it shall stand." I have not taken any major step without the sound of the Spirit of counsel since 1976. That Spirit will guide you no from today!

Do you want to know how Jesus made it so great? He said:

I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which has sent me.
John 15:30

He was perfectly directed, so He made perfect impact everywhere He went. That was the mystery behind the exploits in His ministry. He had the release of the Spirit of counsel upon His life, and that made all the difference. No wonder the Psalmist said:

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Psalm 23:1-5

What happens when the Lord is your Shepherd? Our enemies are rendered helpless, by virtue of the divine presence you carry. He will cause you to become an economic giant in the midst of economic crisis. You will also be bursting forth in sound health in the midst of an epidemic. His guidance is the mystery behind my stamina; that's what makes the difference in our ministry.

You need the Spirit of counsel to do exploits, because you need His guidance and visions to have manifestations. The Spirit of counsel is the force behind visions in life (Prov. 29: 18). It offers guidance and direction, so that God's purpose for your life is not lost.

Jesus knew what He came for, but He still enjoyed the ministry of the Spirit of counsel throughout His time here on earth. When He was told that Lazarus was sick, the Bible says, "He abode two days still ill the place where he was" (Jn. 11:6). Then on the third day, He said, "Let us go ..." That was when the Spirit of counsel said to Him, "Move!" If He had moved earlier, Lazarus may not have woken up from the dead.

Friend, the Spirit of counsel will always lead you to the region of exploits. How we need that spirit today King David always received counsel from God before he went forth to any battle; and every counsel from God produced results for him. When you are guided, you are guided into greatness and prominence. Let' lay hold on the ministry of the Spirit of counsel.

But how can we put this Spirit to work in our lives? By constantly inquiring of the Lord before you make any move. Before every move, always ask, "Spirit of God, this is what I'm thinking; but what are You saying?" And the Spirit of God will respond with specific instructions and direction. Like all things that have to do with the Spirit, don't let sin deafen your ears to hear His instructions, because He will surely speak.

It takes the ministry of the Holy Spirit to have meaning in the kingdom. Without the spirit of counsel, I wouldn't be in ministry today, as the Spirit of counsel helps me improve on existing results. I command the same grace to come upon you, in the precious name of Jesus.

The Spirit of Might

There is a Spirit of might. By this I mean that inner strength and tireless energy, the kind Jesus possessed. No vision can deliver results without strength, unique strength. You cannot walk in dominion if you are down today and up tomorrow. Paul knew this too well, hence he again prayed this prayer for the Ephesian Church:

*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,
That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.*

Ephesians 3: 14-16

Habakkuk 2:2 also says:

... Write the vision ... that he may RUN that readeth it.

You need strength to run. God is going to deliver unusual strength to the end-time Church. Daniel 11:32 says it is those who do know their God that shall be strong and do exploits. You need strength to do exploits; and this strength can only be delivered to you by the Spirit of might.

Judges 15 tells us that when the Spirit came mightily upon Samson, he used the jawbone of an ass to slay one thousand Philistines. He uprooted the gate of a city (post and all), and carried it up the mountain! Samson was never down. As long as the Spirit of might was upon him, nobody could handle him. Receive that Spirit of might now, in Jesus' name!

Paul stayed in the deep (of the sea) for one whole night! At another time, he was stoned and left for dead. But no sooner had his "killers" turned their backs, than he jerked back to life! The man of war stood up and continued on his mission! Very strange strength - it was the Spirit of might at work. I see every weakness in your life die now, in Jesus name!

Every great accomplishment requires great strength to bring it to pass. Jesus taught for three days at a stretch; He was always on duty, "about my Father's business," yet He never broke down. The Spirit of might was heavy upon His life.

There are many things your spirit wants to do, but your flesh is weak to do them. In Ephesians 3:16, we discover that the Spirit of God strengthens our inner man for exploits. Jesus said:
I must work the works of him that sent me... John 9:4

You need strength to do the work of the kingdom.

If you do that work in the flesh, you'll die cheaply, as there's no way you can pursue heavenly vision with natural strength. The Root of Might

Let me show you the source of the Spirit of might.

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me ...

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the OIL of JOY for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

Isaiah 61:1,3

The Holy Spirit is sometimes known as "The Oil of Joy." The might of heaven is released upon you through avenues of joy. Show me a man that is never broken - hearted, and I will show you a man of unique strength. The oil of joy upon you automatically releases the Spirit of might. Look at Nehemiah 8:10 ... *Neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*

So the mystery of the Spirit of might is packaged in the oil of joy. This was what accounted for the unique strength in Jesus' ministry.

Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Psalm 45:7

Jesus operated in the oil of gladness. It energizes the spirit-man; turning you into another man. I used to be weakling, that anointing came upon me. Now I can do all things through Christ who strengthen me (Phil. 4:13).

The oil of gladness and joy is the secret behind the Spirit of might. Jesus had more of it than anybody else; no wonder He demonstrated more strength than anyone else. He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

The Holy Ghost is the One who imparts joy unspeakable that is full of glory, joy that cannot be explained in natural terms. Only the Holy Ghost can give you joy when things are not working. No matter what is happening around you, you're just on top! I see you come out of every sorrow of heart, in the name of Jesus! No matter what the situation is like, when you stick your life to the joy of the Holy Ghost, God makes some unique strength available to you, which will take you from the valley to your high places in life (Hab. 3:17-19).

The Bible says:

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

Proverbs 17:22

Most sicknesses people suffer today are as a result of a broken heart. It is a broken heart that results in broken body, as you are never broken outside until you're first broken inside. But when the inner-man is strengthened, the outer-man will be strong. That is why the Bible again says: *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear!*

Proverbs 18: 14

When your spirit is wounded, it takes your body along. So quit those depressive thoughts now. Every time your spirit is broken, it is an attempt of the devil to break your destiny. Stop him and connect yourself to the source of your help. Say to the Oil of Gladness, "I want an encounter with You. Strengthen me with might in my inner-man. "

Joy is the secret of true strength; it is God's myth behind inner strength. In these days of exploits, you don't have a place without strength. Joel 2 gives a profile of the end-time army of exploit:

The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.

Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.

They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks.

Joel 2:4-5, 7

These are men of unique strength, and it's a function of the oil of gladness. Receive it today, In the name of Jesus!

The Spirit of Knowledge

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.
John 14:26

He will teach you all things - how to stay healthy, how to prosper, keep your home, raise children, make progress, have success, name it. Before I was married, the Holy Ghost taught me how to maintain a consistent and unbroken peace in my home. He also taught me how to maintain a financial flow in the covenant. He taught me how to stay alive and fulfill my days, that's why I'm still alive today, in spite of all the attempts on my life. He equally taught me how to stay healthy, and it's almost 40 years since I was healed of tuberculosis. I'm still displaying health in the presence of my "enemies", and my health-cup "runneth over". All He taught me has stuck with me, and has made me great in life.

When the Holy Ghost teaches, it sticks with you, and makes you tick! If a man teaches, you may not fully understand, but when He teaches, the difference is clear! I don't mean verbal knowledge or intellectual exercise, but spiritual encounters with depth. The Bible says:

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
John 8:32

The Holy Spirit teaching you great depths from the Word of God is one of the fundamental truths of Christian triumph. It makes you a sweat less, triumphant Christian. He taught me how to succeed, and I have never feared failure since then. In fact, I wrote a book, Success Buttons, teaching people what keys to press to succeed in life. Everything I do succeeds, because He taught me. You can have a definite encounter with that same Spirit.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.
Ephesians 1: 17

There is a Spirit called the Spirit of revelation. When you encounter the revelation knowledge of God on any issue, you become a man of exploits in that area. It's not enough to merely read or hear; you need to catch a revelation of what you're reading and hearing. That is what makes the difference. The Psalmist said, "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard ..." [Ps. 62: 11). It is that second hearing that we call revelation. That Spirit is required to walk in dominion.

Revelation makes God's Word become personal to you - He turns the general Word into a personal word, which the charismatics call Rhema. O, God has spoken too many things to me that no man could have taught me. Note that when God teaches, it is an instruction; and when you receive it, it becomes your manifestation.

Revelation is the ability to take delivery of instructions from God, as vision without instruction equals frustration. Knowing where you're going is good, but knowing how to get there is equally important, because you never get to your destination by just knowing where you're going. You also need to know how to get there.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...
Hosea 4:6

Not knowing what to do is the reason many in the Church are down and out today. But the Spirit of revelation cheaply commands the miraculous.

Please note that the Spirit of knowledge is the same one called the Spirit of revelation in Ephesians 1: 1 7. This Spirit unfolds the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.
Mark 4:11

Every kingdom mystery you grasp makes you gain mastery in that area. So, it is not enough to merely read. The Ethiopian eunuch was reading, but had no understanding. It took Philip asking him, "Understandeth what thou what thou readest!" and expounding the scriptures to him for him to grasp what he was reading (Acts 8:30-35). It is the Spirit of revelation that reveals the mysteries of the kingdom to us.

The Spirit of knowledge destroys ignorance. It is my belief that you are not suffering because there is a great devil somewhere, but rather because of your great ignorance. But when the Spirit of revelation takes over in your life, just one scripture you read will give you multiple interpretations, until your manifestation is delivered to you. You know that when light challenges darkness, darkness gives way immediately.

I knew I would never be poor long ago, not because God appeared to me in a dream, but because I saw it from His Word, the Bible. I knew the day I saw it; it was so real. When God reveals a thing to you, you can't be confused about it. Revelation is the bedrock for every revolution in the kingdom. No wonder apostle Paul said:

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.
1 Corinthians 2:12

So that Spirit delivers to us the things that are freely given to us of God, and teaches us how to lay hold on them. There are things freely given to you, which you have not been able to receive, because they have not yet been revealed to you. You don't have to be sick for instance, let alone be hospitalized. You don't have to be poor. It's your ignorance of abundance that has kept you in lack. You don't have to suffer crisis in your home either. Your ignorance of God's instructions for a peaceful home is what is causing hardship and crisis for you. I took instructions on how to

run the ministry, how to manage my home, how to develop an ever-growing ministry, and how to grow a big church from the Bible!

Book is full of instructions. But those who miss the instructions it contains suffer devastations and destructions. Only the Holy Ghost delivers them to people, so you must accept His help right now, as He is willing to teach you.

Do you know that the men who the Bible records as turning the world upside down were ignorant and unlearned men? They didn't go to any school, as most of them were fishermen. But they were carriers of the Spirit of knowledge and revelation (Acts 4:13, 17:6)! The wisdom of the Holy Ghost was what gave them all that unusual insight they so boldly declared. Such wisdom is too high for the ordinary mind, so it's time to go to the "School of the Spirit".

The Spirit of revelation also puts you in charge, giving you dominion. It Puts You in Charge

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11:9

The end-time Church is destined to display strange authority, because of the knowledge of the Lord that is operating within her.

This Spirit also shows you a better way of doing things. Until you destroy tradition, you never gain access to the truth. There is a better way to do what you are doing now, that will take you to higher heights. The Spirit of knowledge will show it to you.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:10, "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon." So we have the power to build on where they stopped. I never saw where Paul breathe into someone, but I caught something brighter than he did - that God breathe into clay, and it became a living being (Gen. 2:7). Operating in this revelation, I met a woman who was suffering from AIDS, in Kampala, Uganda, and I said to her, "Open your mouth!" She did, and I breathe into her mouth and cursed AIDS. I told the people around, "Watch it, she's alive!"

Again, there was this little girl who hadn't had a bowel movement for five days, and her father was in tears, because her stomach was already protruding. Again, I breathe into her mouth, and few minutes later, she emptied the whole junk inside her into the toilet. Something penetrated the regions of darkness and shattered it!

A pregnant woman met me and was crying. Hospital report said her baby was breech, and she was due for delivery and was full of agitation. I asked her, "When do you want to have your baby?" And she replied, "I'm already due." I told her to open her mouth, and breathe into her, instructing her to, "Go and have your baby now!" They didn't get home from church before labour started! They had to drive into the nearest hospital. By the time her husband returned with the baby's things, he heard the cry of their newborn baby!

Revelation is developing life equations from scriptures, for outstanding solutions. It is knowing what God is saying, and putting them together in order to punish the devil and give him a technical knockout!

But note that it is not for natural men. The Bible says:

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 2: 14

You can be intellectually sound and yet be a spiritual dummy. This is because it is only the Spirit of God that knows the things of God. Therefore, only He can show it to you (1 Cor. 2:10). The Bible says it is when you know the truth that you will be free. So how much of the things of God the Spirit of God teaches you is what determines how free you will be.

Also, please note that no one who enjoys sin can ever have access into the mysteries of the kingdom of God, because they are in parables to them that are without (Mk. 4:11). They will sound as mere stories to those who wallow in sin. So it is important that you stay clean, so that the access remains open to you.

The Spirit of The Fear Of The Lord

There is something that gives birth to unprecedented exploits; it is called the fear of the Lord. For instance, Joseph, a man discreet and wise, who through his wisdom saved Egypt in the time of famine, said concerning himself, "For I fear God" (Gen. 42:18). Job was described as the greatest of all men of the East. Satan acknowledged him as possessing one outstanding quality - the fear of the Lord! "Doth Job fear God for nought!" Satan asked (Job 1:9).

Looking at all seven Spirits of God listed in Isaiah 11:2, we observe that the root of this latter rain is the fear of the Lord. It is at the bottom rung of the ladder. And just as every ladder is climbed from the bottom, you climb into the fullness of the seven Spirits from the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. The spirit of the fear of the Lord is what gives birth to the spirit of knowledge.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...

Proverbs 1: 7

Knowledge then brings you into might, which is inner strength.

... A man of knowledge increaseth strength.

Proverbs 24:5

From might you graduate to counsel. From counsel to understanding, then to wisdom, which culminates in manifestations of power.

Please understand this: the world will not fear you until your fear of God is in place. Satan will not fear you until your fear of God is established. Sickness will not fear you until your fear of God is in place, neither will failure fear you, until your fear of God is intact. So, it is your fear of God that gives you your place on the earth.

And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom...
Job 28:28

When the fear of the Lord is at work in you, you will overturn the mountains by the roots (Job 28:11). That is, you will convert obstacles to miracle.

You will cut out rivers among the rocks. That is, you will flourish, in spite of the hardship on the earth. You will also be able to stop every form of wickedness around you. Destruction and death will fear you too (vs.22).

God's presence is guaranteed when the fear of the Lord is in place in your life. The thrice-Holy God demands holiness from you. If you don't let Him have it, neither will you have Him! God demands our holiness for us to enjoy His presence. We can't have His presence until we give Him what it takes.

I'd like you to understand that nothing is more valuable than divine presence in your Christian adventure. That is your greatest asset. And the fear of the Lord is the price to pay for it. Without His presence your place on earth will be lost, and your hope of getting to heaven will be uncertain.

The Spirit of the fear of the Lord is what Apostle Paul refers to as the "Spirit of holiness" in Romans 1:3-4:

*Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;
And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*

Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power because the spirit of holiness was at work in Him. He was tempted at all points, yet was without sin, so He qualified to be anointed without measure. Jesus knew no sin, no wonder He knew no defeat. He was in touch with heaven. Since He walked in purity, the Father always responded to Him. In fact, Jesus was dedicated to doing only the things that pleased God.

And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.
John 8:29

If God is holy, you can't walk with Him except you are holy. The Bible asked in Psalm 24:3-4:

*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord! or who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.*

When you walk with God, you are guaranteed automatic exploits. His presence commands exploit. - the sea gives way to Him, and Jordan is drive I' back for Him. The mountains skip like rams before Him [Ps. 114). But sin repels God's presence. So when sin disappears, His presence is made manifest, and exploits are inevitable. The barrier between man and the flow of the Spirit of the fear of the Lord is sin. Until the sin barrier is broken down, man's separation from God remains.

When you become free from sin, you become a friend of God and you have access to all things that the Father has shown Jesus. When this happens, friend, you begin to operate at the level Jesus operated, and you begin to do the type of exploits He did, and even greater as He promised.

The seven Spirits of God gave Jesus His throne, they will give you yours also! When the former rain came, He said, "You shall be endued with power from on high." But He promised to give us both the former and the latter rain in the first month. So in our time, we are going to experience the six other Spirits in practical manifestation - the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.

When the seven Spirits of God are at work in you, your rest shall be glorious. You will become more than conquerors in the conflicts of life, and you will walk on in dominion.

Now pray this prayer with me:

"Lord, let all Your waves and billows come over me! I want to have an encounter with the seven Spirits of God."

Sermon Nine

Title: Deliverance from Repeated Unpleasant Circumstances and Situations by Pastor Tunde Aremu⁹

There are people that suffer unnecessary hardships, handicaps, misfortunes and attacks in their family or business without any clear explanation as to why those things are happening. They work hard, pray and fast, yet there is no significant result.

In cases of couples who are waiting on God for the fruit of the womb, some have gone through every possible medical test and surgery, yet the story is still the same. In some cases, even doctors have confirmed that a couple is medically fit for conception, but nothing happens.

To some, contrary to what the Bible says that whatever we put our hands on to do shall prosper, they experience failure in all their business undertakings. They have tried their hands on almost every type of business venture, yet they are still trying to live. In a few cases, some have noticed the same trend in the lives of other members of their family - both immediate and extended.

For instance, cases of ladies not getting married early enough, several people not having children after marriage, some marry after they have had children out of wedlock, some marry and divorce no matter how hard they try to save the marriage, a constant record of failure in examinations in

⁹ Tunde Aremu, *Prayer and Deliverance for Believers*, Ibadan, 2003

spite of hard work, the list is endless. Some of these examples and several others suggest that witches or wizards or a curse is operating.

One brother noticed that all his four brothers and sisters were childless after marriage. When he was to marry, he fasted and prayed for seven days on this issue. During the prayer the Lord laid on his heart not to consummate the marriage for the first seven days of his wedding, and that the problem will be revealed and solved. Eventually this brother got married, and he and his bride travelled out for their honeymoon.

The wife insisted that they should make love on the second day of their honeymoon, but the brother refused. He explained the situation in the family and what the Lord told him. By the third day, the lady threatened divorce if her husband refused to sleep with her. The brother told her rather bluntly that if she did not want the same experience that his elder ones have fallen into, she should exercise patience; after all, they had stayed for several years without making love before they got married. The sister refused. It was a tug of war. But the Lord helped this man to maintain his stand.

On the seventh day, this man received an urgent message from home that his mother was critically sick in the hospital and at the point of death. She insisted that all her children must assemble before her immediately.

. They rushed to the hospital just on time and she confessed, crying before all the children that she was a witch and was responsible for their barren state. She narrated that her class of witchcraft group usually assembled the first few days of marriage of their children, so that they would collect the sperm (spiritually); the first time the couple slept together, and work on it so that the couple will be childless for life. Luck ran out on her, however, when her fifth child got married, as he would not go near his wife. The group assembled as usual, demanding for the usual sperm, but she could not present it. The meeting was adjourned till the next day, and still there was no sperm and she was given another 24 hours grace. This time she said she was desperate, she grew frantic, and spiritually, she went to the hotel room where her son and the wife were staying, and worked into the wife's thoughts, which was why the wife threatened her husband with divorce.

The council of witches could not understand her reluctance to bring the required sperm, and it was as if she had committed a high treason, so, the council sent witches to nail her for making the council meeting fruitless. After all her apologies and weeping, she shouted that they had nailed her, and she died.

The question is, how can a mother, the woman who gave birth to these five children make all her children childless? Was she forced or did she do it willingly? She would have pretended to be concerned; she might have spent money or perhaps accused her innocent daughters-in-law of infertility. No wonder the Bible says, members of our household could be our enemies.

For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.
(Micah 7:6)

Jesus Himself confirmed it when he said,

"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household"
(Matthew 10:36).

Jesus told the unbelievers that they are of their father, the devil (John 8: 44). Apostle Paul said, the devil perfects his works in the children of disobedience, (Ephesians 2: 2). Under pressure, our loved ones who are unbelievers can obey their father, the devil, despite the fact that they care so much for us. Of a truth, the days are evil.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassion fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.
(Lamentations 3:22, 24)

Please do not get me wrong. The fact that someone is not born again does not mean he is a witch or wizard. And you should not suspect everyone, refuse to take gifts, . or stop eating at friends' houses. And not all mothers are wicked. After all the Bible says,

Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. .
(I John 4:4b)

And these signs shall follow them.' that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; ... and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. (Mark 16: 17-18)

Prayer Points

1. I decree destruction upon every household enemy that is resisting my breakthrough in the name of Jesus.
2. Every unfriendly friend delegated against my blessings, I sweep you away with the broom of destruction in the name of Jesus (Isaiah 14:23).
3. Every spirit of disobedience and rebellion in my life, I torment you out by .fire in the name of Jesus. (Deuteronomy 15:5).
4. Lord, let every power propagating evil covenants in my family receive total paralysis in the name of Jesus (Exodus 34:7).
5. I command that any part of my body in the custody of my enemy be-released now in the name of Jesus.
6. By the 39 stripes of Jesus, I receive total healing for every stubborn sickness in my body.
7. Every power of ignorance holding me captive, loose your hold now in the name of Jesus (Hosea 4:6).
8. Lord, feed me with the truth that-will set me free from demonic prisons in the name of Jesus (John 8:32).
9. Every satanic power binding me with sicknesses and diseases, I overcome you by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 12: 11).
10. Anchor of bondage in my life, be uprooted by the fire of the Holy Ghost in the name of Jesus.
11. You spirit of hardship, loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus.

12. Every problem in my life that defies solution, receive the touch of God in the name of Jesus.
13. Let the anchor of every stubborn problem in my life break and loose their hold in the name of Jesus.
14. I challenge every power resisting the power of God in my life by the great earthquake and thunder of God in the name of Jesus.
15. Let every mountain in my life give way in the name of Jesus.
16. Let every unseen hand working evil in my life wither in the name of Jesus.
17. I frustrate every power frustrating my life by fire in the name of Jesus.
18. I reject every spirit of failure in every area of my life and family in the name of Jesus.
19. I reject, bind and cast out every spirit of acute poverty in my life in the name of Jesus.
20. I pull off every garment of poverty put upon me in the name of Jesus, and let them be roasted by the fire of the Holy Ghost.
21. I reject every sin of disobedience in my life in the name of Jesus.
22. You that demon of Mammon, loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus.
23. I refuse to labour and put my wages in pockets with holes in the name of Jesus.
24. I refuse to sow and build for others to inherit in the name of Jesus.
25. I reject and cast out the spirit of Asthma in the name of Jesus.
26. You the spirit of anger in my life loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus.
27. I break every stronghold and palace of anger in my life by fire in the name of Jesus.
28. I reject you spirit of unforgiveness in my life and I command you to come out of me in the name of Jesus.
29. I reject you, spirit of bitterness, loose your hold of my life in the name of Jesus.
30. I challenge every strongman of anger in my life by fire, loose your hold of my life in the name of Jesus.
31. You spirit of lust and immorality, come out of my life now in the name of Jesus.
32. I command every lying spirit to come out of my life in the name of Jesus.
33. Let every tool of prayerlessness be uprooted out of my life in the name of Jesus.
34. You deaf and dumb demon, jump out of my life by fire in the name of Jesus and come back no more in Jesus' name.
35. I reject every spirit of stealing in my life (conscious and unconscious). Come out of my life by fire in the name of Jesus.
36. I reject every spirit of blindness (physical and spiritual blindness) in my life; be flushed out by fire in the name of Jesus.
37. Let every evil root of poverty be destroyed out of my life in the name of Jesus.
38. I rebuke all household wickedness in Jesus' name.
39. Any problem arranged for the future for me, receive total destruction in Jesus' name.
40. Every satanic time bomb planted into my future, be destabilized totally in Jesus' name.
41. Every problem programmed into the heavenlies for me be brought down by the hook of God and be destroyed by fire.
42. Every circle/chain of problems in my life, receive multiple destruction in Jesus' name.
43. Oh Lord, render me inaccessible, untouchable and impenetrable to household wickedness, for greater is he that is in me than the devil that is in the 'world (I John 4:4).

Real Life Experiences

Human beings have the will to either accept a situation, if it is good, or reject it, if it is bad. The things we want to reject are usually dealt with in deliverance ministrations.

These are some of the situations people usually reject.

Acute poverty or always living a life of insufficiency

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. (3 John 2)

*But thou shall remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.
(Deuteronomy 8:18)*

Throughout the Bible, God never promised his children poverty or a life of suffering at any time, as long as we obey His word. In fact, He promised that poverty will be removed from us.

*However, there should be no poor among you, for in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you.
(Deuteronomy 15:4 - NIV)*

Now, since these passages are in the Bible, why should acute poverty and suffering be among God's people? Why do Christians lose all their capital in business, their jobs find it difficult to pay rent or their children's school fees? Many Christians cannot even boast of eating balanced diets. Many live on charity. For how long shall all these be?

God's promises are not served on a platter of gold. You as a Christian have your own part to fulfil before you can enter into God's abundance.

*And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify again of you this day that ye shall surely perish.
(Deuteronomy 8:19)*

The concluding sentence of Deuteronomy 15:4 says,

Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day.
(Deuteronomy 15:5)

And the NIV says,

*If only you fully obey the LORD your God and are careful to follow all these commands I am giving you today.
(Deuteronomy 15:5)*

If you want to live in abundant prosperity, you have to obey God in all things. If you disobey God, you automatically obey the devil and in a way acknowledge him as your master and you

have given him the licence to lead you on. And what does the devil have to offer you? Destruction (John 10: 10a)

Disobedience to God as I have said can open a door to the devil, thus inviting the spirit of mammon and the spirit of poverty. They operate in several ways. In some cases the people concerned will experience itching sensation on their palm when the devil is stealing their money. Some people experience physical dis-appearance of their money; some cannot give an account of how or on what their money was spent while some realise that it takes a lot of effort and time on their part to make money. To some others still, they always have mounting problems that always make them live a life of continual insufficiency.

Of a truth, some of such people are operating under a curse. For details on this area, read my book *Covenants, Curses and The Way Out*.

Sicknesses that have defied all medications

And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years.

*And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.
(Mark 5:25-26)*

The story of the woman above is familiar to most of us. She had an issue of blood for twelve years. During this period, she spent all that she had and was not better, but rather grew worse. When a case transcends all medical efforts, going to Britain, United States or Germany to see another experienced medical specialist is not the answer. The satanic powers and principalities behind that case must be cast out. Much praying, speaking in tongues, fasting and making positive confessions are all temporary measures. Jesus removes such cases totally during deliverance ministrations.

Some have gone for surgery for a particular problem three or four times. Some have intermittent skin diseases, and body odour that the best perfumes and medications cannot conceal. Many have devised means of coping with their problems silently. Why should you devise means of coping with what Paul called, the "messenger of Satan?" (II Cor. 12:7). Some sick people's situations will improve to a point where there are rays of hope, but behold, they will relapse without any real medical explanation, and eventually die. The lady with the issue of blood went to Jesus after she had wasted all her earthly resources and Jesus healed and delivered her immediately.

Between the 5th and 8th of March, 1995, I was preaching at a meeting in Abuja. It was a programme organised by the First Baptist Church, Garki. When I finished preaching, I told the brethren to pray targeted, and specific spiritual warfare prayers, and the atmosphere changed .. The brethren prayed like their lives depended on it, and they got their desired results. There were lots of testimonies to the glory of God. Jesus Himself said,

*And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.
(Matthew 11:12)*

We have to be violent and specific when we pray against the host of hell. This is called balanced deliverance prayer.

One lady just shouted in the meeting and fell under the anointing. During testimonies, she said she just understood how to deal with the enemy that had caused her to have heartburn that defied medications for 13 years. She said, while she was praying, she saw one hand that moved straight to her heart, removed the old one and replaced it with a brand new heart. She fell when the surgery began, and got up after the spiritual surgery. She saw all that happened.

Friend, the spare parts of the bad or missing parts in your body are available in the store house of God. He is not tired of making happy anybody who meets His terms and conditions. That lady also got the accommodation which government authorities have refused to approve for years, before the programme ended. In fact, she said the man personally approved, signed and delivered the letter to her and he later wondered what he had done. People who have hindered your blessing will release them without knowing what they are doing. God is on the move.

This balanced deliverance prayer of being violent, and praying targeted, strategic and specific prayer, works faster than all methods known today. From experience, once the individual is fully fired by the word of God, and fully understands the authority he has as a believer, the balanced deliverance prayer will just cut across the soul and marrow of any demonic affliction.

Another testimony occurred while I was ministering at His Grace Evangelical Church, Scout Camp, Ibadan, on April 13, 1994. I decided not to minister or lay hands on anyone but to teach brethren how to handle their cases. Satan is not as powerful over a believer as the average believer thinks he is. The Bible says, when we shall see him, we shall be surprised that it was one ugly, boastful creature that has held many spellbound over his abilities all these years.

*They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, is this the man that made the earth to tremble,
That did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof;
that opened not the house of his prisoners?
(Isaiah 14:16, 17)*

Knowledge has a major role to play when we want to receive our blessings from God. One lady in the meeting started shouting, "Come out. You are an idiot. No compromise at all. No dialogue." It was so loud that in a congregation of about 800 people her voice was heard, and I was forced to look towards her directly. She ran around, shouting and pointing to an object or somebody which she alone saw.

After the prayers, I asked for testimonies. The lady was the first to run forward. She said, "I have suffered from asthma for 21 years. In every prayer meeting or fellowship, I have prayed against it. But tonight, I got to understand who I am and how I can deal with the devil. As I opened my mouth to say, you asthma, come out in Jesus' name, somebody jumped out of me and said, "Please let's negotiate. Let's settle." That was why I started shouting at him and pursuing him and

the moment he disappeared, I got my total healing." That testimony shook all of us. Asthma, a spirit being? Oh yes!

The demons troubling some people reside in them while others are attacking from outside. In cases where demons reside in an individual, specific and targeted spiritual warfare prayer should be applied. Jesus dealt with such a case in Luke 13.

And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God (Luke 13:11-13)

When the Jews accused him of healing on a sabbath day, He said,

And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? (Luke 13: 16)

Satan binds people with sicknesses and diseases, and in some cases, leaves a demon in that person to torment him or in some other cases, he attacks from outside and afflicts.

Fourteen years ago, 1981, I was preaching in a crusade on the subject, "With God all things are possible". I had hardly finished preaching when an elderly woman brought one girl to me for prayers. This woman said, "This girl is deaf. You said, God can do anything, he can solve any problem and heal any sickness." I could not deny this because I had just finished preaching that message.

Fear almost gripped me. It was about 2 years in the Lord. Prior to this time, I had seen God heal headache, stomach-ache, etc., but no deaf, dumb or blind person had ever been healed in my meeting. How do I go about it? I was still at a loss, when the Holy Spirit spoke quietly in my heart, "Cast out deaf spirits." That was the first time in my life that I knew that whatever sickness or symptom the devil manifests is the demon's name. So,

. there are spirits of anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, immorality, lying, stealing, prayerlessness, blindness, dumbness, poverty, etc.

I spoke out, with my eyes closed, "You deaf demons, come out of her and enter her no more in Jesus' name." Immediately I heard a sound as if somebody felt I opened my eyes only to see her on the floor. I had never seen, heard nor been told that people fall under the anointing. If it were now, I would have left her on the floor until she regains her consciousness. But I quickly carried her up and asked, "What happened to you?" She replied, "When you spoke that command, I saw one man with a sword coming towards me and I fell. When I fell, five black creatures ran out of me and immediately, my ears opened."

Oh I rejoiced that night. I felt like calling back all those who had attended the crusade that night to come back and hear that testimony if not that they had left a long time ago. I learnt another

lesson, that, the deliverance minister should not close his eyes when ministering deliverance. You are not praying to the devil, you are commanding him to leave.

Prayer Points:

Any power working against my treasure, be disgraced out of my life by fire. (Deuteronomy 28:12)

The Lord gives me power to make wealth; therefore, I destroy every power working against my finances in Jesus' name.

Every power of poverty, jump out of my life in Jesus' name.

Mammon, I disgrace you out of my life in Jesus' name.

I fill every hole dug in my palm by demons with the blood of Jesus mingled with the fire of God.

I flush out all atoms of disobedience in my life by the blood of Jesus. (I Samuel 15:22b.)

Sermon Ten

Title: Deliverance From Occult Practices by Pastor Mrs. Toyin Okehi¹⁰

This is very serious. Many people have handed themselves and their families over to the devil at one time or the other unknowingly. When such people repent and become born again, it is not sufficient for them to only invite Jesus into their lives but also to break every link and contact they had had with the devil.

Former Muslims

Most Muslims have an anti-Christ demon. So if an individual or his parents have been Muslims before, they may have a demon of anti-Christ by virtue of their former religion. With the activities of that demon, they just hate Christianity with passion. When anybody repents from following Islam, he or she needs deliverance. Whether he has been a Christian for a long time or not, as long as he has not formally renounced that demon and been ministered to, it sometimes affects his relationship with God.

When things go tough, a little feeling of hatred towards God and the assembly of believers begins to well up in the person. It is better for one to dissociate from anything the devil may use as an effective weapon in times of trouble.

Prayer Points:

I reject every anti-Christ demon in my life, and I command you to come out now in the name of Jesus.

Any evil thing planted in my life by the spirit of antichrist, loose your hold and come out in the name of Jesus.

I flush my conscience of all evil knowledge I had about Christ by the blood of Jesus, in the name of Jesus.

I reject and break every covenant with the spirit of anti-Christ and its works in the name of Jesus.

Former juju priest or priestesses

All those who have served demons at any time as priests or priestesses need serious deliverance after they receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. Burning the shrine charms

¹⁰ Toyin Okehi, *Christ the Cornerstone*, Lagos, 2000

etc., although shows a genuine, willingness to serve the Lord, but the things that demons have planted in the body of the person, the satanic powers and the authority the person had in the spirit realm, should be destroyed.

Prayer Points:

1. I renounce and nullify my priesthood to any strange god or Baal, in the name of Jesus.
2. I flush out by the blood everything working contrary to the love of God in my life by the blood of Jesus.
3. I destroy every work of Baal in my life by fire in Jesus' name
4. I renounce every authority given to me against the will of God by the blood of Jesus. Jesus is my authority.
5. Every position that is exalting itself against the knowledge of God I relinquish you in the mighty name of Jesus. Ecclesiastes 8:4.
6. I apply the blood of Jesus to my foundations and flush out evil mark working against me.

I blot out very effect of satanic marks in my foundation by the blood of Jesus.

Psalm 51:2 - O Lord, cleanse me from all conscious and unconscious sins in the name of Jesus.

Those dedicated to the devil

Many Christians were ignorantly dedicated to the devil when they were born. This is apparent in the type of names some people bear, names ascribing praises or glory to the devil and his works. Some have marks on their faces and incisions on every part of their body. All such people dedicated, to the devil may find things extremely difficult unless they go for deliverance.

All the children of a former or present priest or priestess of the devil have been dedicated to the devil. It is like what obtains in Christendom when a child is dedicated in the church at the end of 40 days. For instance, in 1991 when my wife was pregnant, I laid hands on her tummy regularly and dedicated the twins unto God. I did this regularly until they were born. When they were eventually born, I laid hands on them; spoke in tongues, prophesied over them and again decreed that they should be filled with the Holy Spirit. After 30 days, we took them to our church and our Pastor officially dedicated them to God. A child dedicated to God this way can never be compared with the one dedicated to the devil.

Just like I dedicated my twins to God, majority of juju priests or priestesses if not all, dedicate their own children to their own gods in whom they believe. All such children dedicated to the devil have a measure of satanic presence which is supposed to guide and protect them just as the Holy Spirit does for those dedicated unto the Almighty God. When such potential satanic agents turn to God for salvation, they must consciously renounce these demons if they want to experience progress in their lives. If they don't and they eventually pass on, they will still go to heaven, but the devilish covenants and things deposited in them, could delay their miracles and make things very tight and difficult for them while on earth.

Also, those whose traditions or customs require the first son or first daughter to perform a rite either by initiation, marking or partaking of a special food, must renounce and break ties with these links. It is dangerous when you allow the devil another extra day after you have known the truth. The Bible says, we shall know the truth and the truth shall make us free (John 8:32).

Prayer Points:

1. I reject every evil dedication of my life in the name of Jesus.
2. Every mark of incision (occultic or satanic), be erased by the blood of Jesus in Jesus' name.
3. I challenge every monitoring spirit assigned against my life by fire in the name of Jesus.
4. I rededicate my life to the Lord God in the name of Jesus.
5. I terminate every satanic rite, I renounce your effect and break your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus.

Those who have been to juju houses

Each time we are to hold our night vigils (second and last Fridays of the month in Lagos and Ibadan respectively), we usually fast and pray, and in most cases sanctify the hall of meeting, and pray over each bench or chair that whoever comes to the meeting would receive a measure of God's touch and miracle. Many have come back to testify that the moment they entered the hall of meeting, their sicknesses or problems disappeared. This is done in most Churches and Ministries.

In the same vein, juju priests and priestesses usually prepare themselves before their god; they arm themselves with incantations to release on their clients. A specific demon called Baal follows such people home to ensure that the agreement signed in the priest's shrine holds. When anybody decides to follow Jesus, it is mandatory to go for deliverance to be free from all such contaminations and get purified. Even if that agreement was signed 50 years ago, it makes no difference. There are trillions of demons in existence so several demons can be assigned to follow an individual for life and the devil will see to it that this work lacks no demonic backing. So everyone who has been to juju houses need to be delivered from Baal demons.

Prayer Points:

I revoke every satanic incantation working against my life in the name of Jesus.

I challenge the activities of Baal spirit in my life by fire in the name of Jesus.

You Belial spirit and you associate, loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus.

I clear off every evil cloud following after my life by fire in the name of Jesus.

I reject and break every blood covenant existing between me and demons through incision by the blood of Jesus.

Former cult members

All those who have been members or have participated in pseudo-Christian religions e.g. Grail Message, AMORC, Freemasonry, New Age, Hare Krishna, etc., or been in cults like Ogboni confraternity. etc., at whatever level, need thorough deliverance. If not, the promises, covenants and oaths taken while they were members, will be used by the devil to torment the people with terminal sicknesses, diseases, or even death.

That is why if any person ceased to be members of such cults without being born again, most of them suffer severely for it. It is only Jesus that can truly protect and guide one from all the attacks of the devil. a lot to be discussed under this topic but that would come under a separate book.

Prayer points:

1. I reject every occultic material in my life and I destroy you by fire in the name of Jesus.
2. I renounce my membership of any occultic group (mention the name) I belong to in the name of Jesus.
3. I redeem my life from the grip of every occultic power by the blood of Jesus in the name of Jesus.
4. Any blood covenant between me and any agent of the devil, break now by the blood of Jesus (Isaiah 28: 18).
5. I release myself from every covenant working against my breakthrough in Jesus' name (Isaiah 28:18).
6. Any abnormality programmed into my spirit, soul and body through evil covenants, be evacuated by the blood of Jesus.
7. I reject and renounce membership of any group I had been involved within the past with the blood of Jesus.
8. Blood of Jesus, speak protection on my behalf (Revelation 12: 11).

Former white garment church members

White garment churches are steeped in occult practices. They do a number of things the wrong way. They burn incense which the Bible says is an abomination for present-day Christians.

*Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me;
(Isaiah 1:13)*

The scripture says those who burn incense during their worship do so to their own demonic god called the queen of heaven (which operates in the air).

*But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil
(Jeremiah 44:17)*

In some cases, former church members who left these churches because they have seen the light of Jesus have one sad story or another to tell as leaders of these churches would not willingly let go of them and would do everything in their power to make these people come back. If they did not return, the leaders would make sure they make things difficult for them. The Bible says of those who left the worship of the queen of heaven;

*But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.
(Jeremiah 44:18)*

In some of these churches, they keep members in the enclave by intimidation, blackmail, hypnotism, control and manipulation through witchcraft. Former members who are now standing Christians should not take these threats lightly.

The reason these threats must be neutralised by fervent prayers is that anyone who has ever been a member of an occult church unknowingly enters into satanic covenant and a doorway is therefore opened for baal and religious demons to enter. And if anyone who leaves is not truly born again, his situation will be worse off as the Bible says because the person has no justification to ward off the imminent attacks the church would wage on him.

Also in the case of a former member who has undertaken the more serious covenant of bathing in the river, during deliverance ministrations, the person should be cleansed with the Blood of Jesus. He should also say, "I cleanse myself externally by bathing with the Blood of Jesus Christ," there is no ointment, power or principality that can resist the power in the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. The Blood of Jesus Christ will neutralise and destroy all the effects of poisons taken in these occult churches. The word of God says,

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

(Revelation 12:11)

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

(Hebrews 13:12)

Many people who still worship in these churches believe that they are doing the right thing. "But we also pray in the name of Jesus," they often argue. Yes, you pray in the name of Jesus, but you also bring in some other names. You mix pagan beliefs with the gospel. A lot of evils and abomination are done in the name of God, yet you argue, "But we also pray in Jesus' name." The Bible says we should resist the devil, but goes further to say that we are to flee from every appearance of evil.

A woman who was a former member of one of these churches came to our Ministry in 1994 for deliverance. Her problem started after she was bathed in the river by a so-called pastor. This woman was taken to the river by her pastor for a spiritual bath that would wash every evil away. While in the river, the pastor had sex with her and she got pregnant and gave birth to a boy who was half human and half demon. This boy tormented his mother so much that it was as if he was sent to destroy her. She finally came with the boy for deliverance. We were able to help this woman, because she told us the real cause of her problem.

In 1994, another woman gave her testimony. According to her, her problems started when she went to a so-called prophet for prayers to have a husband. This "prophet" had four wives. After taking her to the river for spiritual bath, she could no longer control herself sexually. The man used her like a dog. She could no longer reason nor have control over her sexual appetite. After several months of being used by this "prophet", the man decided to have her as the fifth wife but she refused. The man then took her for another "consecration" in the river and there gave her something to swallow. The moment she did that, she became restless, and she nearly ran mad. The "prophet" threatened that except she agrees to marry him, nobody on earth will marry her and that she would die childless

The lady then decided to leave that church; she gave her life to Jesus Christ and was filled with the Holy Spirit. Yet for years after, she had no husband. She was always sick and she had objects running round her body. Doctors could not see anything wrong with her, yet she was dying.

The whole church fasted and interceded and wept unto God on her behalf. Shortly after that, she became engaged to a Christian brother and they got married. Not long after this, she got pregnant and had a son. But the frequent illness and movement round her body continued. For another 10 years, she could not get pregnant again. After counselling and deliverance, the lady gave testimony of complete healing and she became pregnant again.

At the time of her testimony, she was 4 months pregnant. All the people who attended the "War Against Childlessness" programme that month, where she shared her testimony, were really blessed as she danced to the glory of her God who is supreme above all religious demons and charms from white garment churches.

If perhaps you have been there before, or you want to come out, your deliverance will also be total in Jesus' name.

Prayer Points:

1. I frustrate the activities of religious spirits in my life in the name of Jesus.
2. I reject every satanic anointing upon my life, and I command you to dry up in the name of Jesus.
3. Every incense I burnt (or the one that was burnt on my behalf) standing against me in the heavens, be dismantled by fire in the name of Jesus.
4. I declare every doorway opened to Baal or religious spirits in my life, closed by the blood of Jesus.
5. I withdraw all my virtue locked up in the water through evil baths by the wind of the Holy Ghost in Jesus' name.
6. Every satanic object moving in my body, be melted by fire and come out now in the name of Jesus.
7. I release myself from every evil sacrifice written against my name (Isaiah 13, 30:7, 22).
8. I drink the blood of Jesus and swallow the fire of God to purge my system.
9. I revoke every evil decree upon my life and family by the blood of Jesus (Isaiah 10: 1).
10. You mountain of evil covenants and curses, be made plain by the power of the Holy Ghost (Zechariah 4:7).
11. Lord, wipe out every religious demon working against my promotion in Jesus' name.
12. I will not return to my vomit in the mighty name of Jesus (Proverbs 26: 11, 2 Peter 2:22).
13. I overcome every evil by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 12: 11).

STEP ONE: OPEN CODING - CATALOGUING THE TEN SERMONS INTO CATEGORIES

The first process which is called **Open Coding** involves cataloguing the sermons into categories. In this thesis, the categories are two. The sermons that are my data will be conceptualized with a view to finding out in what genre of Christian motif to catalogue them, and this is a preliminary allocation of the sermons into two key categories. Details of this are written in chapter five of the thesis numbered 6.6.1.

Faith Gospel Paradigm	Demonic Possession Paradigm
Sermon 1 Prophetic Prayer Works by Pastor Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola	Sermon 2 Ancient Ancestral Covenants and Strategic Warfare by Prophet (Dr.) Samson Ayorinde
Sermon 7 Believer's Power Instrument by Bishop David Oyedepo	Sermon 3 Dealing with Territorial Strongholds by Pastor Sola Folaranmi
Sermon 8 Power in the Spirit by Bishop Kehinde Adedokun	Sermon 4 Release from Curses by Pastor Sola Akorede
	Sermon 5 Deliverance from Evil Altar by Revd. Dr. D. K. Olukoya
	Sermon 6 The Trap of Blood Covenant by Pastor Isaiah Olatunji
	Sermon 9 Deliverance from Repeated Unpleasant Circumstances and Situations by Pastor Tunde Aremu
	Sermon 10 Deliverance from Occultic Practices by Pastor Mrs. Toyin Okehi

APPENDIX II

STEP TWO: SELECTIVE CODING - IDENTIFYING BY UNDERLINING FEATURES OF YORUBA PRIMAL RELIGION IN THE 10 SERMONS

Brief Introduction to Appendix II

The sermons that have been open coded above according to the two themes are further analyzed here by identifying the primal concepts in them, through conceptualizing. This involves underlining such identifiable incidents.

Sermon One

Title: Prophetic Prayer Works by Pastor Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola¹¹

Everything has its own principles of operation whether physical or spiritual. The same applies to prophetic prayer

4. It works by faith. When prophetic prayer is released by faith, it is as potent as if God Himself had spoken.
5. All things were made by the word and the voice of the Lord and they must respond to His command directly or indirectly. Psalms 33:6-9; Colossians I: 16, Hebrews I 1:3; John 1:3.
6. All created things have ears at their own level of existence. This includes both living and non-living matters.

(a) For example, these non-living materials were addressed in prayer

(i) Earth:- Jeremiah 22:9, Numbers 17: 29-14

(ii) Altar:- I Kings 13: 1-5

(iii) The sun and the Moon:- Joshua 10: 12-14 .

(iv) Lazarus: John 11: 11

(b) Some of the living things addressed in prayers of command include:

(i) The fig tree Matthew 21: 18-20

(ii) Lazarus: - John 11:43-44

(iii) Jairus' daughter: - Luke 8:41, 49-56.

These objects were made by the word of the Lord, therefore they must obey the same word. This is the mystery of creation. The occultists and spiritualists understand this very well.

6. If all things have ears, therefore the material elements from which they were made can hear and respond to the word and voice of God.
7. Prophetic praying releases the forces and mysteries of life into action.

A notable prayer leader and a prophet shared this wonderful testimony with me not too long ago. It was about a situation in Nigeria, himself and other intercessors dealt with. It was the Tiv and Jukun war in the middle belt of Nigeria. For so many years this vicious ethnic war raged on unabated.

The Christians from both sides unfortunately were siding their own ethnic groups. While the Christians in one ethnic group were praying that God would fight against the other ethnic group.

¹¹ Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola, *Advanced Level Prayers*, Lagos, 2004

The other ethnic group was also praying the same prayer to God. But thank God for some intercessors who had knowledge of prophetic praying. They took up the challenge of ending this local ethnic misunderstanding that had developed into a full scale war fought with modern weapons. There was also a very terrible demonic complication in the skirmishes. The local people consulted the powers of darkness so much that a typical old woman would stand facing riot policemen armed with automatic rifles and amazingly collecting all the bullets with a wrapper without a single bullet hitting her. The policemen in fear and terror would stop shooting and run for their dear lives. In fact, each of the ethnic groups send only such women with demonic powers to battle while their men stayed behind watching and waiting for the other group to be exhausted in order to capture them.

These intercessors from both ethnic groups were so disturbed at these wanton destruction of their people that they decided that rather than take sides, they would stand in the gap to fast and seek God's face for what to do in order for the civil strife to come to an end. So they came together and repented of the bloodshed, forgave themselves and waited on the Lord. Then, the Lord began to speak prophetically to them on what to do.

Armed with the word of God they had received, they went to the battle front when there was a brief cease-fire. They began to address the trees, the leaves, the roots and the earth never to cooperate and obey the natives any more. They held those objects and scooped the earth in their hand and spoke to them never to respond to the incantation of the warriors again. After a long period of prayer walk and prophetic praying over the battle front, they had a spiritual release and gave God thanks for victory.

Few days after this, the battle resumed again. These women came as usual to the battle ground, plucked some leaves, chewed them in their mouths and spewed them out, while chanting incantations. Then they faced the armed soldiers and policemen with their wrappers hoping to collect the bullets again. Contrary to their expectation, the first volley of bullets ripped through the bodies of first line of the demonic women, felling them. When their men saw this, they took to their heels. The other side also tried their fetish, but it ended in disaster. So the battle stopped permanently and peace was forged between the warring factions. The government was overwhelmed with joy.

From the foregoing, we, as God's children, must know that we can command creation, especially leaves, trees, roots, fruits, parts of animals, feathers, liquids, etc used in making charms and talisman not to work against us by neutralizing and deprogramming these elements by prophetic prayers. We can also render the works of spirits and occultists useless by serious prophetic prayers.

We need to examine the conditions for prophetic prayers, asking these questions: Can any child of God or intercessor pray prophetic prayers? And what price must be paid for one to operate in prophetic prayers? There are 8 major conditions that we will mention here.

9. Open heavens condition as a result of a robust prayer life.
10. Ability to expressly receive God's word. Luke 3: 1-2.
11. Ability to see the visions of the Spirit. Ezekiel 1: 1 - 3
12. The presence of the anointing of God on one's life and work.

13. Constant waiting in God's presence.
14. Ability to minister unto God in deep worship. Acts 3: 1 - 3
15. Possession of ears that hear God clearly. Rev. 2:7
16. Submission to spiritual authority II Cor. 10: 4 – 6

Open Heaven Condition Luke 3:21

The heavens over Jesus was opened as He prayed in Jordan when he was baptized by John. Throughout His ministry, the heavens over His life remained widely opened as a result of constant and deep communion with God the Father in prayer. As a result, there was nothing He asked in prayer that was not given to Him. There was nothing He commanded that heavens did not back with quick answers. A robust prayer and healthy life will keep the intercessor's heaven opened in order that whatever he demands will be carried out. This is a very necessary prerequisite for prophetic praying

Ability to expressly receive God's word. Luke 3: 1-2.

We have seen that it is the word of God that is used in prophetic praying, hence, a man who wants to operate in this realm must be able to receive God's word without any ambiguity or confusion. The word of God came expressly to Ezekiel and John the Baptist hence, they carried out their ministries with precision, having nothing undone or done amiss.

Ability to see the visions of the Spirit. Ezekiel 1: 1 - 3

In addition to open heavens, the ability to see the visions of God is another condition for operating prophetic prayer. Anyone who wants to work with God must be able to see things of the Spirit very quickly. He must be a man who constantly receives revelations from God about different situations and circumstances. A spiritually blind man will not be able to do, what God wants him to do because he sees only in the physical. Ezekiel saw the visions of God

The presence of the anointing of God on one's life and work. Ezekiel 1:3; 8: I; I Samuel 16: 13

All the men of God from the Old and New Testaments had the hand or Spirit or anointing of God upon them; this in essence, is the approval of God on their ministries. Nothing of eternal value can be done for God without the divine presence upon one's life. The presence of God's Spirit brings upon a man an extra-ordinary vigor and power to do what could not be done naturally. Nehemiah succeeded in his task of wall building according to the good hand of the Lord upon him, (Nehemiah. 2:8).

Constant waiting in God's presence. Ezekiel 3: 15 - 16

This is waiting before God in quietness for hours and for days without saying anything until God speaks. Ezekiel was in this condition with the others by the river of Chebar. He sat where the people sat, he was also in their condition. But amazingly at the end of seven days, it was only him alone that the word of God came to. Habakkuk too determined to wait upon God to see what he would say to him. God responded by answering and instructing. (Habakkuk. 2: 1 – 2).

Ability to minister unto the Lord in deep Worship Acts 3: 1 – 3.

The disciples in Acts 13 ministered to the Lord in praise, worship, adoration and fasting. God responded in that passage, giving a word of direction concerning what the church should do about Barnabas and Saul. Anyone who will operate in prophetic praying therefore must develop

an habit of ministering to the Lord privately in praise, worship, adoration and even fasting in order to obtain clear guidelines and direction from the Lord.

Possession of ears that hear God clearly. Rev. 2:7

The book of Revelation 2:7 says, "he that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit is saying unto the churches." It is not enough that the word should come expressly, one should also be able to hear that word. Faith to carry out prophetic praying comes by hearing the word of God. One who is dull of hearing will be a causality in spiritual battles. One who will like to operate in prophetic praying should develop a good hearing capability.

Submission to Authority 2 Corinthians 10: 4 – 6.

The totality of a man's being must be fully submitted to the Lordship of Christ who created all things. Even Jesus Himself was a man under authority. He was fully submitted to God's authority in order to effectively carry out prophetic praying. Demons, elemental entities, and all created objects will obey us only when our own obedience is complete. Disobedient, proud and self-willed Christians cannot operate in prophetic praying. They will be stoutly resisted and possibly afflicted by forces they are praying against.

Sermon Two

Title: Ancient Ancestral Covenants and Strategic Warfare by Prophet (Dr.) Samson Ayorinde ¹²

Several covenants have been made by men of the old over several nations and territories and even though we may think we are now living in a very civilized time and they are no more effective. It's a deceit. The power and influences of the devil is still very pervasive in many areas of the world today. Those covenants are still very active, potent and effective because they are regularly serviced and thus perpetuated from year to year and from generation to generation.

Some covenants were made some 300,400 or 500 years ago through the altars and groves our ancestral fathers have built on various portions of the land. Therefore, despite the gospel influence, the manifestation of the power and the life of God in the land, many of the people are still not responding to the gospel. A lot of our people are still spiritually impoverished and impervious to the gospel. No matter what you say, they don't just understand. Their mind is under the lock and grip of the enemy. There are several communities in Nigeria, for instance, that up till now, cannot boast of a single born- again Christian.

Although a lot of Christian activities have been going on in such places for a long time, up till now there is hardly any Church of 500 members in such places. In fact, most pastors who go to those places do everything possible to evangelize and convert people, but they usually end up burned out and retreat due to frustration and defeat. Many of them eventually pack up and go to some other places.

When a land that has been covenanted to Lucifer is delivered, a lot of things happen such as: Conversions, physical healings, social and economic developments and so on.

¹² Kayode Ojo, *Ancient Ancestral Covenants and Strategic Warfare*, Ibadan, 2004

Ancient covenants are maintained by traditionalists. They know how to do it. The devil taught them the principle and they practice it with zealous devotion.

How Ancient Covenants are maintained.

3. Religious Festivals and Pilgrimages

These are times and seasons of negotiations with the powers of darkness. Many of us come from villages and we've known about *Egungun* (masquerade) festival or the *Eyo* festival- all in Yorubaland of Nigeria. There are similar other festivals all over the world. All these ceremonies are highly symbolic. They are seasons of negotiations with territorial deities spirits. Before a festival takes place, the ancient men and pagan priests would have to go to the caves or shrines (altars) for several days, sometimes up to a whole month. For example, before the *Olojo* festival in Ile-Ife (Nigeria) takes place, the Ooni of Ife (king) would have gone to a lonely place to commune with his "ancestors" and make negotiations for a new year about what would happen in his domain and in the whole of Yorubaland.

This is how new pacts and agreements are made. There are now various towns and cities in Nigeria, particularly in the Southern parts where they have what they call "town's days" e.g *Obanta Day, Akure Day*, and so on. The devil has just brought these things in the past 15 years. The enemy knows that except these things are maintained, the Christians' presence and the anointing of God upon the gospel will soon break his controlling influence. People call this cultural revival, so every town and village place now has its days of cultural celebrations. Many of the sons and daughters of such towns come back home at this time for the festivals. The village priests go back to the village gods and shrines to make new covenants. Because these things happen from year to year, there is therefore a continuity of hold of the power of darkness over the land. The intercessors and gospel ministers must therefore begin to deal with the issue of cultural reawakening in prayer. Israel's covenants with God are usually serviced, activated and maintained by the practice of the seven feasts (festivals of God from the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Feast of Tabernacles (Numbers 23: 1 – 44).

4. Traditions

Traditions and customs are powerful and irresistible forces that prevent people from coming to Christ. What are these traditions and what role do they play? Examples of such include:

d. Initiation of children:

In many pagan and traditional societies, children are usually initiated into some family cults. In some places, it is done just a few days after their delivery. By this act, ancient covenants are maintained through those children. Some of those cults are *Oro, Osugbo, Egungun* and other tribal cults. In some riverine communities of Africa new babies are sometimes left in the river or sea for days to be initiated by water spirits.

e. The Use of Tribal Marks and Body Tattoos

There are some communities that have specified tribal marks or tattoos they give their children to wear. When you see an Oyo (Nigeria) man, you recognize him immediately. The same is true of

a Nupe, Masai, Kanuri, Zulu, Fulani, Ogbomosho, or a Swahili person. Those marks are not just ordinary identification marks. They are spiritually determined and implicative. The marks differ from place to place in Africa, and they came from the inspiration of evil spirits. The god of a locality i.e the territorial spirit usually dictates what kind of mark (covenant tokens) he wants to have amongst the children of such a community, so that wherever they go, they can be “protected” by him. Each time the evil spirit or the territorial spirit sees those marks on an individual, he claims ownership. You know the Bible says “When I see the blood I will pass over (protect) you” So also when a territorial spirit of Ondo sees the Ondo mark on a person he knows him immediately and his role is to “protect” that person and have control over him. The same goes for all the natives of other towns. The Kanuri or Nupe territorial spirits know that an individual belongs to them and that his fathers were under a covenant and the tribal mark was the identification marks by which they would know their children. That is why people from certain localities have strange but peculiarly common behaviours like anger, immorality, stinginess, drunkenness, stubbornness, etc. They are all under the influence or control of their local territorial spirits. Therefore, they manifest negative territorial behaviours or characters.

The younger generation does not understand how these things have come to be. They do not know that wearing these tribal marks makes one come under the direct or indirect influence of these territorial spirits. Thank God, people are getting more civilized and rejecting these marks. But in recent times, I have seen some four and five year-old kids wearing these marks. If you have a traditional mark on you, I want to suggest that you subject yourself to some cleansing ministrations, so that the hold of the territorial of your locality over you can be broken.

f. Incisions on the body

Carrying of incisions on different parts of the body is a sign of an ancient covenant. These things are stolen by the devil from the Bible. God said in Genesis 17, when He called Abraham that he would make His covenant with him and that it would be in his flesh. Every male child born unto Abraham and his seed was to be circumcised on the eighth day. God said, “Once you are circumcised you belong to me. My covenant is in your flesh.” In the same way, the devil makes sure that there is a covenant in the flesh of many people that belong to him. This is in form of tribal marks or incisions.

Once there is a mark which is not a circumcision mark on your body, you must ask questions from your parents. They may say, “Well, for your protection; you used to be very sickly when you were young, you used to faint”. The real fact is that they have given the enemy a foot-hold in your life. You are under a covenant.

Sermon Three

Title: Dealing with Territorial Strongholds by Pastor Sola Folaranmi¹³

Spiritual warfare is divided into two broad categories and we engage in spiritual warfare for these major reasons:

3. For human emancipation
4. For territorial possession, deliverance and enlargement.

¹³ Sola Folaranmi, *Breaking the Satanic Horns of Oppression*, Lagos, 2006

In bringing deliverance to our towns, cities, communities and nations, we need to fully understand how the enemy has penetrated, how far he has gone and the present effects of his activities. In using the term stronghold, we shall be applying it to a human entity Pharaoh, who symbolically represents vicious territorial powers and strongholds that keep multitudes in darkness and in involuntary captivity.

DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF THE TERM STRONGHOLD

According to II Corinthians 10 verse 4, the term stronghold (Greek: *Ochuroma*) means a fortress, a castle or a fortified place. Satan and his demons stay in fortified places against the invasion of the gospel.

Strongholds are the mindset of people in a particular territory. These mindsets are fortified places that keep out the truth and hold in lies.

A stronghold is also forceful stubborn argument, rationale, opinion, ideas of philosophy that is formed and resistant to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Mind-sets on the other hands are combination of both mind and set. In other words, the mind is already settled on a set of beliefs and therefore resistance to change. The mind is fixed and rigid thereby becoming a stronghold.

This concept can also be defined as the thought processes of people groups who have developed way of thinking over centuries of time. For example, communism is a mind-set, capitalism and materialism are mind-sets. Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism are mind-sets. But strongholds and mind-set can be broken by a strong anointing and spiritual warfare.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF STRONGHOLDS

PERSONAL STRONGHOLDS

Personal strongholds are things that Satan builds to influence one's personal life: personal sin, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behavioural patterns. The Word of God warns us in Eph. 4:27 not to give the devil any foothold, but we do by allowing him to operate in our lives through things we love and do not want to get rid of. These strongholds are “holes in our armour” which can be closed by being humble and repentant. Watch out for things like bitterness, pride, etc. (Eph 4:13). When these things persist in our lives, we are to go for counseling and sometimes even for deliverance.

STRONGHOLDS OF THE MIND

Ed Silvano says that a stronghold of the mind is a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes the believer to accept as unchangeable something that he or she knows is contrary to the will of God. This can also be applied on a national level to nations.

From experience I have found that many black people are of the opinion that they cannot achieve anything, but this is contrary to the Word of God in Phil 4: 13 that says that we can do *"all things through Christ who strengthens me"*.

OCCULTIC STRONGHOLDS

Occultic strongholds refer to satanic activities like witchcraft, Satanism, new age religions, etc; which invite evil spirits to operate. They work as power boosters to the territorial spirits that rule over geographic regions. In Acts 17: 21 & 32, it becomes clear that Diana at Ephesus influenced the whole of Asia, but her power was eventually broken by prayer, truth encounters and evangelism. In this case, the occult and a spirit of religion were very closely connected. In Africa, many of these Occultic strongholds exist, e.g., in Venda, young girls are offered in the “Holy Lake” and on high mountains.

SOCIAL STRONGHOLDS

A social stronghold refers to the oppression over city or designated areas in which social injustices, racism and poverty cause people to believe that God does not care about their needs.

TERRITORIAL STRONGHOLDS

These are caused and formed by idols and altars people of different communities raised to them

NATIONAL STRONGHOLDS

These types have to do with a collective or corporate belief in an entrenched lie that a false deity is the real God. E.g. Pharaoh of Egypt was referred like a god.

PHARAOH, KING OF EGYPT AS A STRONGHOLD

We shall be tackling this subject in the context of strategic level prayer warfare. To me, strategic level warfare is simply a deliberate and sustained offensive prayer battle aimed at certain crucial targets (strongholds) the overthrow or destruction of which will bring an enormous release and breakthrough to individuals, communities, cities and even nations. In the military, targeting of strategic targets is very crucial to winning a war very quickly. This possibly informed the reason why God, as a Man of war Himself had to instruct Moses to use the strategic weapons of prophetic prayers and prophetic actions to deal with the strategic targets (the gods and the power bases) of Egypt.

And afterward, Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. (Exodus 5: 1)

We know that Israel is the inheritance of the Lord. Israel as the possession of the Lord has been enslaved for 400 years in Egypt by Pharaoh, but at the fullness of time, God sent his men, Moses and Aaron to the court of Pharaoh to demand for their release. The Lord said He now wanted them for Himself. Enough of involuntary servitude and captivity. This bold demand caught Pharaoh by surprise and amazed him. He vehemently objected to the demand.

And Pharaoh said, who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, the God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray the, three days journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them, wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people front their works? Get you

unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.

(Exodus 5:2-4)

This response of Pharaoh was very clear and unambiguous. He retorted: “Who is the Lord? I don't know Him why should I obey His voice to allow Israel to go? Go back and tell the God that sent you, I don't know Him and I shall not release Israel.” Now somebody who speaks like that knows what he is talking about. When somebody is defiant like that you know he is speaking from a position of strong confidence in something. Pharaoh knew where he was coming from; he knew the ancestral powers of Egypt, and the spiritual pillars (gods) that supported his throne. The Egyptian monarchs and other kings, ancient or modern, don't rule ordinarily. You see them on the throne, but there are other thrones behind their physical thrones. The physical throne is just an ordinary decorated chair in the palace. The real rulers are unseen spiritual entities which give them power and confidence to lord it over other men. When God heard Pharaoh's reply, He knew what Pharaoh was talking about and therefore did not take the threats and the insults of Pharaoh lightly. Therefore God declared in Chapter 12 verse 12b, “... against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgement: I am the Lord.” Also in chapter 6 verse 1-2, the Lord said unto Moses, “now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord.”

Pharaoh and all Egypt served a lot of territorial deities or you call them territorial spirits that gave them power and authority. This was the reason why God decided to take on the thrones behind his throne in an unprecedented strategic spiritual warfare that lasted several months.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPIRIT OF PHARAOH

It is a spirit of:

13. Oppression
14. Bondage
15. Captivity
16. Servitude
17. Deprivation
18. Wickedness
19. Defiance
20. Obstinacy
21. Arrogance
22. Sorcery
23. Witchcraft
24. Idolatry

The God of Israel was aware of all these and He needed to forcefully confront them before Israel could be free. Egypt was the earthly seat of Satan

The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. And I will set the Egyptians

against the Egyptians: and they shall fight everyone against his brother, and everyone against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts. And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up. And they shall turn the rivers far away; and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither for fish.

The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks, shall wither, be driven away, and be no more. The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish. Moreover they that work in fine flax, and they that weave networks, shall be confounded. (Isaiah 19: 1-9)

The battle for Israel's release had to be fought at three levels for an effective judgement and overthrow of the gods. The battle was fought:
at the level of the waters;
at the level of the land (earth);
finally, at the level of the heavens (cosmic level warfare).

THE JUDGEMENT OF THE SERPENTS

The Egyptians served up to ten or twelve major gods. The first power to be confronted was the serpent. Egyptians worshipped serpentine spirits. When you get to the court of Pharaoh or you see the picture of ancient Pharaohs on top of their crown, you will see the head of a serpent with its fangs sticking out indicating their submission to the serpentine spirits. It was a national symbol.

God then instructed Moses to take his divine rod, which now can turn a super-serpent anytime to Pharaoh's palace for a power encounter with Egypt's serpentine god. Moses dropped down the rod and it became a serpent. Pharaoh merely scoffed at Moses and commanded his astrologers, enchanters and the magicians to do the same. All those men also dropped their rods and they also became serpents in the palace of Pharaoh. But God always proves Himself to be the God of dominion. As those serpents moved up and down the palace, the dominion serpent of Moses opened its mouth and swallowed up the serpents of the magicians! Moses took up his own snake and it turned back into a rod! What happened was a divine judgement against serpentine spirit of Egypt. God dealt with that spirit and Pharaoh couldn't draw power from the snakes anymore.

THE MARINE BATTLE

Then God ordered Moses to go to the Nile and stretch his rod over the Nile so that the waters of Egypt could become blood. The Nile was worshipped by the Egyptians, they

called it the 'Father of life', *Osiris*. The water was worshipped because Nile was the major river in the land. The Nile and other water bodies of Egypt were a haven for marine spirits. In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt: Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales. (Ezek 29:1-4)

At two separate instances the Lord told Moses to get up early in the morning and meet Pharaoh as he went to the waters.

Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; 10, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. (Exodus 7: 15)

And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; 10, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (Exodus 8:20)

One may ask, "What was Pharaoh going to do at the river?" Certainly not to bathe, because there were several swimming pools and baths in the palace; rather, he got up early in the morning to draw power from marine spirits at his marine altar. When Pharaoh did not budge, Moses went to the river and stretched forth his rod upon the river and everything became blood. For about seven days, all the waters of Egypt became blood. A type of the blood of Jesus had been employed to poison and suffocate all the marine lives that inhabited their water bodies. The blood of Jesus judged all of them. Thus, the marine power-base of Pharaoh was neutralized.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. (Exodus 7: 19 – 21).

One after the other, in a systematic but strategic way, the Lord began to take out all the other gods of Egypt from the frog to lice, flies, cattle, boils to locusts. All these symbols of Egyptians gods were employed to destroy the gods themselves. At one time, the Egyptians tried as usual to duplicate that which Moses was doing by invocation and high-level enchantments, but they couldn't do it. Then, they turned to Pharaoh and said to him: "now this is the finger of God". Because of this, Pharaoh then began to think of and believe the existence of a bigger and stronger God somewhere. He then started to make concessions. He began to feel the pressure. It is just

like the former President of Yugoslavia who insisted that Kosovo would not have independence. He vowed "I cannot sign any agreement, I don't want any foreign troop on my soil, NATO will not come to Yugoslavia. God forbid." He was resolute. But after 87 days of heavy bombardments, he capitulated. Kosovo was liberated.

A LIVING TESTIMONY

A younger brother of mine who is a pastor shared with me a most fascinating story of how this principle of strategic level prayer warfare was applied to deal with an age long problem of sudden and mysterious deaths of people in a river in his station in one of the towns in Nigeria. The river was not quite deep as to be able to easily drown people, but yet people drown and disappear in the river from time to time. So himself and other intercessors and pastors took up the challenge in prayer and fasting. The Lord then instructed them to go and anoint the river and pour Holy Communion wine inside it to judge the wicked marine spirit causing the death of innocent people. They obeyed the Lord to the letter. A few days after this secret operation, a big, black entity like a man furiously came out of the water very early in the morning, hissing and humming to the king's palace to lodge a complaint of serious disturbance of his water domain, and that he was relocating to another place! He angrily left the palace never to return to the river again. Since then, no death had been reported in that river again. The blood of Jesus is a very potent weapon in dealing with marine spirits.

THE BATTLE AT THE LAND LEVEL

And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. (Exodus 9:22-27)

This was a very crucial stage of the battle against the territorial strongholds of Egypt. The Lord employed the strategic weapons of hail, thunder and fire for the total destruction of all land, forest and mountain- based altars and the spirits that lived in them. This divine 'military' action effectively neutralized the territorial power base of Pharaoh.

COSMIC LEVEL WARFARE

The next god to be judged was Ra - the sun god. The Egyptians for centuries and from ancient times have spiritually explored the heavens through diabolical means. This gave them an unusual, but early knowledge of astrology, mathematics and certain sacred sciences. The sun, the moon and the stars were the major sources of this unusual advanced knowledge. So the Egyptians worshipped and served them. God was very well aware of this. Therefore in a battle strategy never known in history, God employed the weapon of "thick darkness that can be felt" to deal with astral altars of the Egyptians.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. (Exodus 10:21-24)-

By this action the satanic transmission and network between the heavens and the earth of Egypt was broken. The astral altars and their information spirits were dislodged. Pharaoh became totally isolated and vulnerable. Fear and desperation set in.

THE KILLING OF THE FIRST BORN

This last stage of the battle shifted from dealing with inanimate objects to the killing of real human beings. God, as we know always have strategic reasons for all His actions.

And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger. (Exodus 11: 4-8)

And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, go swerve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men... And the children of Israel of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians. (Exodus 12: 29 – 36).

THE RELEASE

Every first born of Egypt was worshipped as an inheritor of family inheritance. There in the first born was deposited all the familiar and ancestral spirits of different generations. The first-born was literally worshipped and counted as a god. The first born was regarded as very sacred and God knew this because He had said, "I will kill all the first-born of Egypt". In the middle of the night, the Bible says the angel of death went forth and smote the entire first-born of Egypt. There was a great cry throughout the length and breadth of Egypt. There was not a house where there was not a dead person. From the first born of Pharaoh on the throne to the first born of the prisoner in the dungeon, all were dead. Pharaoh got up to mourn and all the elders of Egypt came to him and said, 'we are all dead. Let these men go.' The king sent for Moses in the middle of the night and said, 'You people can go.' Finally, there was freedom. Reason? Because all the territorial strongholds were judged. *This principle still applies in today's spiritual warfare for territorial emancipation. Israel left Egypt in pride, loaded with plenty of silver and gold. When strongholds are destroyed people have freedom, joy, progress, silver and gold.

THE POWER OF STRATEGIC PRAYER

To conclude this sermon, I'll like to share one wonderful testimony of a notable victory that came as 'a result of strategic prayer warfare. In the year 1986, I was in Amsterdam, Holland, for Amsterdam '86 evangelistic conference organized by Evangelist Billy Graham for itinerant evangelists. About 10,000 of us from all over the world attended. After two weeks of intensive training, Billy Graham gave everyone a sachet of 100 gospel tracts and asked buses (coaches) to take us to different parts of Holland for evangelism. I was to go to a beach town with a lot of seaside resort. In my team was a friend, Rev. Francis Wale-Oke of the Sword of the Spirit Ministries, who I think was the only other Nigerian in that team. We were under strict instructions not to return with a single tract. The 100 tracts must be given out to unbelievers.

We prayed as the buses took us to the place. On arrival, our musical team set up their instruments near the sea. There, some people were sunbathing and doing all sorts of things. We entertained them with different tunes. They didn't even look at our direction because when you go to Europe and America, it is another story for evangelism. We left the place and went to the shopping malls to distribute our tracts. I met the first person, and said, "Jesus loves you, we are from different parts of the world, I'm from Africa, and this is about Jesus." She looked at me and said, "I don't want Jesus! I don't want Jesus!" Then she started running away. I located another man and told him, "Jesus loves you, have this tract". He took the tract, looked and saw, 'The Name of Jesus, the Way to Salvation'; he threw the tract back on my face as if I gave him a letter-bomb and started running. I went inside the shopping mall and said, 'Good day ladies and gentlemen, I am an evangelist, have this, it is about Jesus and all that.' "No! No! No!" they screamed at me, and threatened to call the police. I had to quickly hurry out!

For about 30 minutes, I was roaming around, no one accepted my tracts. I then remembered Africa. If you gave a tract to somebody even if he doesn't want to read it, yet out of respect and courtesy, he would collect it, when you turn your back, he may then tear it. But here are people who run away from tracts! What do you do? I didn't know that

territorial spirits and marine spirits were in operation. So, I prayed for what to do. Some of our team mates who experienced what I was experiencing either tore their tracts or just threw them off and were ready to go back. You know not all Christians are faithful, but I was eager to obey the man of God. As I was thinking about what to do, tears rolled down my eyes. I said to myself in pity: "100 tracts, in 30 minutes, nobody has collected a single one. What's the guarantee that I will give the 100 out?" As I looked up, I saw Rev. Francis Wale-Oke coming towards me crest - fallen. I asked Rev. Wale, what the matter was. He replied, "Moses, have you given anyone your tracts?" I said not a single one has been accepted. His story was the same. Suddenly, he said, "we are Africans and Nigerians, we are prayer warriors, you know what you used to teach about territorial spirits. Let's do the practical here". It clicked in my spirit. Instantly, I remembered that this was a marine environment, and that marine spirits were interfering with the gospel.

The heaven was closed. The atmosphere was blocked. Men were hardened because of the influence of territorial spirits. We dropped our bags, joined our hands together and exercised authority. We prayed like crazy men, African kind of prayer in a European environment! We screamed in that cold winter. After some minutes of strategic warfare over the marine waters, the marine spirits, and other territorial elements, we opened the minds of men to the gospel. After we had a release in the spirit we took our bags and went back to places we were coming from. Unbelievable! The first woman I talked to about the love of Jesus, retorted back, "You mean Jesus loves me?" "This is the first time somebody is telling me that. What do you have for me?" I gave her a tract which attracted about three other people who even demanded for more. I went back to the same store where they had earlier driven me out and said, "I have come back - Jesus loves you." They said in unison "what do you have for us?" I opened my bag, and several people joyfully accepted many of my tracts. Within 20 minutes, all my 100 tracts were gone! As I was leaping back to base, Rev. Wale-Oke was also returning back smiling, and laughing. He said, "Rev. Moses, all my tracts are gone. Glory be to God!" What happened? We dealt with the influence of marine spirits of that environment and then the heavens were opened for men to be saved. Men who looked cold, impervious, hardened and adamant suddenly opened up because the influence of these spirits over them was broken. The same people, the same place, the same tracts, the same evangelists. The difference was that we targeted our prayers accurately. Now, if we had joined our hands and prayed like this religiously: "O Lord, we want all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of Jesus. O Lord, these people are perishing, let them take our tracts." If we pray like that, nothing would have happened. Strategic prayers will work wonders.

Sermon Four

Title: Release from Curses by Pastor Sola Akorede¹⁴

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

¹⁴ Sola Akorede, *Release from Curses*, Sphinx: Ibadan, 2004

INTRODUCTION

Curses are usually issued as a repercussion to breaking of covenants. A lot of people who have unconsciously entered into evil covenants sometimes break the covenants thus releasing themselves from the attendant, curses. How do such people receive freedom? The evil covenants should be broken and they should obtain release from the attendant curses.

Curses are the direct opposite of blessings. When you curse, you utter a wish of evil against a person, a thing or a group of persons.

To curse is to cause mischief or injury to come upon a person. To curse is to bind a person with a spell, like witches do. To curse is to engage in violent expression of evil against others.

Curses are words put together to torment a person with great calamity.

When we look at curses and study their evil effects on mankind, we find that they have been vehicles of many problems.

A curse is an invisible barrier that keeps people away from what God has for them.

You know that no one wants to be cursed, but we all desire to be blessed. This is why men quickly give approval when blessed and quickly withdraw when cursed.

When hidden curses are in place, you find yourself taking the wrong decision, and the spirit of failure will go into operation. The heart will become polluted, even as unexplainable sorrow begins to happen. Strange thoughts and desires will come into place. The person will go from one problem to the other and things will go wrong at the edge of success.

HOW CURSES OPERATE

A person operating under a curse is easy to recognize, because he will be struggling against something, which he is unable to overcome. At the point of success, frustration comes in because the person has been placed under a curse and it is limiting him, so he stops when he gets to a certain level.

If a curse is placed upon a person that he or she will not advance beyond secondary school education all attempts by such a person to pass university entrance examinations will prove abortive. All efforts will be frustrated because there is a force in operation which is acting as an invisible barrier to prevent the person from moving forward.

Curses bring an evil influence which could result in all kinds of evil things. They can lead to chronic frustration and problems. They can be transferred to a person's possession. They can also be transferred from parents to children.

EFFECTS OF CURSES

1. Curses Have Long Lasting Effects:

They can run from generation to generation. The curse on Jericho was not broken until 300 - 500 years after it was issued. When Prophet Elijah, the man of God came, he identified the problem, and broke the curse. And so shall all evil curses be broken, in Jesus' name.

2. Curses Have Catastrophic Effects:

A person should never hesitate to release himself from the evil effects of any curse.

3. Curses Act Like A Kind Of Shield:

They protect evil spirits and give them legal grounds to operate.

SOURCES OF CURSES

1. Curses can come from so many sources.

If a curse comes upon a person from God, then the person needs to repent and move away from what he was doing, that brought the curse which only God can remove. All curses from God are as a result of disobedience. God was the first person to place a curse on a person in the Bible. He placed it upon Adam and Eve when they ate the forbidden fruit. It is still the same thing today. Every disobedience invites curses from God and only He can remove them.

2. Curses can come from satanic agents, evil prophets, parents, etc.

LAWS GOVERNING CURSES

There are many spiritual laws in the Bible that cannot be broken.

The Bible talks about the law of faith. This law says you have to believe before you can receive.

The Bible talks about the law of life and the law of sin and death.

1. **A curse does not come without a cause.** Proverbs 26:2.says, *"As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come."* An undeserved curse will not come unless a person tolerates it. This means that when there is no landing space, no welcome, nothing to feed upon, a curse cannot come and stay in the life of a person. When there is a reason, the curse can come. This means that nothing can take root unless there is an underlying just reason. There must be a reason why the curse is staying there.

2. **Unless a curse is broken, it continues to operate.**

3. **Curses are spiritual and should be solved like that.** A curse is. a spiritual problem and can only be solved by spiritual means, not by natural means.

Sins allow curses to stay. Where sins remain, curses remain. For complete freedom there must be complete repentance.

Demons enforce and propagate curses. There is no curse without a demon attached to it. It is the demon attached to the curse that will make sure that terrible things happen to the cursed person. A person under a curse may find it hard to take progressive steps. If such a person intends to secure a visa for further studies abroad, for example, the demon will ensure that he does not get it. And if the person succeeds in going abroad, the same demon will ensure the deportation of the person.

4. **Christ has redeemed us from curses by substitution.** He made himself a curse for us. A Man who knew no sin was nailed to the Cross and by His death on the cross and the blood that was shed, we are redeemed from all curses. Galatians 3: 13 & 14.

An unjust curse will return to the sender. If someone has issued a curse without a reason, it will go back to him.

You cannot bless whom God has cursed. Cursing whom God has blessed earns the person issuing the curse a divine curse in return. So, do not curse whom God has blessed.

A curse does not affect a child of God. A curse cannot affect a child of God, who is walking in obedience.

5. **A curse can be acquired unconsciously.** You may not know. When a person is under the influence of a curse, normal prayers will not break the curse. There are thousands of people for whom all known spiritual activities seem inadequate to influence a change, or bring a halt to their suffering. Many are fighting a battle they did not initiate. Hidden curses are a source of real problem. Hidden curses can arise when evil covenants are unconsciously broken.

HOW HIDDEN CURSES COME

WHEN A PERSON BREAKS THE MARRIAGE VOW

When you break the vow and covenant of a marriage, you set a curse in motion. This is the reason why many are suffering today. When a woman leaves her husband and marries a rich man, or a man leaves his wife and marries a younger woman, a curse is set in motion.

When a man has five wives, all the others except the first one are under curses. Young girls who go around with married men are placing themselves under curses; because when the angel wants to bring their own husbands, they will turn back when they see the married men they are illegally hooked to. Married men running around with married women are under a curse. All curses from married women against husband snatchers work like fire. It does not matter whether the women are born again or not. If you are going out with a married man and the wife at home is a witch, any curse she issues against you will surely thrive, whether you are born again or not.

CURSES COME WHEN YOU TREAT OTHERS UNFAIRLY

When a woman sponsors a man to school, and the man turns round to dump the woman after his graduation, the curse from the frustrated woman will blossom. When you refuse to obey your elders for whatever reason, curses come into place. When you disobey a rightful leader, the same thing happens. If a woman that comes from a rich family tries to disparage her poor husband, curses will come in place. Women should not look down on their husbands.

SEXUAL IMMORALITY

You may have forgotten about it. That is why the Bible has two words for sex, i.e. 'laid' and 'knew his wife.' While the first one (laid) is negative, the second word (knew his wife) is positive. When the Bible says, "laid with him", it means fornication or adultery. When the Bible says, "knew his wife", that is the right thing. All the wrong kinds of sex bring curses.

A man that could not get any breakthrough came for deliverance. Three girls turned up in the spirit realm carrying small glasses containing liquid materials. They said, "We trapped him when he was in the university because he was going out with the three of us at the same time." They disclosed that they collected things from his body which they kept in a container under the water. So, there was no way he could prosper. A man might be running up and down, without knowing that curses have been issued on him.

A man using his money to buy sex is under a curse. Girls releasing themselves to be used as objects of satisfaction to men in order to get a job, promotion, accommodation etc., come under curses.

A woman permitting herself to be abused sexually because of money comes under a curse.

A father sleeping with his daughter, or a mother sleeping with her son, comes under curses.

People sleeping with animals, their brother's wives or their sister's husbands come under curses.

A man places himself under a curse when he sleeps with his father's wife.

Fathers sleeping with their step-daughters or parents entertaining guests with their daughters or using their daughters to get contracts, or husbands using their wives for business also remain cursed.

Leviticus 19:29, says, "Do not prostitute thy daughters."

Pasting pictures of naked women on the wall, or buying calendars and magazines with such pictures puts a person under a curse.

Curses from sexual immorality are the strongest curses and very difficult to break. They can take weeks to break during the deliverance of such a cursed person. That is why the Bible says that God is not too worried about sins outside the body as He is worried about sins in the body, i.e. fornication and adultery.

THE WEALTH OF SORROW

The Bible says the blessing of the Lord "*maketh rich without adding sorrow to it.*" That means there is a wealth you can get that will add sorrow to it. All wealth by unrighteous means puts people under a curse. Bribery or stealing the wealth of the dead invites curses. There are so many relatives who let the wives and the children suffer, because as soon as a husband dies, they just come and cart away his property. Such in-laws come under a curse. If you are here and you want to share the property of the dead, you have to be very careful not to get involved.

A man died and his relatives carried away everything he had. The wife begged that they should leave the fridge so that she could be selling iced water and minerals to be able to look after the children, but they refused to listen to her. They have all come under a curse, including those who took just bathroom slippers.

There are also curses on policemen and 'sympathizers' who search the dead and accident victims and take away their money.

All those who sell polluted drug capsules and tablets are under a curse.

Whenever the innocent is pronounced guilty, those who gave the judgement come under a curse.

When you murder someone by witchcraft, you come under a curse.

A woman thought her husband did not love her, so she gave him a love medicine which he ate and died. The woman comes under a curse.

False acquisition of land, shedding of innocent blood, building houses on lands acquired falsely, and murderous actions for quick wealth, attract definite curses.

PARENTAL CURSES. This should not be overlooked.

SHEDDING OF INNOCENT BLOOD.

All abortions invite curses of frustrations.

A woman gave birth to a child and when she met a man who wanted to marry her, she killed the child since the man did not want to see him. Such an act attracts an automatic curse. The same thing goes for people who have babies only to dump them in unholy and deserted places.

EVIL ACQUISITION

Purchasing stolen items on which a curse has been placed. This is why any Christian who buys any second hand material must anoint and pray over it. For example, a car was stolen in Belgium from somebody who sweated for 15 years to buy it. When that car was stolen, he removed his clothes and placed a curse on whosoever will use the car. The car was brought to Nigeria and the curse will be transferred to whoever buys it.

CURSES ISSUED BY SATANIC AGENTS

Such spirits are sent to do harm. The person cursed will be doing bad things, and will chase away good people who would have helped him.

UNCONSCIOUS SELF-IMPOSED CURSES

People curse themselves every day without knowing it. A woman used to say, "my poor legs, my poor legs" and eventually those legs developed problems. Negative words directed at oneself is a curse.

TOUCHING UNCLEAN THINGS, OR ANYTHING DEDICATED TO SATAN

All things that the Bible lists as unclean should not be touched by a believer. When things are like this, there can be mental and physical illness; there can be failure, profitless hard work, defeat, poverty, and family breakup. Even when there is plenty of money coming in, the cursed person is broke.

Corruption of the reproductive organs, chronic sicknesses, bad reputation, and oppression are some of the end products of an accursed life. When the situation is like this, you need to break the curse. I want you to know that God wants us to live a curse-free life.

STEPS TO BREAK HIDDEN CURSES

1. Deal with the curse.
2. Deal with the power behind the curse.
3. Reverse the curse.

STEPS TO RELEASE YOURSELF

1. Repent from all known sins particularly those concerning evil covenants.
2. Renounce the sins of your forefathers.
3. Accept God's forgiveness and forgive yourself.
4. Forgive all those who have ever offended you. Do not bear grudges.
5. Renounce all contacts with any cursed or false religion.
6. Destroy all evil and polluted materials.
7. Release yourself from the curses with aggressive prayer.
8. Cast out the demon behind the curse by saying, "I command every demon of the curse to leave me now in Jesus' name."
9. Claim blessings to replace past curses.
10. Give thanks to God for setting you free.'

When you have done all these, you must stop walking in the paths of unrighteousness. You must walk in the path where you will be blessed. God has a solution to every problem.

With God all things are possible. He has made provision for our freedom. He is the only one that applies divine solution to the sources of the problems of our life. Elisha applied the salt of heaven to the source of the river of a city that looked good on the surface but dead within. Salt is a purifier, a preserver and a seasoner. So it is important to pray that God, the salt preserver of our life, should season our life with His salt. He should also pour His heavenly salt into the foundation of our life so that all curses can be completely broken.

Please, put all your strength into praying the following prayer points.

PRAYER SECTION

1. I refuse to drink from the fountain of sorrow, in Jesus' name.
 2. I take authority over all curses issued against my life, in the name of Jesus.
 3. Ask God to remove any curse he has placed on your life as a result of disobedience.
 4. I command any demon attached to any curse to depart from me now, in the mighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 5. Let all curses issued against me be converted to blessings, in the name of Jesus.
 6. When you mention any of the under-listed curses, you will aggressively say, "Be broken, be broken, be broken, in the name of Jesus. I release myself from you, in the name of Jesus."
- Every curse of mental and physical sickness
- Every curse of failure and defeat

- Every curse of poverty
- Every curse of family break-up
- Every curse of oppression
- Every curse of bad reputation
- Every curse of personal destruction or suicide
- Every curse of chronic sickness •
- Every curse of corruption of the reproductive organ
- Every curse of family strife
- Every curse of profitless hard work
- Every curse of evil dedication
- Every curse of sickness and infirmity
- Every curse of witchcraft.

Sermon Five

Title: Deliverance from Evil Altar by Revd. Dr. D. K. Olukoya ¹⁵

This message is entitled: Deliverance from Evil Altars. Please listen very carefully and as we go on pray each prayer point as if it is the last one you are going to pray.

There is this very interesting story in 1 Samuel 7:7- 11.

“And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar.”

There was a problem. The enemies of the children of Israel had come against them. So they went to Samuel to cry to God on their behalf. Samuel immediately went to the altar. The Philistines made a great mistake and the Lord thundered with a very great thunder against them, the enemies of Israel.

The Holy Ghost has trained many of us in the school of experience. The school of experience is a very expensive school. Unfortunately, these days the deceived and the deceivers are multiplying. But thank God we can be part of that overcoming army that will go forth in overcoming power. The only way to take the kingdom is by force. Satan and his demons will not give us our benefits without a battle. And it is time we stopped the kind of prayer life which eat the meat and the bones together. God wants us to eat the meat

¹⁵ D.K. Olukoya, *Release From Destructive Covenants*, Lagos, 1997

and leave out the bones. It is time to take off the veil and know the true name and fruits of the strongman so we can paralyze them.

The first question we may ask is, "What are altars?" Altars are designed for sacrifice; that is what they are made for. An altar is just not a decorative item. You can find this in Exodus 20:24.

"An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

The Bible tells us how to make it. It can be made with the earth that is from sand or with unhewed stones, stones that have not been broken to pieces. Sometimes people make it with bricks and God does not like this kind of altar. Sometimes a natural rock that nobody has touched becomes an altar. In the Bible you will find altars raised unto God and altars raised for idol worship. When people are raising altars for idolatrous worship, God hates it with perfect hatred. When a king was sacrificing at the altar, God sent a prophet to speak against the altar. The prophet ignored all the people standing by the altar and faced the altar, showing the importance of that altar and the spiritual transaction going on there which the physical eyes could not see. But in the spirit a terrible transaction was going on.

A good Bible student would not be surprised that all the important men of God built altars to God. This is because an altar is a place of communication and fellowship. Noah built an altar; Abraham built so many altars; Isaac built altars; Jacob built altars, Moses built altars; Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, all built altars. When at Mount Carmel Elijah declared war against the enemies of God, he told them to build their own altar and call upon their gods. When it got to his turn, Elijah built the altar of the Lord that had been broken down.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ALTARS

Altars can be positive or negative. Our prayer altars are positive altars. When someone says that his prayer altar is weak, that means his prayer life is nothing to write home about. When you say someone's holiness altar is weak, it means that although the person is holy he cannot withstand much of the works of the enemy. We have Jesus who died on the cross. That cross is an altar where the Son of God was sacrificed. The cross is a positive altar. Positive altars are altars raised to the living God for good purposes. Negative altars are altars raised by the enemy to steal, to kill and to destroy.

You can raise an altar to bless or to destroy, to improve or to demote, to promote or to put down. You can raise an altar to enhance or to frustrate. You can raise an altar for a particular person or for a set of people, those you like or those you do not like. In the Old Testament, altars are built to destroy and to frustrate the enemies. In the passage we have read (1 Samuel 7:7-11), Samuel raised up an altar in the name of the Lord against the Philistines. God became angry with the Philistines and thundered against them from heaven. The altar fought the battle for Israel and it was practically a walk-over. Israel did not fight. God looked down and fought for his people against their enemies.

Many things that God has designed in the Bible to bless, the devil has their counterfeits. He can always make his own. Just like the cross of Jesus, you will see men and women dropping sacrifices at the crossroads. This is a corruption of the cross of Jesus.

Many problems of the black people can be directly linked to dark ministrations at altars. The enemy has erected satanic altars of affliction against many and these altars have priests of wickedness ministering regularly on them. You can ask, "How did the devil get to know about all these?" Don't forget, he was with God in the beginning. He saw the order of heaven and understood how things were run. He has now corrupted that order. He has taught his own people the secret of altars they are using for destructive purposes.

We are going to pray now. The prayer against destructive altars is not something you pray sleeping. It is a traffic of evil things which have been erected against a group of people and they are going up and down for the people's sake. Somebody says, "I bring the paper of sickness: you take it. He brings the paper of tuberculosis, you take it; even the paper of demotion." It is a traffic. It goes up and down, that is the dangerous thing about the altar.

The way things are going in this country now and the terrible way people are looking for money, they can do anything with anybody. Therefore it is not the time for believers to be praying sickly prayers against the enemy. You have to pray violently, with holy madness. Close your eyes and say the following prayer points:

1. Every satanic altar erected against me and my family be demolished by fire, in the name of Jesus.
2. Every vessel submitting my name to the altar be frustrated, in the name of Jesus.
3. I refuse to be a prisoner of any local altar, in the name of Jesus.

The devil has perverted the use of the altar and can now use it to steal, to kill and to destroy. Sometimes altars are made to make contact with wicked spirits. Sacrifices are put on such altars.

WHAT ARE SACRIFICES?

Sacrifices are foods given to wicked spirits to seek for their assistance. That is why the Bible says, "Do not eat food sacrificed to idols." If you eat it you are eating on the same table with the devil. The Bible says this because it wants to educate us that food sacrificed to idols is food for demons, and when you share food with demons, you go away with them. Wicked people put food on an altar and ask wicked spirits for assistance to afflict people.

Some of the things that we call migraine and headache are sometimes a result of demonic affliction. That is why before we do anything to our body we should pray. Even if you had so much faith in drugs you had better pray. We Christians rely on the Holy Spirit and angels to fight for us in the spirit world. When names are taken to the altar to monitor and influence people's lives and they do not know what is going on, it is as if someone is following them around and destroying anything that comes.

USES OF LOCAL ALTARS

I am not saying what I am saying to scare people. Many house-helpers, nannies and in-laws are altar priests, and agents passing information to other altar priests. They should not be brought in to your house without prayers. At the evil altar the spiritual life of a person can be easily monitored and assessed. Demons try to see whether they should waste their ammunition on you or not because there is no point shooting a corpse. When someone has been eaten up, what is the point in shooting him again? They use these altars as control instruments which cause problems for people. Tying a rope to the neck of a cock and mentioning a person's name in the process, and then putting the cock at the crossroads severely limits that person. When there is something good around and you move towards it, something else will prevent you from reaching it. These evil altars can dominate a person; they can tie him down so that he cannot have a mind of his own.

The altars can be used to manipulate a person and intimidate him with all kinds of nightmares and fears. They can be used to cause stubborn afflictions. Therefore they are not the kind of thing you look at and you say gentle prayers. It is the kind of thing you face, the way that the prophet in 1 Kings 13 did. He prophesied against an altar and destroyed it. That is the only way out.

LOCAL ALTARS

What are the kinds of local altars we have here that are used to destroy people?

1. Crossroads altars

These are a perversion of the cross of Jesus. Why the crossroads? The purpose at the crossroads is to be able to summon demons from the North, from the South, from the East and from the West together against the people.

If you get to your office in the morning and find a sacrifice there; it means that demons have been summoned to that place. *If a crossroads sacrifice has been offered against you, you will be bombarded by afflictions, in every department of your life.

It doesn't matter whether you are born again unless you know your rights. If you are born again you have authority but if you do not have power you are still wasting time. If you see a police man on the way, his uniform is a sign of authority. If he tells a person to stop the person will stop as he recognizes his authority. When armed robbers come, though they see his authority, if he has no power to assert that authority invested in him by government, they will kill him. It is like that. There is a difference between authority and power. If you are born again and you have not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit there is no power to back it up. Or if you just have the baptism of the Holy Spirit but you do not have fire and the enemies are offering sacrifices at the crossroads against you, you won't die or if you die you will go to heaven, but they would have denied you so many good things on earth.

You see this kind of sacrifice in a high class neighbourhood like Victoria Island, Lagos. You would have thought it can be found only in a slum area like Ajegunle, but you will also see it in Victoria Island. You will even see university lecturers carrying sacrifices to demonic altars. So where do we go from here? You would have said, oh this is caused by

illiteracy, blaa, blaa, blaa. You will be surprised that university lecturers put sacrifices on the doors of one another.

2. Tree altars

This is another local altar. Examples of this are Iroko tree, pawpaw tree and banana tree. Sometimes enemies wrap pieces of cloth around these trees thus transforming them into altars. The cloth is tied around the person's life and his case is handed over to the tree demons, the witches and the wizards.

3. Rock altars

A sister who had been in the demonic world, got born again. Although she was in the demonic world she was also a prophetess, laying hands on people and prophesying. She said one day in the church she sat next to a woman, a fellow prophetess, and as they were chatting, the fellow prophetess told her, "My own power is greater than yours. Do not mess up with me." She said before she could say anything, the woman crossed her legs and the two of them found themselves inside a rock. There, she saw electronic equipment, refrigerators, rooms, etc. Then the woman cooked for her. They had left from a church service. *A lot of things are happening that many of us cannot see. If many of us can see them, when I say pray, they will pray until they know that something has happened in the spirit realm. There is no extent that wicked people will not go if they do not like you.

4. Photograph altars

Wicked people can take away a wedding picture, a family picture or an individual's picture, put it somewhere, form an altar around it, and through it a person can be tormented, afflicted or even killed. They can use it to break a marriage or do all sorts of other evil things.

5. Image altars

A symbol is made to represent a person and whatever is done to that symbol happens to the person in the spirit. If it is given a terrible blow on the head the person will have a terrible headache. They may decide to give the terrible blow during an examination. That is why you find some children falling ill during the examination period. They are perfectly okay till it is almost time for the examination, then they have headache, stomach ache etc. There is a symbol in the spirit world and it has been used as an altar. A small shop can be constructed to represent where somebody is selling. Whatever is done to that shop happens to the shop in the physical.

6. Reporting altars

In this case a person's name is chanted all day long or regularly at the altar. Such a person may be hearing his name but would not know who is calling him. All that is expected is for him to answer even once and he is in serious trouble.

7. Clothing altars

The enemy can do all kinds of things to someone through his clothes. They can use the clothes to put all kinds of skin diseases on a person. If at one time or the other someone tore a piece of your clothes, or stole your underwear or some things else and you do not know where they are, you need to pray hard.

8. River altars

These are altars served by river demons. They sit on people's lives and keep them submerged.

9. Forest altars

Enemies go to forest altars at night. A lot of people do not know that when they are sleeping at night their enemies are busy working and planning against them in the forest. They go there to chant people's names.

10. Altars of body parts

A person's finger nail, hair, or placenta can be taken away, and the enemy would build an altar around it and use it against the person.

11. Astral altars

There are people who speak evil words against people's stars. They programme words of destruction against a person's star and they will affect the person negatively.

12. Altars of evil transfers

Enemies transfer people's virtues using satanic priests and evil thieves that are around.

13. Family shrine

Any family that has an idol or a shrine has an altar. Through that altar the whole members of the family can be monitored.

I was praying for a sister and felt so sorry for her. Her mother-in-law brought an idol all the way from Edo State into the sitting room of the woman and her husband. She protested strongly that they were Christians and did not believe in such things. The mother-in-law told her to shut up or she would send her packing from her matrimonial home. Then she worshipped the idol for three months before she carried it back to Edo state. All that the mother-in-law did was to create a traffic of demons inside that house, so that if she needs anything from the house all she has to do is to contact her demons.

A lot of prayers and deliverance have to be done for that house to get rid of what she brought. I asked why the husband did not remove the idol. She said as soon as it was brought into the house it seemed as if the husband became a fool, as if he had never been going to church.

14. Physical altars

Someone was kidnapped and dragged to a physical altar to be killed. He did not know what happened to him that morning. He looked for his Daily Guide and found that his son

had thrown it into the dustbin. He got angry and started shouting. His wife tried to pacify him, saying he should pick it out and have his quiet time. He started shouting at her as well. He did not have his quiet time and he left the house angrily. At the bus stop someone moved close to him and slapped him on the shoulder. He followed the man into a bush and there was a satanic priest there, with human parts on the floor round an altar. He called the name of Jesus, and the people began to get confused. They released him quickly. A man in a white garment appeared and shook his hand, and he then found himself in Lagos.

15. Altars of curses

Sometime ago, a man entered a bus. He was supposed to pay N15. He took the old N1 which looks like the present N10, added N5 to it and gave to the driver. Suddenly the trick was discovered but when the driver asked who gave him the money that was no longer in use, no one owned up. Everyone denied. The man too said it was not him. The driver got angry, parked his vehicle, and brought out a horn under his seat. Inside the horn was a viper's tooth. He took the viper's tooth out, mixed it with saliva, touched his mouth and said, "Before I start speaking, who gave me this money?" The man who gave the money was afraid and said nothing. The driver then began to rain terrible curses: "This person will bury his children," all kinds of terrible curses. When he finished he folded the illegal money, closed his eyes and threw it into the forest. Then he said, "Just as I have thrown this money away this man will never find prosperity." Later what the driver said began to happen. The man's first son got "F9 parallel" in the school certificate examination, that is, he failed in all the subjects. But when he was promoted to form five, he had got 'A' in all the 8 subjects in the exam. When the man realized his mistake he went to look for the driver. But the driver reminded him that he had thrown the cursed money into the forest, and he could not find it. Then this man ran to Jesus.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Christian's life is a life of spiritual warfare. If Jesus, the purest man that ever lived, had enemies, it is certain that we are going to have them.

When you talk about warfare there are different strategies. You could lay ambush for somebody, it could be a frontal attack, it could be a night attack, and it could be a constant bombardment from afar. But it can be terrible if you are fighting a war you do not understand.

I watched an American film entitled *Vietnam* and I almost cried. America brought a lot of sophisticated weapons to *Vietnam* but the Vietnamese were hiding on trees. The Americans did not understand the war. They did not know who to shoot. So they just shot indiscriminately and a lot of lives were wasted.

As a Christian if you do not understand the war you are fighting you will be rendered useless. God has the capacity to reduce our enemies to helpless creatures in seconds, and the most impossible situations we might face give us the greatest opportunities for God to show himself mightily. God can use many unusual methods to give us victory. Sometimes things may get worse before they start getting better. You might be complaining, "I don't know, instead of things getting better they are getting worse." Sometimes it has to be like

that because many enemies have already entered and they have to be drained out. The more the enemy boasts against a child of God, the greater his fall shall be. Say this confession to yourself powerfully, “The more the enemy shall boast against me, the greater his fall shall be.”

WAY OUT

What are we going to do now? How do we deal with the evil altars?

- Recognize their operations.

- Repent of anything you have done to make any evil altar to prosper.

- Renounce them whether you know about them or not. There is no point in saying that we do not have them in our family, unless we are not black people.

- Resist them using the word of God and prayer.

- Kill the priest at the altar. There must be some wicked priests being used against you. This is what we call slay their priests or kill their prophets.

- Withdraw your name, your benefits and your virtues from the altars.

- Destroy the altar by cursing it, introducing the fire of God upon it. Call the East wind upon it. Call the divine hurricane of God to blow it away.

- Give praises to God.

Let me ask this question: Do you want to deal with evil altars? You should not care to know who is erecting the altars or why they are erected, what you need to know is that we have a God who can disgrace any evil altar.

PRAYER SECTION

Every prayer against evil altars has to be said loudly, with violence, with faith and with an aggressive spirit. I hope we understand this. We are working against some terrible things, which we have to paralyze. If you are not going to pray it this way it is better to keep quiet.

1. I render every aggressive altar impotent, in the name of Jesus.

2. Every evil altar erected against me be disgraced, in Jesus' name.

3. Anything done against my life under demonic anointing be nullified, in the name of Jesus.

You will now issue the curse of God on every evil altar fashioned against you.

4. I curse every local altar fashioned against me, in the name Jesus.

5. Let the hammer of the Almighty God smash every evil altar erected against me in Jesus name.

If you have ever stepped on any sacrifice or you have found one outside your door in the morning you have to pray this one with double aggression.

6. Lord, send Your fire to destroy every evil altar fashioned against me, in the name of Jesus.

This next prayer point you are about to pray now is a serious one. You can pray and let God direct His hands wherever He wants to direct them.

7. Every evil priest ministering against me at the evil altar receive the sword of God, in the name of Jesus.

8. Let the thunder of God smite every evil priest working against me on the evil altar and burn them to ashes, in the name of Jesus.

9. Let every satanic priest ministering against me at evil altars fall down and die, in the name of Jesus,

When the prophet of God spoke against the altar, where King Jeroboam stood to burn incense, what happened? The king wanted to lay hold on him, and his hand dried up.

10. Any hand that wants to retaliate or arrest me because of all these prayers I am praying, dry up and wither in the name of Jesus,

Sing one song of praise to God violently, especially if you know your prayers have been answered.

11. Every stubborn evil altar priest, drink your own blood, in the name of Jesus.

12. I possess my possession stolen by the evil altar in Jesus' name.

You are going to withdraw seven things from every evil altar. Please, lay your hands on your head.

13. I withdraw my name from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.

14. (Transfer the hand to your chest.) I withdraw my blessings from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.

15. (Take the hand back to your head.) I withdraw my breakthroughs from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.

16. I withdraw my glory from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.

17. (Transfer the hand to your chest.) I withdraw my prosperity from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.

18. (One hand on the head, the other one on the chest.) I withdraw anything representing me from every evil altar, in Jesus' name.

19. Mention the organ that you know is not behaving the way it should. When you have done this begin to say, I withdraw you from every evil altar. Say this seven hot times.

Sermon Six

Title: The Trap of Blood Covenant by Pastor Isaiah Olatunji ¹⁶

INTRODUCTION:

One of the worst things that can happen to a person is for him to be in a cage and not know that he is. The day a mad man begins to see that his clothes are dirty, that day he is healed. But if he is ironing his dirty clothes and tearing them, then the madness is increasing. Added to this is the fact that a man, who has been locked up in a police cell, with the key in the pocket of the police, cannot release himself without the key. The person who will release-him will have to come from outside.

¹⁶ Akin Olatunji, *The Blood Covenant*, Lagos, 2002

THE BLOOD

I am talking about the Blood Covenant Trap, and straightaway I will read from Ezekiel 16:6, *“And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.”*

Blood can be polluted.

Leviticus 17: 11,

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”

So it is a divine decision that blood will make atonement for the soul. The Bible also says, *“Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.”* When Adam fell, God Himself had to slaughter an animal and used the skin to clothe him and his wife thus passing through the blood line again.

Leviticus 17: 14, says,

“For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.”

So the Bible says that life is in the blood. When God created man in the beginning, after he had moulded him from the clay and it was just sitting down lifeless, the Lord breathed into his nostrils. That breath made man a living soul, so that the life and the soul of man are inside the blood.

So, the blood is one of the mysterious things created by the Almighty God. Another mysterious thing created is water, and all of us reading this book, about 70 per cent of our body is water. Right from the beginning of the Bible, we find the Spirit of the living God moving upon the waters.

Another mysterious creation of God is fire. Nobody really understands how it works.

Electricity, like the blood, is also a mysterious creation. I John 5:8,

“And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”

This is a very deep and mysterious verse, as it shows the importance of the blood.

God spoke other things into being, but He created man with His own hands and the Bible says, *“We are fearfully and wonderfully made”* God breathed some of His life into man and that life is held in the blood. Therefore, man is more wonderful than the angels who have no flesh or blood.

Those who studied medicine, tell us that blood is a living liquid, it is alive. It is the blood that carries oxygen from our lungs to all parts of the body; that is, as you are breathing in and out, the air you are breathing eventually goes into your blood and your blood circulates it throughout the

body. It is the same blood that conveys the food you eat to various parts of the body. It is the same blood that maintains your body temperature and that is why it is constant. It is the same blood that helps to excrete waste materials from the body. Blood is an agent of purification. It is the same blood that helps you to maintain the water content of your body.

Inside the blood, there are things you could call security agents. There are tiny tiny cells which constantly attack sickness and weakness in the blood. So, blood gives you protection. The same blood can serve as an emergency first aid material. It is the power plant of the body. Medical people tell us that each cell in the body receives new blood every 50 seconds; so the blood is a very powerful equipment and instrument. In spite of the great advancement in medicine blood is still not yet fully understood; so if you see a person losing blood, he is dying instantaneously.

Because of this powerful nature of the blood and the spiritual materials attached to it, the Bible says the following about it:

1. Eating of blood is forbidden; Gen 9:4; Acts 15:20. So believers are expected to drain the blood off the animals they want to eat.
2. Shedding of blood is forbidden.
3. Defiling the land with blood is forbidden.
4. Any time innocent blood is shed, punishment always follows. The Jews themselves know that blood cannot be shed in vain. When that man came to David and said, "I killed Saul", he thought David would rejoice. Rather David said, "With your own mouth you have condemned yourself. Why is it that you are not afraid to touch the Lord's anointed? Kill him and let his blood be upon his own head."

When Jesus appeared before Pilate and he said, "This man has not done anything, leave him alone"; the Jews said, "No, crucify Him." He said again, "But He has done nothing." Yet they said, "Crucify Him and let His blood be upon us and upon our children." It is still so now for the Jews.

The Bible tells us that blood can speak because of the life in it; it can communicate. That is why in Gen 4: 10, God said to Cain, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." The blood was crying out for vengeance. God Himself always talks of avenging blood. In Revelation 6:10, you will read about the martyrs who have been slain for the gospel and are crying to God.

"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

God said, "Wait, no problem, let them kill the rest of you then we will avenge in full." That is why Jesus accused the Jews with his strong statement, "You are of the generation that kills the prophets and the blood of all prophets from Abel shall be required from this generation."

So blood is very important. What I am saying in essence is that once your blood is polluted, then the totality of your life is polluted. Any wrong thing done to your blood will pollute the whole of your life. This is a very, very serious matter. So much about the blood.

COVENANTS

Zechariah 9: 11,

“As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.”

This is a positive or what you can call a good covenant. God promised to deliver the prisoners who have been put in the pit where there is no water. The positive covenant is what Jesus achieved for us by his death on the cross. There is also a negative covenant.

The first thing to ask ourselves is what is a covenant. A covenant signifies a multi understanding between two or more parties. It can be designed to achieve friendship, or to procure assistance in war. It can be done for mutual protection; it can be done to establish peace. It can be done in several other ways, but it is a legal contract; a binding agreement; a solemn agreement.

In the Old Testament, when the Hebrew people talk about covenant, they give the idea of cutting an animal into two and passing between it. That is why they say, “They are cutting a covenant.” So, the general purpose of the covenant is to provide a binding sense of commitment. God is the originator of covenant and whenever He wants to finally commit Himself to a thing, he enters into covenant.

When you talk about covenant, you now know that it is a strong thing binding two parties, like a contract or a treaty. The terms of the covenant are usually spelt out, and breaking them is a very serious matter. Although some physical activities are involved, it is a spiritual thing.

When you read the Bible you will find the covenants between God and men, for instance, the one between Him and Abraham, which provided that all the males must be circumcised. When a person is circumcised blood is involved. Up till date, the Jews are keeping the covenant. This is why Israel is a special nation. As long as they do not break the Abrahamic covenant they cannot be defeated by another nation. It is therefore unprofitable for any nation to be against Israel, because God has said, “Those who curse you I will curse.”

There can also be a covenant between two people. Marriage is such a covenant and that is why God, is against divorce and anyone causing it. This is why the Bible warns, what God has joined together let no man or woman, or demon or mother-in-law or father-in-law, put asunder. When the priest asks you, “Will you take... to be your wife/husband?” and you answer, “Yes”, then a contract is signed. If you come back later and say; “I was drunk when I said so”, it is too late.

There could be a covenant between man and the devil. The devil can promise some people power and say, "All you have to do is to sleep in a cemetery for 200 days, and then you get the power." He can promise you wealth in exchange for a short life. People make covenants with the devil; this is why some people can never repent of doing evil because already they have entered into an agreement with Lucifer that they will do anything he wants, even if they will die doing it. If you have that kind of enemy, you have to be strong yourself.

Men can make covenants with evil spirits but the most dangerous covenant is the one which the participant is not aware of, yet it is binding. These days many people don't realize that a person can unconsciously enter into a covenant. Many of the things we don't think as serious are taken seriously in the spirit world.

Remember that Jacob and Esau only exchanged words, over a meal, and they were binding. God recognized the words and the devil also recognized them, and Esau lost his birthright. Many people make worse promises with their mouths.

Also, the word covenant translated in the New Testament has a root meaning, "to cut", and it was from the custom of cutting an animal into two and people walking between it; after that, they would sit down and eat food.

In the crude state of covenant formation, those who want to make covenants would come together, and discuss the motives and the terms of the covenants. Someone would say, "Nobody is to eat 'okro' in this village again, is that all right?" and everyone would say "Yes." Someone can also say that every male child in the village must scrape his hairs and give them to the priest. Again they would say, "Yes." They have thus agreed on the terms of the covenant. After the agreement they would exchange gifts and usually the most precious thing owned by the other party is demanded. This exchange of gifts symbolizes that whatsoever one person owns belongs to the other. The most precious possession now is life, and people have covenanted and traded it away.

There is normally a priest to administer the covenant, a satanic priest. Each party makes a cut on his wrist and allows the blood to drop into a cup of wine. It is mixed and each person drinks. They rub their wounds with gunpowder to heal and anytime they see the scar, it would remind them that they entered into a blood covenant. Some occult people also do this.

A lot of people are in trouble today because they met a man or woman a long time ago and entered into a covenant as they fell madly in love if there is that kind of thing. They cut each other's bodies and drank their blood saying, "Promise me you will not leave me." The blood then flowed into each other. Eventually they did not get married and there is problem. Some people do not understand where the problem is coming from. Well, it is already inside the blood by a simple transfer. They cannot marry someone else and if they do, the marriage will break down. After they drank the blood, a curse was spiritually pronounced on whoever would break the covenant.

Beloved, this is one of the sources of the black man's problems. It is only the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ that can buy us back.

The Bible itself is a covenant. The Old Testament and the New Testament can be translated as the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The two parties in a covenant come together and become one.

When Adam fell, blood had to be used for the remission of sin. The person who could make that covenant had to be both man and God. He had to be a person whose blood did not come from his father and mother, which was polluted. This is why Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, his blood was not from man. And so it was that kind of blood that could make atonement for us.

THE POWER OF COVENANTS

When two people are making a covenant, they become legal representatives of their people, even the unborn children and the coming generation. This means that a covenant somebody entered into 500 years ago is still working now and will continue to be so, even among children that are yet to be born. It is already waiting for them immediately they come out to the world. This is the power of covenant and this is what we have to note carefully.

How do people enter into this blood covenant trap? I will tell you but first let us look at how you can recognize those who are already inside this blood covenant trap.

A brother came from Ilorin (a town in Nigeria) sometime ago and shared this testimony with me. During a deliverance session for somebody, suddenly two birds flew into the arena when prayers were going on, and began to fight seriously with each other. They fought until our men went there and stopped the fight by killing and burning them. Why do you think the birds appeared and started fighting? Something had been ignited in the spirit world. Somebody was about to be released from a terrible blood covenant and the battle got so serious that the Lord put confusion between the spirits in charge and they started fighting each other. How did they know that something was happening? It is because there was a covenant. Some people may say, "If I travel to England I will escape from all of this." No, you cannot escape; your great-great-grandfather had ensured one thousand years ago that no matter where you run to, they will know.

RECOGNISING PEOPLE WITH BLOOD COVENANTS

Anti-harvest forces will be operating in their lives. They will gather but will not enjoy. When the harvest is ripe something will happen and everything will fall away.

- *Constant marital failure*, is evident when covenant is in place.
- *Constant loss of money.*
- *Inability to sustain a good thing for a long time.*
- *Constant sickness.*
- *Financial abortion or financial coffins.*
- *Failure at the edge of miracles or breakthroughs.*
- *Wrong marriages.*
- *Evil nightmares* of eating with the dead, serving people you don't know, swimming in water, playing with snakes, marrying in the spirit world, having sexual intercourse with children and adult.
- *Demonic dreams*
- *Chronic lust, confusion and loneliness.*
- *Over-sophistication, being too sophisticated to IJ.ray.*
- *Spiritual serpent and scorpion moving around the body.*
- *Hearing strange voices.*
- *Constant attack of malaria.*
- *Dreams about dead people.*
- *Difficulty in receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit.*
- *Unfruitful Christian lives.*
- *Intense hatred by people who are supposed to be helpful to you.*
- *All unruly children, unhealthy children.*
- *Spirit of failure*

All these are evidences that there are evil blood covenants in place. Beloved, the ball is in your court, because the provision to be free from all the evil effects of blood covenants has been made and unless you use it, nothing positive happens.

If you bought a soap from the market, remove its wrapper and put it on a shelf, and you admire it day and night, but you never use it, you will still have dirty clothes or a dirty body.

HOW DO PEOPLE ENTER INTO THIS EVIL BLOOD COVENANT TRAP?

1. VIRGIN COVENANT

I will ask some questions. Sister, who disvirgined you? How did you lose your virginity? Brother, have you ever deflowered anyone? If you are a man who had deflowered more than one lady, and you did not marry any of them, then don't be surprised now if your life is upside down. Because with your reproductive organ mixed with the blood of these girls, you have made a covenant with them. It is with this your organ that you had your other offspring; so by implication, all your children too are polluted. If you are unlucky, like many sinners, and the girl you disvirgined is demonic, you have made a covenant with that girl and her demon. If nothing is now working in your life, you caused the problem. So think about it, because this might be the origin of what you are facing now.

You might have been raped and don't even know where the people who raped you are now, or you might have accompanied your friends to rape a girl; that may be your problem because you have formed a covenant.

A lady was raped by about six men and she did not go to the police to file a report. Eventually the police found out, came to her and asked, "We hope they did not hurt or harm you?" Do you know what she told the police? She said, "Actually I was enjoying it." When I saw that she was laughing, I knew immediately she knew what she did. Those six men were finished, that is all.

2. INCISION

Incision is a strategy for a blood covenant and pollution. You open up your body for a blood covenant with the witchdoctor or demons, and you create holes through which your blood could be drawn.

3. SEX OUTSIDE MARRIAGE

Another covenant trap is sex outside marriage. When you make yourself one body with a woman, your entire system, blood, everything has been mixed together. What I am saying is this, it is possible that as you are here, a part of your body is in a witchcraft meeting, simply because you slept with a witch, or you woman, because you slept with a wizard. Your present state of holiness cannot deliver you from what I am saying now; neither can your new birth, because you did it when you were in the world. Your present state of holiness can only prevent a re-occurrence. Your new birth opens a door for total deliverance.

Take a man who travelled to England and met a 20-year old British girl. This Nigerian man was going to school while the poor English girl was working hard to support him. The girl sweated until this man was able to get a degree. However, this man never told the British girl that he was already married at home with three children. Then one day he carried his bag, told the girl that he

was going to visit a friend somewhere in Scotland and jumped into an aircraft, abandoned the girl and ran back to Nigeria. Later, he crashed his car under a trailer. If you want to talk about somebody perishing, he perished; for a start his body could not be recognized again in the wreckage. A lot of people might say, "Ah, what a pity, somebody who has just come back from England!" What happened? He perished because of his sin.

If your sexual partner is your father, or your brother, junior or senior, it is even worse. So many of us will have to specifically mention the names of our sexual partners when confessing our sins.

4. ANIMAL SACRIFICE

If you have ever offered an animal sacrifice, you have made a covenant with demon spirits and they will harass you until you break the blood covenant and loose yourself from their grip. You must mention the name of the animal you used, and release yourself. If you have offered so many sacrifices and you cannot remember all of them, you have to ask the Holy Spirit to remind you, because the single one you forget, the devil will hide there.

All those who always say that a prophet tells them to slaughter a chicken or fowl and distribute, are forming blood covenants. All those whose parents kill something for them every birthday, are thus renewing contracts with demons.

5. ABORTION

All those who have ever carried out any abortion, including the doctor who did it and the man who gave the woman the money to do it have formed blood covenants. There are spirits that will enter into them and give them frustration and general backwardness. Their children will be affected later, because the blood of the aborted babies will be crying out against them.

6. TATTOO

If some of our mothers are asked to uncover their bodies, we will see strange pictures and marks there, and they do not understand why things are so rough for them. Some have these strange pictures on their right hands, some on the left, and some on their shoulders. All kinds of pictures are there; they are blood covenants. So the Bible that says, "Don't make a mark on your body", warns you because of these blood covenants. The Bible is against skin marks because in the process of making them your blood could get contaminated and covenants would be formed. When you see a man with that kind of demonic mark on the body, and he is not born again, he generally tends to be polygamous and a woman with such a mark generally has marital problems.

7. EATERS OF FLESH AND DRINKERS OF BLOOD

Blood transferred from eaters of flesh and drinkers of blood forms covenant between two or more people. You know that if you go to a quack hospital, they use needles they have used for one patient to inject another patient thereby taking the blood from one patient to another. The eaters of flesh and drinkers of blood do not sterilize their mouths. They bite sister 'A' and drink her blood; by the time they bite sister 'B' they transfer to her the blood from sister 'A'. In this way they form covenants. When people don't have fire, they are easy victims.

8. MAN AND WOMAN CIRCUMCISION

Evil agents are involved in circumcision sometimes. When they can circumcise a man or a woman, blood covenants are formed with the reproductive organ of such a person and marital problems may follow.

9. HOSPITALS

There are satanic agents operating in hospitals; they are there to hunt for blood. So if you have to go to the hospital, you have to cover yourself with the blood of Jesus and be praying while you are there because of the evil agents that are there sometimes.

10. SATANIC COMMUNION

Receiving communion from the hands of demonic pastors or priests is dangerous. Something happened sometime ago in a church near us here. They were fighting in the church, and the fight was so serious that the church was divided into two camps. Some members were holding their service upstairs and the others on the ground floor. When the sermon was being preached upstairs, those downstairs would be singing praise worship inside the same church. Yet people sat down there. In that kind of place, any type of, communion you take is an initiation into a covenant.

When you know that your priest belongs to a secret society, when you know that your priest is becoming strangely friendly with a girlfriend, and is a fornicator; and he gives you communion and you take, you have been initiated into a covenant.

11. BLOOD BATH

Some people bathe with blood because they believe their problems are too much for them. They kill a goat, put the blood in a bucket, and bathe with it. It may sound strange to you, but people do it.

12. ANOINTING BY BLOOD

There are people who put blood on their head and pray demonic prayers on it. These people have thus made a covenant.

13. BLOOD LIBATION

When blood is poured on the ground or on objects for "praying" purposes, a blood covenant is formed.

14. UNCONSCIOUS DECEPTION INTO A READY-MADE COVENANT

When a person is wounded and blood is coming out, and an evil person comes around and puts his finger on the wound to stop the blood flow and later puts the finger in his mouth, he has formed a covenant with that person.

15. INHERITED COVENANT

Through sinful practices evil spirits can terrorize a family for generations and until there is a true repentance and a command to these demons to go, the family will continue to be afflicted. Even though members of the family have given their lives to Christ, they will still suffer because of

ignorance. Those covenants our parents entered into, are still binding unless we break them specifically.

16. MARITAL COVENANT

I have described this earlier; when lovers cut themselves, lick each others blood and swear to be faithful to each other, they have made a covenant.

17. CONSUMPTION OF DEMONIC FOOD

There are some people who actually cook blood and eat it. Others to drink blood mixed with fresh milk. They are all making covenants with the spirit world.

18. EAR AND NOSE PIERCING

It is bad enough to have holes in your ears, it is even worse when you increase the ones your parents put there to three. All you have done is to triple the covenant.

19. SEX WITH MENSTRUATING WOMAN

Take for example, armed robbers entered into a house and told a woman there to remove her dress. Despite her protest and the fact that she was menstruating, they raped her. This will produce a blood covenant.

20. THROUGH THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BLOOD HUNTERS

Those who are actually hunting for blood are everywhere because the devil has a satanic blood bank, which must be supplied regularly with blood. When blood is low there, the hunters go to a country cause a war or accident to get blood. They cause all kinds of evil things; they can 'even make husband and wife to fight and beat themselves until blood starts to flow. They collect their blood and the husband and wife will reconcile, not knowing that they have already formed a covenant with demons.

THE WAY OUT

The disciples in Acts 13 ministered to the Lord in praise, worship, adoration and fasting. God responded in that passage, giving a word of direction concerning what the church should do about Barnabas and Saul.

1. *Complete repentance.* All sins must be confessed and forsaken. All of them.
2. *Renounce the covenants.* Prayers of renouncing covenants have to be done aloud, vigorously, violently and aggressively, for them to work, because some of us may be breaking something which is about a thousand years old. Some of us may be trying to escape from an evil umbrella that has already covered so many people. You want to run, but cannot run and you know that the demon holding the umbrella will pursue anybody who wants to run. That is why some people have terrible dreams of being pursued.
3. *Bind the spirit in charge of the evil covenant.*
4. *Speak destruction to their products.* The covenants can produce evil things because of their long stay.
5. *Decree what you desire, by aggressive faith.*

Beloved, we have a very serious prayer section to address. A sister was failing her school certificate exams. Her mother went to consult an oracle and was told to go and form a covenant with the river so that she could pass. So they cut the girl, took a bit of her blood, used it to write her name on an egg and threw it into a river. The girl passed the examination, and that was 22 years ago. She studied medicine and got her degree, got married, had the first daughter, the second daughter and then the demons came and said, "Well, we allowed you to pass your school certificate and other exams and you are not serving us; you are going to enter into trouble now." The woman did not understand what they meant because she was going to fellowship in a church where this kind of things were neither taught nor taken seriously. The attack started this way: one day, the husband brought a girl home and told madam, "This girl will stay in the guest room. She is my business partner." The wife said, "But you are a Christian you cannot do this, you can't do this", but the man did not answer back.

The next day, the man brought another girl, and said to the wife, "You see now they are two business partners and both of them will stay in the guestroom." After a week, the two girls started fighting and the madam said, "What kind of thing is this? You gave these people accommodation and they are fighting now." Before madam could say, "Jesus is Lord", the next thing she heard from her husband was, "Well, they are fighting because that room is too choked. Therefore one of them will have to move into our bedroom." Then the madam said, "This is very bad, I am going to report to your pastor." The husband said, "Very simple, if you report me to the pastor, I will just stop coming to the church, finish."

At first, the wife wanted to fight, but later decided to come to us, and we were able to locate that she had formed a covenant, and the demons were just warming up. She then prayed and broke the blood covenant. It took her six aggressive hours, and the two girls ran out of her house and peace was restored.

Therefore, you have work to do. The work may not stop with praying once. Some people may spend quite some time because some covenants take time to break. In case you have not given your life to Christ, you cannot break anything. So the first thing to do is to surrender your life to Jesus. Take the first step towards receiving your freedom by saying this prayer: "Father in the name of Jesus, I come before you and I claim the power of the blood of Jesus. I want you to forgive me my sins. Lord Jesus, come into my life. Thank You Jesus. Amen."

If you are a higher eagle who have been converted to a lower eagle and caged, today is your day of freedom. Amen.

PRAYER SECTION

1. If you know you are guilty of these things, repent and ask for forgiveness. If you know you sold your virginity at a cheap price or you did so unwillingly, ask the Lord to forgive you because you want to break the stubborn yoke. This evil trend must not continue.
2. Put one hand on the head, and the other on the stomach. All prayers to renounce covenants, whether consciously or unconsciously entered into, are to be said aggressively, vigorously and loudly because you might be fighting a battle that is two

thousand years old. The Bible says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). Say this with holy aggression:

3. "Holy Ghost Fire, boil spiritual contamination out of my blood (boil as boiling water for purification; as it boils the water vapour condenses and it becomes pure water). Say this once and repeat, "Holy Ghost Fire, boil it out."
4. I release myself from every satanic blood covenant, in the name of Jesus.
5. Grip your head with your two hands and pray very aggressively, "I release my head from every evil blood covenant, in the name of Jesus."
6. Still gripping your head with your two hands, "I dismantle every stronghold of evil covenants, in the name of Jesus."
7. When somebody enters into an evil covenant, a curse is issued on him. As he is breaking the covenant, the curse too is there; he is bombarded by two different things, the covenant and the curse. So, pray like this. "I release myself from every covenanted curse, in the name of Jesus."
8. Let the blood of Jesus speak against every unconscious evil covenant.
9. I speak destruction unto the fruits of unclean spirits in my life, in the name of Jesus.
10. I break every evil covenant linkage, in the name of Jesus.
11. I dismantle every stronghold of evil blood covenants, in the name of Jesus.
12. I nullify the effects of evil access to my blood, in Jesus' name.
13. I release myself from every covenanted-curse, in Jesus' name.
14. I release every organ in my body from the grip of evil blood covenant, in the name of Jesus.
15. I dissociate myself and my family from every territorial blood covenant, in the name of Jesus.
16. I dissociate myself from every tribal blood covenant, in the name of Jesus.
17. I dissociate myself from every inherited blood covenant, in the name of Jesus.
18. I withdraw my blood from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.
19. I withdraw my blood from every satanic blood bank, in the name of Jesus.
20. I break every unconscious evil blood covenant, in Jesus' name.
21. Let the blood of any animal shed on my behalf loose its covenant power, in the name of Jesus.
22. Let every drop of blood speaking evil against me be silenced by the blood of Jesus.
23. I release myself from every collective blood covenant captivity, in the name of Jesus.
24. I release myself from every conscious or unconscious evil blood covenant, in the name of Jesus.
25. Let the blood of every evil covenant loose its power over me, in the name of Jesus.
26. I defy and destroy every evil covenant agreement, in Jesus' name.
27. Let the blood of the new-covenant speak against the blood of any evil covenant militating against me, in the name of Jesus.
28. I receive the mandate to disqualify the right of all evil blood covenants, in the name of Jesus.
29. Every evil blood covenant formed with any organ of my body be nullified by the blood of Jesus.
30. I recover all the good things stolen through evil covenants by the enemies, in the name of Jesus.

31. Let every evil blood covenant along my blood-line be neutralized, in the name of Jesus.
32. I release myself from every curse attached to evil covenants, in the name of Jesus.
33. I release myself from the grip of curse-covenant breakers, in the name of Jesus.
34. Let every repercussion of breaking unconscious covenants be washed away by the blood of Jesus.

Sermon Seven

Title: Believer's Power Instrument by Bishop David Oyedepo¹⁷

God has provided the Church with some very powerful covenant instruments for enforcing her dominion here on earth. But note that whereas He has provided the arms, it's our responsibility to know how to use them and actually use them, and not be like the children of Ephraim, who though armed turned and fled from the battle [Ps. 78:9). We must know how to use our God-given implements; otherwise our dominion here on earth will only be wishful thinking.

I will identify and discuss how to use some of these instruments in this sermon.

The Name of Jesus

The name of Jesus is a power tool for walking in dominion. It is an unbeatable force in the conflicts of life. The name of Jesus reigns wherever the sun shines, and at the mention of it, every knee bows - whether of things on the earth, things underneath the earth, and things in heaven. No wonder the Bible describes it as a strong tower.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.
Proverbs 18: 10

The name of Jesus is a strong tower, an institution of power. Once you invoke that name in faith, a strong tower is erected round about you. Peter called upon that name at the gate Beautiful, and his dominion over sickness was established. Hear what he said, and what happened afterwards:

Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.
Acts 3:6

There was an explosion of power at the mention of the name of Jesus, such that a man that was crippled from birth rose up and began to leap and jump! When all the people saw the lame man healed, they gathered around him, Peter and John. And when Peter saw this, he said to them:

... Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk!

¹⁷ David O. Oyedepo, *Walking in Dominion*, Ota, 2006

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his son Jesus; whom ye delivered up and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go ...

And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Acts 3:12-16

The name of Jesus gets things done. It is not just a title; but a possession. That is why Peter said, "Such as I have." You need to be possessed with that name.

The name of Jesus has inbuilt power, that allows anyone who possesses and uses it to walk in dominion. It is a gift to the Church, for our reign here on earth. Jesus said:

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Mark 16:17-18

That is dominion! The name of Jesus is a reservoir of signs and wonders. It unleashes signs and wonders when invoked in faith. Anointing goes forth when the name of Jesus is invoked in faith, just like when you spray a room with insecticide. The name is poison to every work of the devil. The wicked just has to bow to the power it carries. And the good news is that all who believe have the right to use that name, just as Peter did.

There are situations in which you find yourself, where you cannot easily carry the Bible or any book to encounter the Word of God. There is also probably not enough time to pray at that time, and no one around to lay hands on you, but you need liberty from the devil's oppression. In such situations, you need to remember that you carry a name that is loaded with the unction required for your rescue - the name of Jesus! With that name, every Goliath before you will come down!

There is an anointing in that name that destroys yokes, divides the flames of fire and silences death. The use of that name puts you in dominion. That is why the Bible says:

At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2: 10-11

The name of Jesus destroys challenges and brings every opposition down. Every time you are confronted with a challenge, look at it with the eye of faith, and from the depth of your heart release the name of Jesus in faith; that opposition must bow!

The Blood Of Jesus

Theologians tell us that the blood of Jesus only cleanses us from our sins. That is not the whole truth. When the blood came on the scene, see what the Bible says it also did for us:

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Revelation 5:9-12

The blood of Jesus, apart from cleansing from sin, also delivered to man power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing. The blood is also referred to as the blood of the covenant.

The blood of Jesus is the covenant stronghold of the saints. When you have a good understanding of what the blood stands for and its' potency, then you will become unstoppable and can no longer be molested by anyone or thing.

As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.

Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope; even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee;

Zechariah 9: 11-12

The blood of Jesus is like the sword of a mighty man. When you take cover under the blood (because the life of the flesh is in the blood), the Lord shall be seen over you. Triumph is impossible without the blood. Jesus came to take all power from the devil and give it back to us. All this represents dominion.

And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the LORD GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.

The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar.

Zechariah 9:14-15

As long as you are under this blood cover, you remain impenetrable and inaccessible, because the God of the blood will be seen upon you, and His arrows shall go forth as lighting on your behalf. The blood of the covenant exempts you from molestations, shame and reproach. See your covering and dignity in it, as it wraps you up in power and dominion. It's time to walk in it for your dominion.

The devil's last card is death, and death can't cross the bloodline. So, it's time to come under the canopy of the blood. Every occultic sect has blood connections, but whatever is from above is above all. No man born of a woman can be compared with Christ in any form. If there is any blood covenant that initiates people into any occultic sect, none can he compared in efficacy with the one that connects us to heaven

The blood is a missile in heavenly places. It will always hit its' target when invoked in faith. The bold declaration of, "The blood of Jesus!" by any heavenly citizen must work. By destiny, all heavenly citizens are more than conquerors, as Satan is not permitted to prevail in this realm. So begin to use this blood of triumph in whatever conflicts of life you are confronted with, and walk on in dominion.

There is tangible power in the blood, as it is God's last card. It was God's trump card in Egypt, when Pharaoh refused to allow Israel leave the land of captivity. But when the blood came on the scene, Israel marched out of Egypt in dominion and abundance!

The blood of Jesus is the divine provision for man's freedom from every form of satanic corruption. It is what it takes to silence the opposition. It is the ultimate for our victory when applied against the wicked plans of the enemy. You turn on a switch in heaven every time you plead the blood of Jesus, as the blood immediately begins to speak, "Passover". By the blood of Jesus, every evil will pass over you, in Jesus' name!

God revealed in Hebrews 12:24 that we have access in mount Zion, the city of refuge, to the blood of sprinkling that speaks for us. The blood of sprinkling provides a covering for us against the wickedness of Satan. Every time God's people appear in Zion, angels are present, whose only job is to sprinkle the blood of the Lamb, which speaks every good thing for the believer, It speaks healing, peace, protection, provision, fruitfulness, etc. And what's more, it is the impenetrable by the avenger of blood.

There is a continuous sprinkling of the blood, twenty-four hours of the day, in Zion. Therefore, whenever a child of God appears there, whether alone or with other believers, he gets sprinkled

with the precious blood of the Lamb. So, if the devil comes to you with depression or any form of oppression, just blast the atmosphere with the blood. Declare vehemently, "The blood of Jesus is against you, Satan!" The Blood of Jesus is the seal of our victory in every conflict of life. It enables us to walk in dominion.

Testimonies

There is so much power in testimonies, which the Church of Jesus is ignorant of, and so has not fully utilized it.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Revelation 12: 11

The blood and testimonies are instruments of triumph. Testimonies eradicate trials. But what do you find in the Church today? People talking only about the trials they are faced with. To walk in dominion, however, we need to talk more about our testimonies. Hear what Isaiah 8:20 says:

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Stop talking about trials; instead, talk testimonies! Locate relevant testimonies, wrap them up in the blood, and begin to shoot them as missiles at your targets. David shot testimony arrows at Goliath, and collected Goliath's head (1 Sam. 17:37)! The time has come for you to also collect the heads of all your Goliaths.

The blood of Jesus and testimonies are two powerful weapons commonly used even in heaven. They are overcoming forces that cause the saints to be more than conquerors here on earth. Whenever heavenly citizens invoke the blood and shoot testimony arrows, God's presence is released, and His arrows go into operation, causing them to become an ensign in the land. So, take the blood weapon in your right hand, and testimonies in your left, and your dominion is guaranteed, as no devil can prevail against you.

Friend, we are a people born in due season! These mysteries were hid in time past, even from kings and princes, but have been revealed in our generation, so we can walk on gallantly in dominion! We are dangerously armed saints! God in His infinite mercy has revealed great treasures to us, to establish our dominion here on earth. Wielding these weapons, we have been privileged to see many dead people raised back to life; many homes restored, and shattered lives re-moulded.

With the name of Jesus, His blood and testimonies, you're on your way to the top. No devil can prevail against you with these very powerful weapons in your hand. You're fully armed, so march on in victory and dominion!

The Anointing Oil

The mystery of the anointing oil is another blessing we have seen produced very terrific and mind-blowing results. James 5:14-15 reveals one of the tasks the oil is meant to perform for us:

Is any sick among you; let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

The Bible says, "The Lord shall raise him up." It is the Lord that shall raise him up, not the oil. The Lord, who authored the oil, will respond to your obedience to raise the dead, destroy cancer, AIDS, etc.

The anointing oil is not a chemical product. It is the Spirit of God mysteriously put in a bottle, and mysteriously designed to communicate the power of God bodily. It is the power of God in the person of the Holy Spirit, placed in a tangible form in the hand of man to humiliate Satan, malting an open show of him. It is God's wisdom for man's rescue! It is the might of God. No gate can be shut against it, as every gate is lifted up at its appearance.

The anointing oil carries mysterious virtue. It is what it takes to be absolutely free, as it destroys all discomforts of life. It is God's standard against every invasion of the enemy.

God introduced the mystery of the anointing oil in Exodus 30:23-31, where He gave Moses details on how it was to be mixed. *In 1 Samuel 16: 13, we see that it is the Spirit of God.

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward ...

David was anointed with oil, but what came upon him was not oil, but the Spirit of the Lord. So the anointing oil is a medium through which the Holy Spirit, the power of God, is invoked to intervene on man's behalf. The Holy Spirit goes into manifestation when the oil is applied.

The anointing oil is God's standard or weapon in your hand, to put the enemy where he belongs - far from you, out of your life, home and affairs (Isa. 9: 19). No devil in hell can resist the authority loaded in the anointing oil! Look at what it did in the days of the disciples:

*And they went out, and preached that men should repent.
And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.*

Mark 6:12-13

The anointing oil is able to end all frustrations in your life. When it touches the barren, she becomes abundantly fruitful. When it touches anyone chained by the devil, the person becomes automatically free. There is no sickness or disease of any kind that can escape the power in the anointing oil. So, discover the mystery in the anointing oil, and it will put you over always, causing you to walk in dominion!

The Church of Jesus must begin to appropriate the significance and uses of this divine instrument of power, to see the finger of God move supernaturally in the affairs of men. Many have lost grip of what the anointing oil really stands for. Look beyond that common chemical called, "Olive oil", into the mystery that it carries. The anointing oil is not mere oil; there is a person mysteriously packaged inside it. The Holy Ghost is meant to make men comfortable, eradicate hardship and erase affliction. That is what the oil does, as it is the Holy Ghost in a mystery.

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.
Matthew 3: 12

The Holy Ghost has a broom in His hands with which He thoroughly garnishes His floor. He will gather together all the chaff in your life, and burn them up with unquenchable fire. That bottle in your hand is no ordinary liquid, but fire! In other words, its content is highly dangerous. What natural explanation can you give that will justify its catching fire when poured on the ground? The Person inside the oil came alive! Who can shoot an arrow at fire and get results? What kind of knife can you use to cut fire? Can any gun kill it? Everything inherent in the person of the Holy Ghost can be found inside the bottle.

I blessed a bottle of oil for a cousin in 1991, and he kept it away in his wardrobe. His business was about to hit the rocks when suddenly he remembered the oil. He brought it out of his wardrobe, and anointed all his signposts with it, and business immediately picked up for him! The Holy Ghost is THE comforter, not A comforter. There is no situation he cannot handle. Every hardship in life answers to his authority.

Note that we are not only to anoint people with the oil, but can also anoint things. The children of Israel anointed their tabernacle, laver, offerings, etc. with he oil.

And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony,

And the table and all his vessels and the candlestick and his vessels and the altar of incense,

And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot.

And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy.

And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.

And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations.

Exodus 30:26-31

God has given us a rod; we can't afford to sit down and watch magicians molest us. The Egyptians were rod-less at the end of the first round of conflict with Moses. If Moses had not cast down his rod, would it have become a serpent? Stop carrying the bottle of anointing oil about for fun; use it! It is not enough to be seen carrying the bottle of anointing oil around; you must put it to work. Moses never parted with his rod, as it was his only weapon of defence.

Whenever you sense evil around you, stand to your feet and pour the oil on the ground. Speak to the situation and let it know you are in charge. Let it know power from on high has taken over. Any day you are on your way out and you've left your oil at home, go back for it. Somebody might need your help on the way, and you will be able to manifest your glory.

The man Smith Wigglesworth was a man of one book and one bottle - the Bible and the oil. He died at the age of 87 and never needed to use any form of medicine. Friend, it works! So, why should you continue to suffer whereas you have power in your house? You have the Comforter at your disposal, why must you die in discomfort? There will always be a performance of the things the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

From now on, as you handle this instrument of glory, every discomfort in your life and around you shall become history, in Jesus' name.

The Mantle

It will be recalled that at the time of Elijah's departure, Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him. When he got to the bank of Jordan and could not cross over, he smote the waters with his mantle that fell from Elijah, declaring, "Where is Lord God of Elijah" and the waters parted, and Elisha went over (2 Kgs. 2:13-14).

Any material that has come in contact with the anointed of God carries the unction for manifestation. Such material is what is referred to as the mantle in our context.

God's presence is proved by the manifestations of signs and wonders. The Bible says the disciples went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following (Mk. 16:20). Hebrews 2:4 also tells us: "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will" Therefore, every time you see signs and wonders, know that God is present.

Now let me show you God's wisdom at work. Mark 5:30 tells the story of the woman with the issue of blood. When she touched Jesus, He asked, "Who touched my clothes?" Also in Acts 19: 11-12, we are told:

And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

It wasn't Paul that wrought the special miracles; it was God. The virtue that healed the people did not come out from Paul, but from God. The virtue that operates in the mantle (the handkerchief or clothe from an anointed man of God) is God's virtue. That is why I never feel anything leave my body when miracles take place via the mantle.

One day I was walking through the congregation to the pulpit, and a man who had suffered a spinal injury for seventeen years touched my clothes (a flowing gown) and immediately heard a cracking sound in his lumbar region. That was it! He was instantly healed! And for the first time in seventeen years, he didn't need his lumbar jacket anymore. The power of God healed him instantly. It was God's virtue, not mine, because nothing left me when he was healed; unlike Jesus, who felt virtue leave Him when the woman with the issue of blood touched Him.

The virtue in the mantle is from God, not from any prophet or man of God. All we need do is to provoke Him with our obedience. Only then will we see His virtue go into action. Elisha said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah!" and God's virtue went into action. Note that it wasn't Elijah's virtue, as Elijah was already gone by then (2 Kgs. 2: 12-14). Whatever God can handle, his virtue can handle.

And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul ... "Those miracles were wrought without any special effort from Paul or the people. The aprons and handkerchiefs they brought from Paul were enough to check out the diseases and evil spirits, but it was God working. The people took notice and acknowledged Paul as a man that had the hand of God upon his life. So when he could not go to where the problem was, they knew they could take anything from him to the problem, and it would be gone.

Friend, God has not changed. He is still working by the hands of men today. These are men who carry transferable unction, and are sent for the deliverance of mankind, the liberty of the captives, the opening of blind eyes, raising the dead, and for the blessing of the people.

In 1989, a brother's wife ran mad in another town that was some distance from where I was. Since I couldn't go with him to where she was, I took my handkerchief, spoke some powerful words into it, and gave it to him, saying, "Get down to Ekpoma with this, and the power working inside me is going with you now. Wipe her face with this handkerchief when you get there, and the madness will be gone."

He left, believing, and later testified that as soon as the mad woman saw the handkerchief, she ran to grab it, but he held her and wiped her face with it, and the madness vanished instantly! She became pregnant that same month, and nursed her baby all by herself. Till today, she's doing fine in the Lord.

Friend, the mantle of a prophet of God in your hands will work wonders! God gave me this mantle ministry for the liberation of mankind, and we have countless testimonies as proof. The mantle ministry is a ministry of transmission of unction. As I speak forth the anointing for special miracles and casting out of devils to go into the handkerchief (even as Jesus spoke to the fig tree and it heard Him)], wherever it appears, the works of the devil will be destroyed. It is a mantle for exploits. It is the end-time prophetic mystery in the hand of the carrier, for amazing

results, signs and wonders. It is a carrier of divine energy and heavenly virtue. It always produces signs!

The Communion

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

John 6:51-57

The communion is the flesh and the blood of Jesus. We renew our eternal life policy every time we come to the communion table, by contacting the Zoe, the very life of God. When you partake of the communion, whatever flows in Jesus (the vine) begins to flow in you (the branch), causing eternal life to swallow up our human life that is susceptible to demonic oppressions.

There is no drink, capsule or medicine that can be compared with the flesh and blood of Jesus. The communion is a supreme capsule and a supreme injection that cannot be compared with any other. I don't care who your family or specialist doctor is, Jesus said, "For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed."

In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam and Eve all kinds of shrubs and herbs. For what purpose did He give it to them? It was for food (Gen. 1:29). He never intended for these plants to be for their healing. If only men would eat what God intended for them to eat, they will not experience sickness and disease. When God created man, He never made provisions for his healing. He only gave man what to eat.

It was after man was corrupted and dethroned that Satan's wicked rule and oppression began. God then had to send his only begotten Son with another type of food, designed to make us never need drugs of any kind. What is that food? "My flesh is meat indeed, and my bloods drink indeed." If you partake of the communion table with this understanding, you will never need to take any drug for the remaining days of your life!

The breaking of bread (the communion table) is the best hospital to transfer any case to. It is the highest theatre, the office of the Greatest Specialist Jesus Himself, the Great Physician, the Balm of Gilead! The communion is God's ultimate prescription for our total health.

The apostles continued in the breaking of bread daily, so sickness was far from them.

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

Acts 2:46

Don't esteem the communion table lightly, as everything you will ever require for your total health is found in it. It will make you live like Jesus here on earth, where Jesus becomes the One working out all things for you, and you operate in His class.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

John 6:57

God said He will satisfy your mouth with good things, and Jesus said, "I am that bread of life ... that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." Nothing compares in value with the nutritious value found in the flesh and blood of Jesus! You become spiritually indestructible when you partake of it. Sickness will no longer be mentioned around you. The communion makes it impossible for you to be humiliated or molested health-wise.

Jesus said as often as you observe this ordinance, you remember Him:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it; in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, do shew the Lord's death till he come.

1 Corinthians 11 :23-26

The communion takes care of everything that weakens you and mocks your redemptive testimony. The children of Israel ate manna in the wilderness, and as they went from nation to nation, from one people to the other, God suffered no man to manhandle them. He cursed kings for their sakes, tying, "Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm" (Ps. 105:13-15).

The communion makes it impossible for any devil to harm you. Would Jesus suffer what you're suffering right now? If your answer is no, as you take the communion, say an angry and eternal "No!" to whatever you are going through right now, and it will never reoccur in your life again.

The communion infuses God's kind of life into your blood stream, bones, marrows, mind and spirit-man. It instantly destroys whatever is contrary to life inside your system. It's a mystery, end-time wisdom of God for your dominion. It is for the saints, for the Church of Jesus Christ. So, use it!

Feet Washing

The feet washing mystery is, among other things, God's wisdom for establishing the dominion of the saints. The second Adam brought back for us what was lost through the first Adam.

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself

After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet!

Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet.

Jesus answered, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

John 13:3-8

By this mysterious exercise of feet washing, Jesus was restoring to the new generation of human race (the new creation) the dominion that was lost in the first Adam. So, as your feet are dipped into water, you step into the plan of God, through the mysteries of His wisdom, and walk into the realm of dominion. If all things given to Jesus are handed over to you, tell me what devil will ever be able to challenge you?

Jesus washed His disciples' feet so they too could enter the realm where the Father had put Him. Evidently, dominion was passed onto the disciples through this mystery of divine transference, such that when Jesus left, they represented Him, spirit, soul and body. Everything bowed to them, just as they did Jesus.

From now on, as you observe this ordinance, every evil will bow before you, and whatever part in Christ that you are yet to experience will be delivered unto you. For example, you certainly need unbeatable intelligence in the things of God, so you can run the affairs of this life. It will be delivered to you via this mystery. Jesus had such amazing wisdom that sounded in heaven and answered here on earth also. The same Jesus said to us, "The works that I do you shall do, and greater works shall you do" (Jn. 14:12). Your inheritance of the Jesus order of wisdom shall be delivered to you, in Jesus' name!

Friend, there's a part you have in Christ that Satan is out to keep away from you. Now you know it, so violently possess your possession by using this great instrument God has delivered to you. The wisdom of feet washing offers you the singular opportunity of stepping into all things delivered to Christ. Don't allow your confidence to be dampened by any devil.

The feet washing mystery is simply God's wisdom on display. What do people stand to gain from it? They will gain their complete inheritance in Christ. And what is this inheritance all about? Mysterious dominion for mysterious triumphs! It is time to resume our rightful positions in redemption.

Sermon Eight

Title: The Holy Spirit Power by Bishop Kehinde Adalaku¹⁸

Apart from being baptized in the Holy Ghost and growing to the anointing level, you also need the seven Spirits of God fully operating in your life to truly walk in victory. Jesus had the anointing without measure, and also had the seven Spirits of God fully operational in His life.

But what are the seven Spirits of God? Upon whom do they come?

And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Revelation 4:5

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars ...

Revelation 3: 1

We understand that Jesus is the One speaking to the seven churches here. So He is the One that has the seven Spirits of God. A careful look at the army of the Lord described in Joel 2 reveals something interesting also. Verse 3 says, 'A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth.' And by that operation, the land before them was like the garden of Eden, and behind them a desolate wilderness. "Yea and nothing shall escape them."

This great army of the Lord will operate by the power of the seven Spirits of God, because we are told in Revelation 4 that out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices, burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

Also look at Revelation 5:6:

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst «the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Who is that Lamb? Jesus! He has the seven Spirits of God, which are now made available to the sons of God on earth. Those seven Spirits were fully operational in Christ - a pointer to the fact that God wants them to be operational in us too. And when those seven Spirits are at work in a man, he will be nothing but a sign and a wonder on the earth.

¹⁸ Kehinde Adalaku, *Spiritual Authority of Believers*, Lagos, 2009

We are entitled to the seven Spirits of God in our lives. This is because we can't come into the fullness of the stature of Christ if the forces working in Him are not working in us as well. I see you gain access into the operations of the seven Spirits of God, in the name of Jesus!

But what are the seven Spirits of God?

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:
Isaiah 11: 1-3

This is the sum total of the seven spirits of God. They are for a total disarming of wickedness, and the establishment of the peaceful dominion of the Church here on earth. Don't you know He's coming to rapture a Church without spot, wrinkle or anything of such? So He must send us help (that is, supernatural ability) to live above board.

The Spirit of the Lord

In Luke 4: 18 Jesus proclaimed:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

This was where the Spirit of the Lord opened the first chapter of the former rain. The other forces are reserved for the last days. It's interesting to note that the former rain brought gifts of the Holy Spirit. First Corinthians chapter 12 tells us that it's all by the same Spirit. That means all the gifts of the Holy Ghost (the nine gifts - faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues, word of wisdom and word of knowledge are gifts of the Spirit of the Lord. These all add up to the Spirit of power.

When the Holy Spirit came in Acts chapter 2, He came as the power from on high. The former rain was thus heralded as the power from on high, which is one of the seven Spirits of God. God is omnipotent. So inside Him must be a force that generates power. So the Spirit of the Lord, as it were, stands for the power in the former rain.

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Luke 24:49

One of the key manifestations of the Holy Ghost in the last days is power. When Jesus came on His Messianic assignment to the earth, He came in the spirit of power, to deliver the captives. Luke 4:14 tells us:

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

Jesus began to walk in dominion as soon as the Spirit of the Lord came upon Him. He entered the synagogue in Nazareth, and read Isaiah 61:1-2 from the book that was delivered unto Him (Lk. 4:18). When you put Luke 4: 14 and 18 together, you will discover that the Spirit of the Lord He was talking about is also the Spirit of power. The Bible says He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee and announced, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." Therefore, the Spirit of the Lord is the Spirit of power.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is the power from on high. Jesus told the disciples in Acts 1: 8:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

I'd like you to be thirsty for the impartation of power. You need it to walk in dominion. Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath, anointed me ..." To anoint means to empower. That is to say, "He hath (empowered) me to preach the gospel to the poor ..."

"What is this power for?" you might ask. It is for subduing the enemy.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

Psalm 110: 1-

The Spirit of power you are endued with is for subduing the enemy. It is so you can dominate the region of darkness, and say to Satan, "You are no longer in charge here. Your judgment is sealed already." The Spirit of power is to enable you rule over your enemy, Satan, so he can't bring sickness and failure to you or stand in your way when you're on the move. Satan can't stop your progress, neither can any witch challenge your destiny. That is the essence of the Spirit of power. It is to make you walk in dominion here on earth!

We see from the above scripture that Jesus will not come until all His enemies are made His footstool. That means God will bring about the outpouring of His power in the last days, such as has never been before. That power will completely disarm all wickedness, subdue kingdoms, and

wrought righteousness [Heb. 11:33). There will be strange manifestations in the last days, to totally subdue the enemies of God. Romans 8: 19 tells us that the whole creature is waiting for us, because we are in the days His power.

With the Spirit of power breaking forth on you, you will become a recognized master anywhere you are found. How can you have an All-Powerful, Omnipotent Father and still be a weakling? Where did you get your weakness? From this day, the enemy will not humiliate your destiny anymore!

To truly walk in dominion, however, you must be conscious of the fact that you are loaded with power from on high. That same power is what was at work in Peter, Paul, and other great men of exploits we have read about. If you are baptized with the Holy Ghost, then that same power resides inside you. But until you are conscious of His indwelling presence you are not yet set for exploits.

From henceforth, anywhere you see the devil trying to make noise, step in and shut him up in the name of Jesus. As you step in, he must step out, because the power of heaven (the Holy Ghost Himself) is resident in you. The whole creation is groaning and travailing in pains, waiting for the sons of God to show up and bring their deliverance. You have what they need, so go forth and manifest your sonship! By the Spirit of power, there will be a total disarming of wickedness, and an establishment of the peaceful dominion of the Church.

The Spirit of Wisdom

The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

Proverbs 3: 19

O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

Psalm 104:24

All the exploits of the Father God are tied to the wisdom that is operational in Him. It therefore means that for you to be a candidate for His kind of exploits also, you must be connected to His kind of wisdom. Paul the apostle prayed a very special prayer for the Ephesian Church in Ephesians 1: 17:

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

It is God that gives the Spirit of wisdom. But what will it do?

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.

Ephesians 1: 18-19

The Spirit of wisdom enlightens your understanding, using you to know what God has in store for you. It enables you to be mentally productive by illuminating your mind, and imparting you with creative abilities for exploits. It offers strange skills for you to excel in whatever area God has placed you. That is why the Bible says:

I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

Proverbs 8: 12

God's wisdom is creative; so when the Spirit of wisdom is at work in you, you will find heaven just directing you on very mysterious frequencies, to cause you to improve continually on where you are per time. God's wisdom is the ability to form and reform, the ability to create and recreate. We are going to have waves of inventions these last days in the body of Christ, ingenious waves of creativity. Things will just be happening, by reason of God's wisdom at work in His Church. People will begin laying hold on hidden wisdom, to do outstanding exploits.

There will be such strange inventions in our time the wisdom of God at work in the Church will cause her to burst forth with countless witty inventions. The end-time Church will gain prominence by the many-sided wisdom of God, which only the Holy Spirit imparts.

The Holy Spirit is the One that connects us to the wisdom of God. He teaches us by opening us up to the deep things of God. He helps us out in our quest for knowledge, and reveals truth to our spirit-man. The Holy Spirit can't teach you and you won't understand what He's teaching you. When He teaches you, He quickens your understanding to grasp the things He's revealing to you.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him - even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

1 Corinthians 2: 10-13

God is set to bring a mental revolution to you, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There is a Spirit called the Spirit of wisdom. It is one of the seven spirits of God, and is delivered to you on request.

You can't operate the Spirit of wisdom and not be creatively productive. There's a better way of doing that job, and a better approach to that assignment. All you need do is to call on Him, to show you the better way, just as Solomon did:

Give me now wisdom and knowledge that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people that is so great!

2 Chronicles 1: 10

It Makes Stars! No one ever gains access to the Spirit of wisdom without becoming a star.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

Daniel 12:3

Their shining will command attention and bring attraction. Note that I'm not talking about the wisdom of this world here. This is not intellectual, technological or scientific wisdom. I'm talking about the wisdom of God in a mystery, which only the Holy Spirit teaches (not the universities and colleges). It is this wisdom that will bring you into the limelight without sweat!

Revelation 5: 10 tells us that by the blood of Jesus we have been redeemed unto God as priests and kings and we shall reign on the earth. He redeemed you to reign, and it is by wisdom that kings reign, and princes decree justice (Prov.8: 15). You don't have a place in the end-time army without the Spirit of wisdom, because it is a reigning army. So like 1 Corinthians 12:31 counsels, covet this all-important gift.

No one has encounter with the Spirit of wisdom without making outstanding marks in life. Joseph took over government in Egypt by the Spirit of wisdom. Pharaoh could not help but declare:

...Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet all wise as thou art:

Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

Genesis 41:39-41

The Spirit of wisdom established Joseph's prominence in a strange land. It also established Daniel in a place of prominence among his enemies. The wisdom at work in him was described as the wisdom of the gods (Dan. 5:11).

Worthy of note is the fact that everyone that operated in the Spirit of wisdom lived a clean life. This is because the Holy Spirit will not relate with filthy men, Daniel lived a clean life. He purposed in his heart not to defile himself (Dan. 1: 8). When cornered by Potiphar's wife to lie with him, Joseph said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? " (Gen. 9: 39). They lived extraordinary and very productive lives because of the wisdom of God at work in them. But first of all, they were men of pure of hearts. God said in Proverbs 1:23:

Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

You can't gain access into His wisdom until you have turned at His reproof. No filthy man will ever have access to the Spirit of wisdom. So don't block your access to the throne; leave that sin before it makes a reproach of your life. If you clean up, God promises to beautify you with His wisdom. So, place a demand on God for the release of that Spirit to you. Remember that he that asketh receiveth.

The Spirit of Understanding

*Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

Proverbs 13: 15

There is a Spirit of understanding. It is the excellent Spirit that causes men to excel cheaply. It makes one become outstanding on the earth. It is the ability to intelligibly diagnose situations, put solutions together, and be able to go on to the ultimate end of obtaining practical results. It is knowing what to do to bring situations under control. It is so important that Apostle Paul prayed it for the Ephesian Church:

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

Ephesians 1: 18

Nothing becomes outstanding without understanding. See how Daniel took over in the land of Babylon. Understanding made him to stand out. He was able to disarm darkness and locate his place in God. Hear how he was described:

There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;

Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.

Daniel 5:11-12

The understanding that comes from God is likened to light. The problems of life are darkness; so when that light comes, darkness has no choice but to give way. Psalm 112:4 says:
Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness...

There's a level of understanding you walk in that every hierarchy of darkness will have no choice but to give way when you're coming. Concerning Jesus the Bible says in Luke 2:47:

And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

Friend, there's a spirit called the Spirit of understanding. It is also known as the excellent spirit. It distinguished Daniel in the land of captivity. You are now in a free land, that same spirit will much more cheaply distinguish you, in the name of Jesus

The Spirit of understanding is a gift from God.

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Daniel 1:17

"God gave them ..." The Spirit of understanding comes from God. It was the chief reason for their outstanding accomplishments in the land of Babylon. He gave it to them then, and is still giving it today.

Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

Daniel 2:20-23

That level of understanding is not possible, except by the finger of God! The Bible says that gift knows what is in the darkness. That's unusual insight! No wonder Daniel knew what was in darkness, and light dwelled with him.

Please note that there are two levels of understanding. One has to do with your spiritual understanding, while the other has to do with skillfulness in what God has planned for you from the beginning. Here are examples of both respectively:

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Colossians 1:9

And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah;

And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.
Exodus 35:30-31

I'd like you to lay hold on supernatural skill in handling whatever assignment God has placed in your hands. It will cause others to come and learn from you. Understanding guarantees the delivery of profit. Your result reveals the quality of the light you carry and the quality of your life is a result of the level of light available to you.

Light is what is called understanding. It illuminates so as to reveal. There's a difference between knowledge and understanding. Knowledge is discovering what exists, while understanding is insight into it. Understanding tells you how to take delivery of what exists. May the Spirit of understanding distinguish you in this ongoing move of God.

The Spirit of Counsel

This is the mother of visions and guidance. The Bible says:

And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it...
Isaiah 30:21

This is the mother of guidance; and it is one of the seven Spirits of the Lord. It guides your steps. The Spirit of counsel divinely orders your steps, so you will be free from all regrets.

God's guidance guarantees greatness. When you lay hold on His counsel, your destiny is secured. This is because when God tells you which way to go, that way must prosper. When He says to you, "Go!" no evil can stop you, and when He says, "Move!" no devil can push you down either. When God leads, it makes a leader of the led. If God leads you, you'll become a leader in that path He is leading you. That is the importance of the Spirit of counsel.

We are in the days of vision, so we need the operations of the Spirit of counsel more than ever before. The Spirit of counsel gives visions to men. It says to you, "This is the way, walk ye in it. It directs your path into the realms of excellence.

God's counsel guarantees the end (Isa.46: 9-10), as His counsel cannot be cancelled. When located and pursued, the end is secured. Also, when you invoke the release of the Spirit of counsel, all wariness, frustrations and regrets come to a final end - "for (His) counsel it shall stand." I have not taken any major step without the sound of the Spirit of counsel since 1976. That Spirit will guide you no from today!

Do you want to know how Jesus made it so great? He said:

I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which has sent me.
John 15:30

He was perfectly directed, so He made perfect impact everywhere He went. That was the mystery behind the exploits in His ministry. He had the release of the Spirit of counsel upon His life, and that made all the difference. No wonder the Psalmist said:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Psalm 23:1-5

What happens when the Lord is your Shepherd? Our enemies are rendered helpless, by virtue of the divine presence you carry. He will cause you to become an economic giant in the midst of economic crisis. You will also be bursting forth in sound health in the midst of an epidemic. His guidance is the mystery behind my stamina; that's what makes the difference in our ministry.

You need the Spirit of counsel to do exploits, because you need His guidance and visions to have manifestations. The Spirit of counsel is the force behind visions in life (Prov. 29: 18). It offers guidance and direction, so that God's purpose for your life is not lost.

Jesus knew what He came for, but He still enjoyed the ministry of the Spirit of counsel throughout His time here on earth. When He was told that Lazarus was sick, the Bible says, "He abode two days still ill the place where he was" (Jn. 11:6). Then on the third day, He said, "Let us go ..." That was when the Spirit of counsel said to Him, "Move!" If He had moved earlier, Lazarus may not have woken up from the dead.

Friend, the Spirit of counsel will always lead you to the region of exploits. How we need that spirit today King David always received counsel from God before he went forth to any battle; and every counsel from God produced results for him. When you are guided, you are guided into greatness and prominence. Let us lay hold on the ministry of the Spirit of counsel.

But how can we put this Spirit to work in our live? By constantly inquiring of the Lord before you make any move. Before every move, always ask, "Spirit of God, this is what I'm thinking; but what are You saying?" And the Spirit of God will respond with specific instructions and direction. Like all things that have to do with the Spirit, don't let sin deafen your ears to hear His instructions, because He will surely speak.

It takes the ministry of the Holy Spirit to have meaning in the kingdom. Without the spirit of counsel, I wouldn't be in ministry today, as the Spirit of counsel helps me improve on existing results. I command the same grace to come upon you, in the precious name of Jesus.

The Spirit of Might

There is a Spirit of might. By this I mean that inner strength and tireless energy, the kind Jesus possessed. No vision can deliver results without strength, unique strength. You cannot walk in dominion if you are own today and up tomorrow. Paul knew this too well, hence he again prayed this prayer for the Ephesian Church:

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.

Ephesians 3: 14-16

Habakkuk 2:2 also says:

... Write the vision ... that he may RUN that readeth it.

You need strength to run. God is going to deliver unusual strength to the end-time Church. Daniel 11:32 says it is those who do know their God that shall be strong and do exploits. You need strength to do exploits; and this strength can only be delivered to you by the Spirit of might.

Judges 15 tells us that when the Spirit came mightily upon Samson, he used the jawbone of an ass to slay one thousand Philistines. He uprooted the gate of a city (post and all), and carried it up the mountain! Samson was never down. As long as the Spirit of might was upon him, nobody could handle him. Receive that Spirit of might now, in Jesus' name!

Paul stayed in the deep (of the sea) for one whole night! At another time, he was stoned and left for dead. But no sooner had his "killers" turned their backs, than he jerked back to life! The man of war stood up and continued on his mission! Very strange strength - it was the Spirit of might at work. I see every weakness in your life die now, in Jesus name!

Every great accomplishment requires great strength to bring it to pass. Jesus taught for three days at a stretch; He was always on duty, "about my Father's business," yet He never broke down. The Spirit of might was heavy upon His life.

There are many things your spirit wants to do, but your flesh is weak to do them. In Ephesians 3:16, we discover that the Spirit of God strengthens our inner man for exploits. Jesus said:

I must work the works of him that sent me...

John 9:4

You need strength to do the work of the kingdom. If you do that work in the flesh, you'll die cheaply, as there's no way you can pursue heavenly vision with natural strength. The Root of Might

Let me show you the source of the Spirit of might.

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me...

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the OIL of JOY for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

Isaiah 61:1,3

The Holy Spirit is sometimes known as "The Oil of Joy." The might of heaven is released upon you through avenues of joy. Show me a man that is never broken - hearted, and I will show you a man of unique strength. The oil of joy upon you automatically releases the Spirit of might. Look at Nehemiah 8:10

... Neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

So the mystery of the Spirit of might is packaged in the oil of joy. This was what accounted for the unique strength in Jesus' ministry.

Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Psalms 45:7

Jesus operated in the oil of gladness. It energizes the spirit-man; turning you into another man. I used to be weakling, that anointing came upon me. Now I can do all things through Christ who strengthen me (Phil. 4:13).

The oil of gladness and joy is the secret behind the Spirit of might. Jesus had more of it than anybody else; no wonder He demonstrated more strength than anyone else. He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

The Holy Ghost is the One who imparts joy unspeakable that is full of glory, joy that cannot be explained in natural terms. Only the Holy Ghost can give you joy when things are not working. No matter what is happening around you, you're just on top! I see you come out of every sorrow of heart, in the name of Jesus! No matter what the situation is like, when you stick your life to the joy of the Holy Ghost, God makes some unique strength available to you, which will take you from the valley to your high places in life (Hab. 3:17-19).

The Bible says:

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

Proverbs 17:22

Most sicknesses people suffer today are as a result of a broken heart. It is a broken heart that results in broken body, as you are never broken outside until you're first broken inside. But when the inner-man is strengthened, the outer-man will be strong. That is why the Bible again says:

The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear!
Proverbs 18: 14

When your spirit is wounded, it takes your body along. So quit those depressive thoughts now. Every time your spirit is broken, it is an attempt of the devil to break your destiny. Stop him and connect yourself to the source of your help. Say to the Oil of Gladness, "I want an encounter with You. Strengthen me with might in my inner-man. "

Joy is the secret of true strength; it is God's myth behind inner strength. In these days of exploits, you don't have a place without strength. Joel 2 gives a profile of the end-time army of exploit:

The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.

Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.

They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks.
Joel 2:4-5, 7

These are men of unique strength, and it's a function of the oil of gladness. Receive it today, In the name of Jesus!

The Spirit of Knowledge

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.
John 14:26

He will teach you all things - how to stay healthy, how to prosper, keep your home, raise children, make progress, have success, name it. Before I was married, the Holy Ghost taught me how to maintain a consistent and unbroken peace in my home. He also taught me how to maintain a financial flow in the covenant. He taught me how to stay alive and fulfill my days, that's why I'm still alive today, in spite of all the attempts on my life. He equally taught me how to stay healthy, and it's almost 40 years since I was healed of tuberculosis. I'm still displaying health in the presence of my "enemies", and my health-cup "runneth over". All He taught me has stuck with me, and has made me great in life.

When the Holy Ghost teaches, it sticks with you, and makes you tick! If a man teaches, you may not fully understand, but when He teaches, the difference is clear! I don't mean verbal knowledge or intellectual exercise, but spiritual encounters with depth. The Bible says:

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

The Holy Spirit teaching you great depths from the Word of God is one of the fundamental truths of Christian triumph. It makes you a sweat-less, triumphant Christian. He taught me how to succeed, and I have never feared failure since then. In fact, I wrote a book, *Success Buttons*, teaching people what keys to press to succeed in life. Everything I do succeeds, because He taught me. You can have a definite encounter with that same Spirit.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

Ephesians 1: 17

There is a Spirit called the Spirit of revelation. When you encounter the revelation knowledge of God on any issue, you become a man of exploits in that area. It's not enough to merely read or hear; you need to catch a revelation of what you're reading and hearing. That is what makes the difference. The Psalmist said, "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard ..." [Ps. 62: 11). It is that second hearing that we call revelation. That Spirit is required to walk in dominion.

Revelation makes God's Word become personal to you - He turns the general Word into a personal word, which the charismatics call Rhema. God has spoken too many things to me that no man could have taught me. Note that when God teaches, it is an instruction; and when you receive it, it becomes your manifestation.

Revelation is the ability to take delivery of instructions from God, as vision without instruction equals frustration. Knowing where you're going is good, but knowing how to get there is equally important, because you never get to your destination by just knowing where you're going. You also need to know how to get there.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...

Hosea 4:6

Not knowing what to do is the reason many in the Church are down and out today. But the Spirit of revelation cheaply commands the miraculous.

Please note that the Spirit of knowledge is the same one called the Spirit of revelation in Ephesians 1: 1 7. This Spirit unfolds the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables.

Mark 4:11

Every kingdom mystery you grasp makes you gain mastery in that area. So, it is not enough to merely read. The Ethiopian eunuch was reading, but had no understanding. It took Philip asking him, "Understandeth what thou readest!" and expounding the scriptures to him for him to grasp what he was reading (Acts 8:30-35). It is the Spirit of revelation that reveals the mysteries of the kingdom to us.

The Spirit of knowledge destroys ignorance. It is my belief that you are not suffering because there is a great devil somewhere, but rather because of your great ignorance. But when the Spirit of revelation takes over in your life, just one scripture you read will give you multiple interpretations, until your manifestation is delivered to you. You know that when light challenges darkness, darkness gives way immediately.

I knew I would never be poor long ago, not because God appeared to me in a dream, but because I saw it from His Word, the Bible. I knew the day I saw it; it was so real. When God reveals a thing to you, you can't be confused about it. Revelation is the bedrock for every revolution in the kingdom. No wonder apostle Paul said:

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.
1 Corinthians 2:12

So that Spirit delivers to us the things that are freely given to us of God, and teaches us how to lay hold on them. There are things freely given to you, which you have not been able to receive, because they have not yet been revealed to you. You don't have to be sick for instance, let alone be hospitalized. You don't have to be poor. It's your ignorance of abundance that has kept you in lack. You don't have to suffer crisis in your home either. Your ignorance of God's instructions for a peaceful home is what is causing hardship and crisis for you. I took instructions on how to run the ministry, how to manage my home, how to develop an ever-growing ministry, and how to grow a big church from the Bible!

Book is full of instructions. But those who miss the instructions it contains suffer devastations and destructions. Only the Holy Ghost delivers them to people, so you must accept His help right now, as He is willing to teach you.

Do you know that the men who the Bible records as turning the world upside down were ignorant and unlearned men? They didn't go to any school, as most of them were fishermen. But they were carriers of the Spirit of knowledge and revelation (Acts 4:13, 17:6)! The wisdom of the Holy Ghost was what gave them all that unusual insight they so boldly declared. Such wisdom is too high for the ordinary mind, so it's time to go to the "School of the Spirit".

The Spirit of revelation also puts you in charge, giving you dominion. It Puts You in Charge

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.
Isaiah 11:9

The end-time Church is destined to display strange authority, because of the knowledge of the Lord that is operating within her.

This Spirit also shows you a better way of doing things. Until you destroy tradition, you never gain access to the truth. There is a better way to do what you are doing now, that will take you to higher heights. The Spirit of knowledge will show it to you.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:10, "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon." So we have the power to build on where they stopped. I never saw where Paul breathe into someone, but I caught something brighter than he did - that God breathe into clay, and it became a living being (Gen. 2:7). Operating in this revelation, I met a woman who was suffering from AIDS, in Kampala, Uganda, and I said to her, "Open your mouth!" She did, and I breathe into her mouth and cursed AIDS. I told the people around, "Watch it, she's alive!"

Again, there was this little girl who hadn't had a bowel movement for five days, and her father was in tears, because her stomach was already protruding. Again, I breathe into her mouth, and few minutes later, she emptied the whole junk inside her into the toilet. Something penetrated the regions of darkness and shattered it!

A pregnant woman met me and was crying. Hospital report said her baby was breech, and she was due for delivery and was full of agitation. I asked her, "When do you want to have your baby?" And she replied, "I'm already due." I told her to open her mouth, and breathe into her, instructing her to, "Go and have your baby now!" They didn't get home from church before labour started! They had to drive into the nearest hospital. By the time her husband returned with the baby's things, he heard the cry of their newborn baby!

Revelation is developing life equations from scriptures, for outstanding solutions. It is knowing what God is saying, and putting them together in order to punish the devil and give him a technical knockout!

But note that it is not for natural men. The Bible says:

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 2: 14

You can be intellectually sound and yet be a spiritual dummy. This is because it is only the Spirit of God that knows the things of God. Therefore, only He can show it to you (1 Cor. 2:10). The Bible says it is when you know the truth that you will be free. So, how much of the things of God the Spirit of God teaches you, is what determines how free you will be.

Also, please note that no one who enjoys sin can ever have access into the mysteries of the kingdom of God, because they are in parables to them that are without (Mk. 4:11). They will sound as mere stories to those who wallow in sin. So it is important that you stay clean, so that the access remains open to you.

The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord

There is something that gives birth to unprecedented exploits; it is called the fear of the Lord. For instance, Joseph, a man discreet and wise, who through his wisdom saved Egypt in the time of famine, said concerning himself, "For I fear God" (Gen. 42:18). Job was described as the greatest of all men of the East. Satan acknowledged him as possessing one outstanding quality - the fear of the Lord! "Doth Job fear God for nought!" Satan asked (Job 1:9).

Looking at all seven Spirits of God listed in Isaiah 11:2, we observe that the root of this latter rain is the fear of the Lord. It is at the bottom rung of the ladder. And just as every ladder is climbed from the bottom, you climb into the fullness of the seven Spirits from the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. The spirit of the fear of the Lord is what gives birth to the spirit of knowledge.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...

Proverbs 1: 7

Knowledge then brings you into might, which is inner strength.

... A man of knowledge increaseth strength.

Proverbs 24:5

From might you graduate to counsel. From counsel to understanding, then to wisdom, which culminates in manifestations of power.

Please understand this: the world will not fear you until your fear of God is in place. Satan will not fear you until your fear of God is established. Sickness will not fear you until your fear of God is in place, neither will failure fear you, until your fear of God is intact. So, it is your fear of God that gives you your place on the earth.

And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom...

Job 28:28

When the fear of the Lord is at work in you, you will overturn the mountains by the roots (Job 28: 11). That is, you will convert obstacles to miracle.

You will cut out rivers among the rocks. That is, you will flourish, in spite of the hardship on the earth. You will also be able to stop every form of wickedness around you. Destruction and death will fear you too (vs.22).

God's presence is guaranteed when the fear of the Lord is in place in your life. The thrice-Holy God demands holiness from you. If you don't let Him have it, neither will you have Him! God demands our holiness for us to enjoy His presence. We can't have His presence until we give Him what it takes.

I'd like you to understand that nothing is more valuable than divine presence in your Christian adventure. That is your greatest asset. And the fear of the Lord is the price to pay for it. Without

His presence your place on earth will be lost, and your hope of getting to heaven will be uncertain.

The Spirit of the fear of the Lord is what Apostle Paul refers to as the "Spirit of holiness" in Romans 1:3-4:

Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power because the spirit of holiness was at work in Him. He was tempted at all points, yet was without sin, so He qualified to be anointed without measure. Jesus knew no sin, no wonder He knew no defeat. He was in touch with heaven. Since He walked in purity, the Father always responded to Him. In fact, Jesus was dedicated to doing only the things that pleased God.

And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.
John 8:29

If God is holy, you can't walk with Him except you are holy. The Bible asked in Psalm 24:3-4:

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord! or who shall stand in his holy place?

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

When you walk with God, you are guaranteed automatic exploits. His presence commands exploit. - the sea gives way to Him, and Jordan is driven back for Him. The mountains skip like rams before Him [Ps. 114). But sin repels God's presence. So when sin disappears, His presence is made manifest, and exploits are inevitable. The barrier between man and the flow of the Spirit of the fear of the Lord is sin. Until the sin barrier is broken down, man's separation from God remains.

When you become free from sin, you become a friend of God and you have access to all things that the Father has shown Jesus. When this happens, friend, you begin to operate at the level Jesus operated, and you begin to do the type of exploits He did, and even greater as He promised.

The seven Spirits of God gave Jesus His throne, they will give you yours also! When the former rain came, He said, "You shall be endued with power from on high." But He promised to give us both the former and the latter rain in the first month. So in our time, we are going to experience the six other Spirits in practical manifestation - the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.

When the seven Spirits of God are at work in you, your rest shall be glorious. You will become more than conquerors in the conflicts of life, and you will walk on in dominion.

Now pray this prayer with me: "Lord, let all Your waves and billows come over me! I want to have an encounter with the seven Spirits of God."

Sermon Nine

Title: Deliverance from Repeated Unpleasant Circumstances and Situations by Pastor Tunde Aremu¹⁹

There are people that suffer unnecessary hardships, handicaps, misfortunes and attacks in their family or business without any clear explanation as to why those things are happening. They work hard, pray and fast, yet there is no significant result.

In cases of couples who are waiting on God for the fruit of the womb, some have gone through every possible medical test and surgery, yet the story is still the same. In some cases, even doctors have confirmed that a couple is medically fit for conception, but nothing happens.

To some, contrary to what the Bible says that whatever we put our hands on to do shall prosper, they experience failure in all their business undertakings. They have tried their hands on almost every type of business venture, yet they are still trying to live. In a few cases, some have noticed the same trend in the lives of other members of their family - both immediate and extended.

For instance, cases of ladies not getting married early enough, several people not having children after marriage, some marry after they have had children out of wedlock, some marry and divorce no matter how hard they try to save the marriage, a constant record of failure in examinations in spite of hard work, the list is endless. Some of these examples and several others suggest that witches or wizards or a curse is operating.

One brother noticed that all his four brothers and sisters were childless after marriage. When he was to marry, he fasted and prayed for seven days on this issue. During the prayer the Lord laid on his heart not to consummate the marriage for the first seven days of his wedding, and that the problem will be revealed and solved. Eventually this brother got married, and he and his bride travelled out for their honeymoon.

The wife insisted that they should make love on the second day of their honeymoon, but the brother refused. He explained the situation in the family and what the Lord told him. By the third day, the lady threatened divorce if her husband refused to sleep with her. The brother told her rather bluntly that if she did not want the same experience that his elder ones have fallen into, she should exercise patience; after all, they had stayed for several years without making love before they got married. The sister refused. It was a tug of war. But the Lord helped this man to maintain his stand.

¹⁹ Tunde Aremu, *Prayer and Deliverance for Believers*, Ibadan, 2003

On the seventh day, this man received an urgent message from home that his mother was critically sick in the hospital and at the point of death. She insisted that all her children must assemble before her immediately.

They rushed to the hospital just on time and she confessed, crying before all the children that she was a witch and was responsible for their barren state. She narrated that her class of witchcraft group usually assembled the first few days of marriage of their children, so that they would collect the sperm (spiritually); the first time the couple slept together, and work on it so that the couple win be childless for life. Luck ran out on her, however, when her fifth child got married, as he would not go near his wife. The group assembled as usual, demanding for the usual sperm, but she could not present it. The meeting was adjourned till the next day, and still there was no sperm and she was given another 24 hours grace. This time she said she was desperate, she grew frantic, and spiritually, she went to the hotel room where her son and the wife were staying, and worked into the wife's thoughts, which was why the wife threatened her husband with divorce.

The council of witches could not understand her reluctance to bring the required sperm, and it was as if she had committed a high treason, so, the council sent witches to nail her for making the council meeting fruitless. After all her apologies and weeping, she shouted that they had nailed her, and she died.

The question is, how can a mother, the woman who gave birth to these five children make all her children childless? Was she forced or did she do it willingly? She would have pretended to be concerned; she might have spent money or perhaps accused her innocent daughters-in-law of infertility. No wonder the Bible says, members of our household could be our enemies.

For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.
(Micah 7:6)

Jesus Himself confirmed it when he said,

"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household"
(Matthew 10:36).

Jesus told the unbelievers that they are of their father, the devil (John 8: 44). Apostle Paul said, the devil perfects his works in the children of disobedience, (Ephesians 2: 2). Under pressure, our loved ones who are unbelievers can obey their father, the devil, despite the fact that they care so much for us. Of a truth, the days are evil.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassion fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.
(Lamentations 3:22, 24)

Please do not get me wrong. The fact that someone is not born again does not mean he is a witch or wizard. And you should not suspect everyone, refuse to take gifts, . or stop eating at friends' houses. And not all mothers are wicked. After all the Bible says,

Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. .

(I John 4:4b)

And these signs shall follow them.' that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; ... and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. (Mark 16: 17-18)

Prayer Points

1. I decree destruction upon every household enemy that is resisting my breakthrough in the name of Jesus.
2. Every unfriendly friend delegated against my blessings, I sweep you away with the broom of destruction in the name of Jesus (Isaiah 14:23).
3. Every spirit of disobedience and rebellion in my life, I torment you out by .fire in the name of Jesus. (Deuteronomy 15:5).
4. Lord, let every power propagating evil covenants in my family receive total paralysis in the name of Jesus (Exodus 34:7).
5. I command that any part of my body in the custody of my enemy be-released now in the name of Jesus.
6. By the 39 stripes of Jesus, I receive total healing for every stubborn sickness in my body.
7. Every power of ignorance holding me captive, loose your hold now in the name of Jesus (Hosea 4:6).
8. Lord, feed me with the truth that-will set me free from demonic prisons in the name of Jesus (John 8:32).
9. Every satanic power binding me with sicknesses and diseases, I overcome you by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 12: 11).
10. Anchor of bondage in my life, be uprooted by the fire of the Holy Ghost in the name of Jesus.
11. You spirit of hardship, loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus.
12. Every problem in my life that defies solution, receive the touch of God in the name of Jesus.
13. Let the anchor of every stubborn problem m my life break and loose their hold in the name of Jesus.
14. I challenge every power resisting the power of God in my life by the great earthquake and thunder of God in the name of Jesus.
15. Let every mountain in my life give way in the name of Jesus.
16. Let every unseen hand working evil in my life wither in the name of Jesus.
17. I frustrate every power frustrating my life by fire in the name of Jesus.
18. I reject every spirit of failure in every area of my life and family in the name of Jesus.
19. I reject, bind and cast out every spirit of acute poverty in my life in the name of Jesus.
20. I pull off every garment of poverty put upon me in the name of Jesus, and let them be roasted by the fire of the Holy Ghost.
21. I reject every sin of disobedience in my life in the name of Jesus.
22. You that demon of Mammon, loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus.

23. I refuse to labour and put my wages in pockets with holes in the name of Jesus.
24. I refuse to sow and build for others to inherit in the name of Jesus.
25. I reject and cast out the spirit of Asthma in the name of Jesus.
26. You the spirit of anger in my life loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus.
27. I break every stronghold and palace of anger in my life by fire in the name of Jesus.
28. I reject you spirit of unforgiveness in my life and I command you to come out of me in the name of Jesus.
29. I reject you, spirit of bitterness, loose your hold of my life in the name of Jesus.
30. I challenge every strongman of anger in my life by fire, loose your hold of my life in the name of Jesus.
31. You spirit of lust and immorality, come out of my life now in the name of Jesus.
32. I command every lying spirit to come out of my life in the name of Jesus.
33. Let every tool of prayerlessness be uprooted out of my life in the name of Jesus.
34. You deaf and dumb demon, jump out of my life by fire in the name of Jesus and come back no more in Jesus' name.
35. I reject every spirit of stealing in my life (conscious and unconscious). Come out of my life by fire in the name of Jesus.
36. I reject every spirit of blindness (physical and spiritual blindness) in my life; be flushed out by fire in the in the name of Jesus.
37. Let every evil root of poverty be destroyed out of my life in the name of Jesus.
38. I rebuke all household wickedness in Jesus' name.
39. Any problem arranged for the future for me, receive total destruction in Jesus' name.
40. Every satanic time bomb planted into my future, be destabilized totally in Jesus' name.
41. Every problem programmed into the heavenlies for me be brought down by the hook of God and be destroyed by fire.
42. Every circle/chain of problems in my life, receive multiple destruction in Jesus' name.
43. Oh Lord, render me inaccessible, untouchable and impenetrable to household wickedness, for greater is he that is in me than the devil that is in the 'world (I John 4:4).

Real Life Experiences

Human beings have the will to either accept a situation, if it is good, or reject it, if it is bad. The things we want to reject are usually dealt with in deliverance ministrations.

These are some of the situations people usually reject.

Acute poverty or always living a life of insufficiency

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. (3 John 2)

But thou shall remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

(Deuteronomy 8:18)

Throughout the Bible, God never promised his children poverty or a life of suffering at any time, as long as we obey His word. In fact, He promised that poverty will be removed from us.

However, there should be no poor among you, for in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you.
(Deuteronomy 15:4 - NIV)

Now, since these passages are in the Bible, why should acute poverty and suffering be among God's people? Why do Christians lose all their capital in business, their jobs find it difficult to pay rent or their children's school fees? Many Christians cannot even boast of eating balanced diets. Many live on charity. For how long shall all these be?

God's promises are not served on a platter of gold. You as a Christian have your own part to fulfil before you can enter into God's abundance.

And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify again of you this day that ye shall surely perish.
(Deuteronomy 8:19)

The concluding sentence of Deuteronomy 15:4 says,

Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day.
(Deuteronomy 15:5)

And the NIV says,

If only you fully obey the LORD your God and are careful to follow all these commands I am giving you today.
(Deuteronomy 15:5)

If you want to live in abundant prosperity, you have to obey God in all things. If you disobey God, you automatically obey the devil and in a way acknowledge him as your master and you have given him the licence to lead you on. And what does the devil have to offer you? Destruction (John 10: 10a)

Disobedience to God as I have said can open a door to the devil, thus inviting the spirit of mammon and the spirit of poverty. They operate in several ways. In some cases the people concerned will experience itching sensation on their palm when the devil is stealing their money. Some people experience physical disappearance of their money; some cannot give an account of how or on what their money was spent while some realise that it takes a lot of effort and time on their part to make money. To some others still, they always have mounting problems that always make them live a life of continual insufficiency.

Of a truth, some of such people are operating under a curse. For details on this area, read my book *Covenants, Curses and the Way Out*.

Sicknesses that have defied all medications

And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years.

*And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.
(Mark 5:25-26)*

The story of the woman above is familiar to most of us. She had an issue of blood for twelve years. During this period, she spent all that she had and was not better, but rather grew worse. When a case transcends all medical efforts, going to Britain, United States or Germany to see another experienced medical specialist is not the answer. The satanic powers and principalities behind that case must be cast out. Much praying, speaking in tongues, fasting and making positive confessions are all temporary measures. Jesus removes such cases totally during deliverance ministrations.

Some have gone for surgery for a particular problem three or four times. Some have intermittent skin diseases, and body odour that the best perfumes and medications cannot conceal. Many have devised means of coping with their problems silently. Why should you devise means of coping with what Paul called, the "messenger of Satan?" (II Cor. 12:7). Some sick people's situations will improve to a point where there are rays of hope, but behold, they will relapse without any real medical explanation, and eventually die. The lady with the issue of blood went to Jesus after she had wasted all her earthly resources and Jesus healed and delivered her immediately.

Between the 5th and 8th of March, 1995, I was preaching at a meeting in Abuja. It was a programme organised by the First Baptist Church, Garki. When I finished preaching, I told the brethren to pray targeted, and specific spiritual warfare prayers, and the atmosphere changed. The brethren prayed like their lives depended on it, and they got their desired results. There were lots of testimonies to the glory of God. Jesus Himself said,

*And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.
(Matthew 11:12)*

We have to be violent and specific when we pray against the host of hell. This is called balanced deliverance prayer.

One lady just shouted in the meeting and fell under the anointing. During testimonies, she said she just understood how to deal with the enemy that had caused her to have heartburn that defied medications for 13 years. She said, while she was praying, she saw one hand that moved straight to her heart, removed the old one and replaced it with a brand new heart. She fell when the surgery began, and got up after the spiritual surgery. She saw all that happened.

Friend, the spare parts of the bad or missing parts in your body are available in the store house of God. He is not tired of making happy anybody who meets His terms and conditions. That lady also got the accommodation which government authorities have refused to approve for years, before the programme ended. In fact, she said the man personally approved, signed and delivered

the letter to her and he later wondered what he had done. People who have hindered your blessing will release them without knowing what they are doing. God is on the move.

This balanced deliverance prayer of being violent, and praying targeted, strategic and specific prayer, works faster than all methods known today. From experience, once the individual is fully fired by the word of God, and fully understands the authority he has as a believer, the balanced deliverance prayer will just cut across the soul and marrow of any demonic affliction.

Another testimony occurred while I was ministering at His Grace Evangelical Church, Scout Camp, Ibadan, on April 13, 1994. I decided not to minister or lay hands on anyone but to teach brethren how to handle their cases. Satan is not as powerful over a believer as the average believer thinks he is. The Bible says, when we shall see him, we shall be surprised that it was one ugly, boastful creature that has held many spellbound over his abilities all these years.

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, is this the man that made the earth to tremble,

That did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?
(Isaiah 14:16, 17)

Knowledge has a major role to play when we want to receive our blessings from God. One lady in the meeting started shouting, "Come out. You are an idiot. No compromise at all. No dialogue." It was so loud that in a congregation of about 800 people her voice was heard, and I was forced to look towards her directly. She ran around, shouting and pointing to an object or somebody which she alone saw.

After the prayers, I asked for testimonies. The lady was the first to run forward. She said, "I have suffered from asthma for 21 years. In every prayer meeting or fellowship, I have prayed against it. But tonight, I got to understand who I am and how I can deal with the devil. As I opened my mouth to say, you asthma, come out in Jesus' name, somebody jumped out of me and said, "Please let's negotiate. Let's settle." That was why I started shouting at him and pursuing him and the moment he disappeared, I got my total healing." That testimony shook all of us. Asthma, a spirit being? Oh yes!

The demons troubling some people reside in them while others are attacking from outside. In cases where demons reside in an individual, specific and targeted spiritual warfare prayer should be applied. Jesus dealt with such a case in Luke 13.

And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

*And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God
(Luke 13:11-13)*

When the Jews accused him of healing on a Sabbath day, He said,

*And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?
(Luke 13: 16)*

Satan binds people with sicknesses and diseases, and in some cases, leaves a demon in that person to torment him or in some other cases, he attacks from outside and afflicts.

Fourteen years ago, 1981, I was preaching in a crusade on the subject, "With God all things are possible". I had hardly finished preaching when an elderly woman brought one girl to me for prayers. This woman said, "This girl is deaf. You said, God can do anything, he can solve any problem and heal any sickness." I could not deny this because I had just finished preaching that message.

Fear almost gripped me. It was about 2 years in the Lord. Prior to this time, I had seen God heal headache, stomach-ache, etc., but no deaf, dumb or blind person had ever been healed in my meeting. How do I go about it? I was still at a loss, when the Holy Spirit spoke quietly in my heart, "Cast out deaf spirits." That was the first time in my life that I knew that whatever sickness or symptom the devil manifests is the demon's name. So, there are spirits of anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, immorality, lying, stealing, prayerlessness, blindness, dumbness, poverty, etc.

I spoke out, with my eyes closed, "You deaf demons, come out of her and enter her no more in Jesus' name." Immediately I heard a sound as if somebody felt I opened my eyes only to see her on the floor. I had never seen, heard nor been told that people fall under the anointing. If it were now, I would have left her on the floor until she regains her consciousness. But I quickly carried her up and asked, "What happened to you?" She replied, "When you spoke that command, I saw one man with a sword coming towards me and I fell. When I fell, five black creatures ran out of me and immediately, my ears opened."

Oh I rejoiced that night. I felt like calling back all those who had attended the crusade that night to come back and hear that testimony if not that they had left a long time ago. I learnt another lesson, that, the deliverance minister should not close his eyes when ministering deliverance. You are not praying to the devil, you are commanding him to leave.

Prayer Points:

1. Any power working against my treasure, be disgraced out of my life by fire. (Deuteronomy 28:12)
2. The Lord gives me power to make wealth; therefore, I destroy every power working against my finances in Jesus' name.
3. Every power of poverty, jump out of my life in Jesus' name.
4. Mammon, I disgrace you out of my life in Jesus' name.

5. I fill every hole dug in my palm by demons with the blood of Jesus mingled with the fire of God.
6. I flush out all atoms of disobedience in my life by the blood of Jesus. (I Samuel 15:22b.)

Sermon Ten

Title: Deliverance From Occult Practices by Pastor Mrs. Toyin Okehi²⁰

This is very serious. Many people have handed themselves and their families over to the devil at one time or the other unknowingly. When such people repent and become born again, it is not sufficient for them to only invite Jesus into their lives but also to break every link and contact they had had with the devil.

Former Muslims

Most Muslims have an anti-Christ demon. So if an individual or his parents have been Muslims before, they may have a demon of anti-Christ by virtue of their former religion. With the activities of that demon, they just hate Christianity with passion. When anybody repents from following Islam, he or she needs deliverance. Whether he has been a Christian for a long time or not, as long as he has not formally renounced that demon and been ministered to, it sometimes affects his relationship with God.

When things go tough, a little feeling of hatred towards God and the assembly of believers begins to well up in the person. It is better for one to dissociate from anything the devil may use as an effective weapon in times of trouble.

Prayer Points:

I reject every anti-Christ demon in my life, and I command you to come out now in the name of Jesus.

Any evil thing planted in my life by the spirit of antichrist, loose your hold and come out in the name of Jesus.

I flush my conscience of all evil knowledge I had about Christ by the blood of Jesus, in the name of Jesus.

I reject and break every covenant with the spirit of anti-Christ and its works in the name of Jesus.

Former juju priest or priestesses

All those who have served demons at any time as priests or priestesses need serious deliverance after they receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. Burning the shrine charms etc., although shows a genuine, willingness to serve the Lord, but the things that demons have planted in the body of the person, the satanic powers and the authority the person had in the spirit realm, should be destroyed.

Prayer Points:

1. I renounce and nullify my priesthood to any strange god or Baal, in the name of Jesus.
2. I flush out by the blood everything working contrary to the love of God in my life by the blood of Jesus.
3. I destroy every work of Baal in my life by fire in Jesus' name

²⁰ Toyin Okehi, *Christ the Cornerstone*, Lagos, 2000

4. I renounce every authority given to me against the will of God by the blood of Jesus. Jesus is my authority.
5. Every position that is exalting itself against the knowledge of God I relinquish you in the mighty name of Jesus. Ecclesiastes 8:4.
6. I apply the blood of Jesus to my foundations and flush out evil mark working against me.
7. I blot out very effect of satanic marks in my foundation by the blood of Jesus.
8. Psalm 51:2 - O Lord, cleanse me from all conscious and unconscious sins in the name of Jesus.

Those dedicated to the devil

Many Christians were ignorantly dedicated to the devil when they were born. This is apparent in the type of names some people bear, names ascribing praises or glory to the devil and his works. Some have marks on their faces and incisions on every part of their body. All such people dedicated, to the devil may find things extremely difficult unless they go for deliverance.

All the children of a former or present priest or priestess of the devil have been dedicated to the devil. It is like what obtains in Christendom when a child is dedicated in the church at the end of 40 days. For instance, in 1991 when my wife was pregnant, I laid hands on her tummy regularly and dedicated the twins unto God. I did this regularly until they were born. When they were eventually born, I laid hands on them; spoke in tongues, prophesied over them and again decreed that they should be filled with the Holy Spirit. After 30 days, we took them to our church and our Pastor officially dedicated them to God. A child dedicated to God this way can never be compared with the one dedicated to the devil.

Just like I dedicated my twins to God, majority of juju priests or priestesses if not all, dedicate their own children to their own gods in whom they believe. All such children dedicated to the devil have a measure of satanic presence which is supposed to guide and protect them just as the Holy Spirit does for those dedicated unto the Almighty God.* When such potential satanic agents turn to God for salvation, they must consciously renounce these demons if they want to experience progress in their lives. If they don't and they eventually pass on, they will still go to heaven, but the devilish covenants and things deposited in them, could delay their miracles and make things very tight and difficult for them while on earth.

Also, those whose traditions or customs require the first son or first daughter to perform a rite either by initiation, marking or partaking of a special food, must renounce and break ties with these links. It is dangerous when you allow the devil another extra day after you have known the truth. The Bible says, we shall know the truth and the truth shall make us free (John 8:32).

Prayer Points:

1. I reject every evil dedication of my life in the name of Jesus.
2. Every mark of incision (occultic or satanic), be erased by the blood of Jesus in Jesus' name.
3. I challenge every monitoring spirit assigned against my life by fire in the name of Jesus.
4. I rededicate my life to the Lord God in the name of Jesus.
5. I terminate every satanic rite, I renounce your effect and break your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus.

Those who have been to juju houses

Each time we are to hold our night vigils (second and last Fridays of the month in Lagos and Ibadan respectively), we usually fast and pray, and in most cases sanctify the hall of meeting, and pray over each bench or chair that whoever comes to the meeting would receive a measure of God's touch and miracle. Many have come back to testify that the moment they entered the hall of meeting, their sicknesses or problems disappeared. This is done in most Churches and Ministries.

In the same vein, juju priests and priestesses usually prepare themselves before their god; they arm themselves with incantations to release on their clients. A specific demon called Baal follows such people home to ensure that the agreement signed in the priest's shrine holds. When anybody decides to follow Jesus, it is mandatory to go for deliverance to be free from all such contaminations and get purified. Even if that agreement was signed 50 years ago, it makes no difference. There are trillions of demons in existence so several demons can be assigned to follow an individual for life and the devil will see to it that this work lacks no demonic backing. So everyone who has been to juju houses need to be delivered from Baal demons.

Prayer Points:

1. I revoke every satanic incantation working against my life in the name of Jesus.
2. I challenge the activities of Baal spirit in my life by fire in the name of Jesus.
3. You Belial spirit and you associate, loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus.
4. I clear off every evil cloud following after my life by fire in the name of Jesus.
5. I reject and break every blood covenant existing between me and demons through incision by the blood of Jesus.

Former cult members

All those who have been members or have participated in pseudo-Christian religions e.g. Grail Message, AMORC, Freemasonry, New Age, Hare Krishna, etc., or been in cults like Ogboni confraternity. etc., at whatever level, need thorough deliverance. If not, the promises, covenants and oaths taken while they were members, will be used by the devil to torment the people with terminal sicknesses, diseases, or even death.

That is why if any person ceased to be members of such cults without being born again, most of them suffer severely for it. It is only Jesus that can truly protect and guide one from all the attacks of the devil.

Prayer points:

1. I reject every occultic material in my life and I destroy you by fire in the name of Jesus.
2. I renounce my membership of any occultic group (mention the name) I belong to in the name of Jesus.
3. I redeem my life from the grip of every occultic power by the blood of Jesus in the name of Jesus.
4. Any blood covenant between me and any agent of the devil, break now by the blood of Jesus (Isaiah 28: 18).

5. I release myself from every covenant working against my breakthrough in Jesus' name (Isaiah 28:18).
6. Any abnormality programmed into my spirit, soul and body through evil covenants, be evacuated by the blood of Jesus.
7. I reject and renounce membership of any group I had been involved within the past with the blood of Jesus.
8. Blood of Jesus, speak protection on my behalf (Revelation 12: 11).

Former white garment church members

White garment churches are steeped in occult practices. They do a number of things the wrong way. They burn incense which the Bible says is an abomination for present-day Christians.

*Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me;
(Isaiah 1:13)*

The scripture says those who burn incense during their worship do so to their own demonic god called the queen of heaven (which operates in the air).

*But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil
(Jeremiah 44:17)*

In some cases, former church members who left these churches because they have seen the light of Jesus have one sad story or another to tell as leaders of these churches would not willingly let go of them and would do everything in their power to make these people come back. If they did not return, the leaders would make sure they make things difficult for them. The Bible says of those who left the worship of the queen of heaven;

*But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.
(Jeremiah 44:18)*

In some of these churches, they keep members in the enclave by intimidation, blackmail, hypnotism, control and manipulation through witchcraft. Former members who are now standing Christians should not take these threats lightly.

The reason these threats must be neutralised by fervent prayers is that anyone who has ever been a member of an occult church unknowingly enters into satanic covenant and a doorway is therefore opened for baal and religious demons to enter. And if anyone who leaves is not truly born again, his situation will be worse off as the Bible says because the person has no justification to ward off the imminent attacks the church would wage on him.

Also in the case of a former member who has undertaken the more serious covenant of bathing in the river, during deliverance ministration, the person should be cleansed with the Blood of Jesus. He should also say, "I cleanse myself externally by bathing with the Blood of Jesus Christ," there is no ointment, power or principality that can resist the power in the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. The Blood of Jesus Christ will neutralise and destroy all the effects of poisons taken in these occult churches. The word of God says,

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.
(Revelation 12:11)

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.
(Hebrews 13:12)

Many people who still worship in these churches believe that they are doing the right thing. "But we also pray in the name of Jesus," they often argue. Yes, you pray in the name of Jesus, but you also bring in some other names. You mix pagan beliefs with the gospel. A lot of evils and abomination are done in the name of God, yet you argue, "But we also pray in Jesus' name." The Bible says we should resist the devil, but goes further to say that we are to flee from every appearance of evil.

A woman who was a former member of one of these churches came to our Ministry in 1994 for deliverance. Her problem started after she was bathed in the river by a so-called pastor. This woman was taken to the river by her pastor for a spiritual bath that would wash every evil away. While in the river, the pastor had sex with her and she got pregnant and gave birth to a boy who was half human and half demon. This boy tormented his mother so much that it was as if he was sent to destroy her. She finally came with the boy for deliverance. We were able to help this woman, because she told us the real cause of her problem.

In 1994, another woman gave her testimony. According to her, her problems started when she went to a so-called prophet for prayers to have a husband. This "prophet" had four wives. After taking her to the river for spiritual bath, she could no longer control herself sexually. The man used her like a dog. She could no longer reason nor have control over her sexual appetite. After several months of being used by this "prophet", the man decided to have her as the fifth wife but she refused. The man then took her for another "consecration" in the river and there gave her something to swallow. The moment she did that, she became restless, and she nearly ran mad. The "prophet" threatened that except she agrees to marry him, nobody on earth will marry her and that she would die childless

The lady then decided to leave that church; she gave her life to Jesus Christ and was filled with the Holy Spirit. Yet for years after, she had no husband. She was always sick and she had objects running round her body. Doctors could not see anything wrong with her, yet she was dying.

The whole church fasted and interceded and wept unto God on her behalf. Shortly after that, she became engaged to a Christian brother and they got married. Not long after this, she got pregnant and had a son. But the frequent illness and movement round her body continued. For another 10

years, she could not get pregnant again. After counselling and deliverance, the lady gave testimony of complete healing and she became pregnant again.

At the time of her testimony, she was 4 months pregnant. All the people who attended the "War Against Childlessness" programme that month, where she shared her testimony, were really blessed as she danced to the glory of her God who is supreme above all religious demons and charms from white garment churches.

If perhaps you have been there before, or you want to come out, your deliverance will also be total in Jesus' name.

Prayer Points:

1. I frustrate the activities of religious spirits in my life in the name of Jesus.
2. I reject every satanic anointing upon my life, and I command you to dry up in the name of Jesus.
3. Every incense I burnt (or the one that was burnt on my behalf) standing against me in the heavens, be dismantled by fire in the name of Jesus.
4. I declare every doorway opened to Baal or religious spirits in my life, closed by the blood of Jesus.
5. I withdraw all my virtue locked up in the water through evil baths by the wind of the Holy Ghost in Jesus' name.
6. Every satanic object moving in my body, be melted by fire and come out now in the name of Jesus.
7. I release myself from every evil sacrifice written against my name (Isaiah 13, 30:7, 22).
8. I drink the blood of Jesus and swallow the fire of God to purge my system.
9. I revoke every evil decree upon my life and family by the blood of Jesus (Isaiah 10: 1).
10. You mountain of evil covenants and curses, be made plain by the power of the Holy Ghost (Zechariah 4:7).
11. Lord, wipe out every religious demon working against my promotion in Jesus' name.
12. I will not return to my vomit in the mighty name of Jesus (Proverbs 26: 11, 2 Peter 2:22).
13. I overcome every evil by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 12: 11).

Hearing strange voices or seeing strange beings

If usually, or once in a while you hear voices telling you strange things, or perhaps you see strange beings talking to you or you discuss with them or with those you know have died, it means you need urgent deliverance ministration. Some people discuss with these beings in their subconscious while some "sleep-talk" i.e. they talk in their dreams. And when they wake up, they are as stupefied as the people who heard them speaking, when confronted with the facts.

In early 1994, one of my friends introduced someone to me. He said the man sometimes speaks to somebody he alone sees. On a certain occasion, he had walked out of the classroom with that strange unseen person, laughing and discussing all the way. He has become an embarrassment to both lecturers and students alike.

As I counselled this man, I got to the root of the problem. He had a friend who was a great footballer like him. They had an accident on their way from a football session in Kaduna, and

this friend died. Since-then, his dead friend started appearing to him, both in his dreams and in the physical. Anytime this dead friend comes, he will lose his physical senses and do anything he says or wants until he goes.

After the counselling session, I led him to Christ and we started deliverance ministration proper: As we were binding the demons influencing him, he started saying to nobody in particular, "Don't go please, come, come." After the prayer, we asked him who he was talking to, and he said it was his friend. He accused him of wickedness saying he brought him to a place where he could be destroyed.

He continued that the dead friend said every association between them had been severed. We counselled him again and prayed for him and he fell under the anointing. After about 45 minutes, he was up and he demanded for a Bible, which was given to him. We were all surprised by this sudden reaction. He narrated his experiences that while he was under the anointing, three men took him to a church, gave him a Bible and instructed him to read the Bible and go to church to hear God's word. It was then we understood that angels came to him to teach him how to retain his blessing.

Prayer Points:

1. I cut off every strange line of communication with demons and all their associates to my life in the name of Jesus.
2. I break every evil link with the spirit of the dead in the name of Jesus.
3. Father God, I sever every link and association with the dead in Jesus' name.
4. Lord, touch me and bless me now in Jesus' name (Mark 10: 13, 16; Luke 18: 15).
5. Father God, touch me in a unique manner today in Jesus' name.
6. Every personality forcing himself into my life contrary to God's will, jump out by fire in Jesus' name.
7. Lord, sweep my life clean with your broom of fire in Jesus' name (Isaiah 14:23).

APPENDIX III
STEP THREE: SORTING– MODELLING THE CONCEPTS
AND LABELLING THE DATA WITH CONCEPTS (FEATURES OF YORUBA
PRIMAL RELIGION) IN THE 10 SAMPLE SERMONS

Brief Introduction to Appendix III

In this section, the third step is called sorting, which involves modelling and labelling the conceptualized incidents, and tagging them is done. These chunks are the materials to be used in comparison with the Yoruba primal religious concepts in chapter six of the thesis.

This appendix is concluded with the summary of elements of primal religion in the ten sermons. Here the number of incidents identifiable in each of the sermon is recorded. This reveals how much of the concept of Yoruba primal religion is exhibited by each preacher. The reason why one preacher shows more primal concepts than others may be a focus for another research in the future.

Analyzing Sermon One

Title: Prophetic Prayer Works by Pastor Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola

Step 3- Labelling the data with the primal religious concepts.

1. All created things have ears at their own level of existence. This includes both living and non-living matters. For example, these non-living materials were addressed in prayer - Earth:- Jeremiah 22:9, Numbers 17: 29-14; Altar:- I Kings 13: 1-5; The sun and the Moon:- Joshua 10: 12-14; Lazarus: John 11: 11 **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM**
2. If all things have ears, therefore the material elements from which they were made can hear and respond to the word and voice of God. Prophetic praying releases the forces and mysteries of life into action. **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM**
3. Some of the living things addressed in prayers of command include: The fig tree Matthew 21: 18-20; Lazarus: - John 11:43-44; Jairus' daughter: - Luke 8:41, 49-56. These objects were made by the word of the Lord, therefore they must obey the same word. This is the mystery of creation. The occultists and spiritualists understand this very well. **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM**
4. Prophetic praying releases the forces and mysteries of life into action. **MAGIC**
5. There was also a very terrible demonic complication in the skirmishes. The local people consulted the powers of darkness so much that a typical old woman would stand facing riot policemen armed with automatic rifles and amazingly collecting all the bullets with a wrapper without a single bullet hitting her. The policemen in fear and terror would stop

shooting and run for their dear lives. In fact, each of the ethnic groups send only such women with demonic powers to battle while their men stayed behind watching and waiting for the other group to be exhausted in order to capture them. **MAGIC**

6. Armed with the word of God they had received, they went to the battle front when there was a brief cease-fire. They began to address the trees, the leaves, the roots and the earth never to cooperate and obey the natives any more. **MAGIC, ANIMISM**
7. We, as God's children, must know that we can command creation, especially leaves, trees, roots, fruits, parts of animals, feathers, liquids, etc used in making charms and talisman not to work against us by neutralizing and deprogramming these elements by prophetic prayers. **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM, MAGIC**
8. And what price must be paid for one to operate in prophetic prayers? There are 8 major conditions that we will mention here. **MAGIC**
9. We have seen that it is the word of God that is used in prophetic praying, hence, a man who wants to operate in this realm must be able to receive God's word without any ambiguity or confusion. **MAGIC**
10. Anyone who wants to work with God must be able to see things of the Spirit very quickly. He must be a man who constantly receives revelations from God about different situations and circumstances. A spiritually blind man will not be able to do, what God wants him to do because he sees only in the physical. **DIVINATION**
11. The disciples in Acts 13 ministered to the Lord in praise, worship, adoration and fasting. God responded in that passage, giving a word of direction concerning what the church should do about Barnabas and Saul. **rites, DIVINATION**
12. Demons, elemental entities, and all created objects will obey us only when our own obedience is complete. **ANIMISM, TABOO.**

Analyzing Sermon Two

Title: Ancient Ancestral Covenants and Strategic Warfare by Prophet (Dr.) Samson Ayorinde

Step 3- Labelling the data with the primal religious concepts

1. Several covenants have been made by men of the old over several nations and territories and even though we may think we are now living in a very civilized time and they are no more effective. It's a deceit. The power and influences of the devil is still very pervasive in many areas of the world today. **ANCESTRAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**
2. Some covenants were made some 300,400 or 500 years ago through the altars and groves our ancestral fathers have built on various portions of the land. **ANCESTRAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

3. Their mind is under the lock and grip of the enemy. **MAGIC**
4. When a land that has been covenanted to Lucifer is delivered, a lot of things happen such as: Conversions, physical healings, social and economic developments and so on. **ANIMISM**
5. The devil taught them the principle and they practice it with zealous devotion. **ANIMISM**
6. The Ooni of Ife (king) would have gone to a lonely place to commune with his “ancestors” and make negotiations for a new year about what would happen in his domain and in the whole of Yorubaland. **ANCESTRAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**
7. The devil has just brought these things in the past 15 years. The enemy knows that except these things are maintained, the Christians’ presence and the anointing of God upon the gospel will soon break his controlling influence. **ANIMISM**
8. The village priests go back to the village gods and shrines to make new covenants. Because these things happen from year to year, there is therefore a continuity of hold of the power of darkness over the land. **ANIMISM**
9. Traditions and customs are powerful and irresistible forces that prevent people from coming to Christ. **ANIMISM**
10. In many pagan and traditional societies, children are usually initiated into some family cults. In some places, it is done just a few days after their delivery. By this act, ancient covenants are maintained through those children. Some of those cults are *Oro*, *Osugbo*, *Egungun* and other tribal cults. In some riverine communities of Africa new babies are sometimes left in the river or sea for days to be initiated by water spirits. **TOTEMISM, MAGIC**
11. There are some communities that have specified tribal marks or tattoos they give their children to wear. When you see an Oyo (Nigeria) man, you recognize him immediately. The same is true of a Nupe, Masai, Kanuri, Zulu, Fulani, Ogbomosho, or a Swahili person. Those marks are not just ordinary identification marks. They are spiritually determined and implicative. **TOTEMISM**
12. The god of a locality i.e the territorial spirit usually dictates what kind of mark (covenant tokens) he wants to have amongst the children of such a community, so that wherever they go, they can be “protected” by him. Each time the evil spirit or the territorial spirit sees those marks on an individual, he claims ownership. **TOTEMISM, MAGIC**
13. That is why people from certain localities have strange but peculiarly common behaviours like anger, immorality, stinginess, drunkenness, stubbornness, etc. They are all under the influence or control of their local territorial spirits. Therefore, they manifest negative territorial behaviours or characters. **TOTEMISM**

14. They do not know that wearing these tribal marks makes one come under the direct or indirect influence of these territorial spirits. **TOTEMISM**

15. If you have a traditional mark on you, I want to suggest that you subject yourself to some cleansing ministrations, so that the hold of the territorial of your locality over you can be broken. **TOTEMISM**

16. Carrying of incisions on different parts of the body is a sign of an ancient covenant. These things are stolen by the devil from the Bible. God said in Genesis 17, when He called Abraham that he would make His covenant with him and that it would be in his flesh. Every male child born unto Abraham and his seed was to be circumcised on the eighth day. God said, "Once you are circumcised you belong to me. My covenant is in your flesh." In the same way, the devil makes sure that there is a covenant in the flesh of many people that belong to him. This is in form of tribal marks or incisions. **TOTEMISM, MAGIC**

17. Once there is a mark which is not a circumcision mark on your body, you must ask questions from your parents. They may say, "Well, for your protection; you used to be very sickly when you were young, you used to faint". The real fact is that they have given the enemy a foot-hold in your life. You are under a covenant. **TOTEMISM**

Analyzing Sermon Three

Title: Dealing with Territorial Strongholds by Pastor Sola Folaranmi

Step 3- Labelling the data with the primal religious concepts

1. In bringing deliverance to our towns, cities, communities and nations, we need to fully understand how the enemy has penetrated, how far he has gone and the present effects of his activities. In using the term stronghold, we shall be applying it to a human entity Pharaoh, who symbolically represents vicious territorial powers and strongholds that keep multitudes in darkness and in involuntary captivity. **ANIMISM**

2. Personal strongholds are things that Satan builds to influence one's personal life: personal sin, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behavioural patterns. **ANIMISM**

3. Occultic strongholds refer to satanic activities like witchcraft, Satanism, new age religions, etc; which invite evil spirits to operate. They work as power boosters to the territorial spirits that rule over geographic regions. In Acts 17: 21 & 32, it becomes clear that Diana at Ephesus influenced the whole of Asia, but her power was eventually broken by prayer, truth encounters and evangelism. In this case, the occult and a spirit of religion were very closely connected. **ANIMISM**

4. Territorial Strongholds: These are caused and formed by idols and altars people of different communities raised to them. **ANIMISM**

5. *And Pharaoh said, who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, the God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray the, three days journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of*

Egypt said unto them, wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people front their works? Get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. (Exodus 5:2-4) This response of Pharaoh was very clear and unambiguous. He retorted: “Who is the Lord? I don't know Him why should I obey His voice to allow Israel to go? Go back and tell the God that sent you, I don't know Him and I shall not release Israel.” Now somebody who speaks like that knows what he is talking about. When somebody is defiant like that you know he is speaking from a position of strong confidence in something. Pharaoh knew where he was coming from; he knew the ancestral powers of Egypt, and the spiritual pillars (gods) that supported his throne. The Egyptian monarchs and other kings, ancient or modern, don't rule ordinarily. You see them on the throne, but there are other thrones behind their physical thrones. The physical throne is just an ordinary decorated chair in the palace. The real rulers are unseen spiritual entities which give them power and confidence to lord it over other men. **ANIMISM**

6. Pharaoh and all Egypt served a lot of territorial deities or you call them territorial spirits that gave them power and authority. This was the reason why God decided to take on the thrones behind his throne in an unprecedented strategic spiritual warfare that lasted several months. **ANIMISM**

7. Characteristics of the spirit of Pharaoh: It is a spirit of: Oppression Bondage Captivity Servitude Deprivation Wickedness Defiance Obstinacy Arrogance Sorcery Witchcraft Idolatry. **ANIMISM**

8. Egypt was the earthly seat of Satan. **ANIMISM**

9. The battle for Israel's release had to be fought at three levels for an effective judgement and overthrow of the gods. The battle was fought: at the level of the waters; at the level of the land (earth); finally, at the level of the heavens (cosmic level warfare). **ANIMISM**

10. The first power to be confronted was the serpent. Egyptians worshipped serpentine spirits. When you get to the court of Pharaoh or you see the picture of ancient Pharaohs on top of their crown, you will see the head of a serpent with its fangs sticking out indicating their submission to the serpentine spirits. It was a national symbol. **ANIMISM**

11. As those serpents moved up and down the palace, the dominion serpent of Moses opened its mouth and swallowed up the serpents of the magicians! Moses took up his own snake and it turned back into a rod! What happened was a divine judgement against serpentine spirit of Egypt. God dealt with that spirit and Pharaoh couldn't draw power from the snakes anymore. **ANIMISM, MAGIC**

12. The Nile and other water bodies of Egypt were a haven for marine spirits. *In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt: Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I*

am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales. (Ezek 29:1-4) **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM**

13. At two separate instances the Lord told Moses to get up early in the morning and meet Pharaoh as he went to the waters. *Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand.* (Exodus 7: 15) *And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.* (Exodus 8:20) One may ask, "What was Pharaoh going to do at the river?" Certainly not to bathe, because there were several swimming pools and baths in the palace; rather, he got up early in the morning to draw power from marine spirits at his marine altar. When Pharaoh did not budge, Moses went to the river and stretched forth his rod upon the river and everything became blood. For about seven days, all the waters of Egypt became blood. A type of the blood of Jesus had been employed to poison and suffocate all the marine lives that inhabited their water bodies. The blood of Jesus judged all of them. Thus, the marine power-base of Pharaoh was neutralized. **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM**

14. One after the other, in a systematic but strategic way, the Lord began to take out all the other gods of Egypt from the frog to lice, flies, cattle, boils to locusts. All these symbols of Egyptians gods were employed to destroy the gods themselves. At one time, the Egyptians tried as usual to duplicate that which Moses was doing by invocation and high-level enchantments, but they couldn't do it. Then, they turned to Pharaoh and said to him: "now this is the finger of God". Because of this, Pharaoh then began to think of and believe the existence of a bigger and stronger God somewhere. He then started to make concessions. He began to feel the pressure. **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM**

15. A younger brother of mine who is a pastor shared with me a most fascinating story of how this principle of strategic level prayer warfare was applied to deal with an age long problem of sudden and mysterious deaths of people in a river in his station in one of the towns in Nigeria. The river was not quite deep as to be able to easily drown people, but yet people drown and disappear in the river from time to time. So himself and other intercessors and pastors took up the challenge in prayer and fasting. The Lord then instructed them to go and anoint the river and pour Holy Communion wine inside it to judge the wicked marine spirit causing the death of innocent people. They obeyed the Lord to the letter. A few days after this secret operation, a big, black entity like a man furiously came out of the water very early in the morning, hissing and humming to the king's palace to lodge a complaint of serious disturbance of his water domain, and that he was relocating to another place! He angrily left the palace never to return to the river again. Since then, no death had been reported in that river again. The blood of Jesus is a very potent weapon in dealing with marine spirits. **ANIMISM, MAGIC**

16. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the*

field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. (Exodus 9:22-27). This was a very crucial stage of the battle against the territorial strongholds of Egypt. The Lord employed the strategic weapons of hail, thunder and fire for the total destruction of all land, forest and mountain-based altars and the spirits that lived in them. This divine 'military' action effectively neutralized the territorial power base of Pharaoh. **ANIMISM, MAGIC**

17. The next god to be judged was *Ra* - the sun god. The Egyptians for centuries and from ancient times have spiritually explored the heavens through diabolical means. This gave them an unusual, but early knowledge of astrology, mathematics and certain sacred sciences. The sun, the moon and the stars were the major sources of this unusual advanced knowledge. So the Egyptians worshipped and served them. God was very well aware of this. Therefore in a battle strategy never known in history, God employed the weapon of "thick darkness that can be felt" to deal with astral altars of the Egyptians. **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM, MAGIC**

18. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. (Exodus 10:21-24)-* By this action the satanic transmission and network between the heavens and the earth of Egypt was broken. The astral altars and their information spirits were dislodged. Pharaoh became totally isolated and vulnerable. Fear and desperation set in. **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM, MAGIC**

19. Every first born of Egypt was worshipped as an inheritor of family inheritance. There in the first born was deposited all the familiar and ancestral spirits of different generations. The first-born was literally worshipped and counted as a god. The first born was regarded as very sacred and God knew this because He had said, "I will kill all the first-born of Egypt". **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM**

20. The king sent for Moses in the middle of the night and said, 'You people can go.' Finally, there was freedom. Reason? Because all the territorial strongholds were judged. This principle still applies in today's spiritual warfare for territorial emancipation. Israel left Egypt in pride, loaded with plenty of silver and gold. When strongholds are destroyed people have freedom, joy, progress, silver and gold. **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM**

21. For about 30 minutes, I was roaming around, no one accepted my tracts. I then remembered Africa. If you gave a tract to somebody even if he doesn't want to read it, yet out of respect and courtesy, he would collect it, when you turn your back, he may then tear it. But here are people who run away from tracts! What do you do? I didn't know that territorial spirits and marine spirits were in operation. **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM**

22. As I looked up, I saw Rev. Francis Wale-Oke coming towards me crest - fallen. I asked Rev. Wale, what the matter was. He replied, "Moses, have you given anyone your tracts?" I said not a single one has been accepted. His story was the same. Suddenly, he said, "we are Africans and Nigerians, we are prayer warriors, you know what you used to teach about territorial spirits. Let's do the practical here". It clicked in my spirit. Instantly, I remembered that this was a marine environment, and that marine spirits were interfering with the gospel. **ANIMISM**

23. Men were hardened because of the influence of territorial spirits. **ANIMISM**

24. We joined our hands together and exercised authority. We prayed like crazy men, African kind of prayer in a European environment! We screamed in that cold winter. After some minutes of strategic warfare over the marine waters, the marine spirits, and other territorial elements, we opened the minds of men to the gospel. **ANIMISM, MAGIC**

25. We dealt with the influence of marine spirits of that environment and then the heavens were opened for men to be saved. Men who looked cold, impervious, hardened and adamant suddenly opened up because the influence of these spirits over them was broken. **ANIMATISM, MAGIC**

26. The difference was that we targeted our prayers accurately. Now, if we had joined our hands and prayed like this religiously: "O Lord, we want all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of Jesus. O Lord, these people are perishing, let them take our tracts." If we pray like that, nothing would have happened. Strategic prayers will work wonders. **MAGIC**

Analyzing Sermon Four

Title: Release from Curses by Pastor Sola Akorede

Step 3- Labelling the data with the primal religious concepts.

1. Curses are usually issued as a repercussion to breaking of covenants. A lot of people who have unconsciously entered into evil covenants sometimes break the covenants thus releasing themselves from the attendant curses. **MAGIC, INTIATION**
2. To curse is to cause mischief or injury to come upon a person. To curse is to bind a person with a spell, like witches do. To curse is to engage in violent expression of evil against others. **MAGIC**
3. Curses are words put together to torment a person with great calamity. **MAGIC**

4. When hidden curses are in place, you find yourself taking the wrong decision, and the spirit of failure will go into operation. The heart will become polluted, even as unexplainable sorrow begins to happen. Strange thoughts and desires will come into place. The person will go from one problem to the other and things will go wrong at the edge of success. **MAGIC, MEDICINE (BAD)**
5. At the point of success, frustration comes in because the person has been placed under a curse and it is limiting him, so he stops when he gets to a certain level. **MAGIC, MEDICINE (BAD)**
6. If a curse is placed upon a person that he or she will not advance beyond secondary school education all attempts by such a person to pass university entrance examinations will prove abortive. All efforts will be frustrated because there is a force in operation which is acting as an invisible barrier to prevent the person from moving forward. **MAGIC, MEDICINE (BAD)**
7. Curses bring an evil influence which could result in all kinds of evil things. They can lead to chronic frustration and problems. They can be transferred to a person's possession. They can also be transferred from parents to children. **MAGIC, MEDICINE (BAD)**
8. They can run from generation to generation. The curse on Jericho was not broken until 300 - 500 years after it was issued. When Prophet Elijah, the man of God came, he identified the problem, and broke the curse. **MAGIC, MEDICINE (BAD)**
9. Curses Act Like A Kind Of Shield:
They protect evil spirits and give them legal grounds to operate.
God was the first person to place a curse on a person in the Bible. He placed it upon Adam and Eve when they ate the forbidden fruit. It is still the same thing today. Every disobedience invites curses from God and only He can remove them. **TABOO**
10. Curses can come from satanic agents, evil prophets, parents, etc. **MAGIC, MEDICINE (BAD)**
11. Sins allow curses to stay. Where sins remain, curses remain. For complete freedom there must be complete repentance. **TABOO**
12. Demons enforce and propagate curses. There is no curse without a demon attached to it. It is the demon attached to the curse that will make sure that terrible things happen to the cursed person. **ANIMISM**
13. A person under a curse may find it hard to take progressive steps. If such a person intends to secure a visa for further studies abroad, for example, the demon will ensure that he does not get it. And if the person succeeds in going abroad, the same demon will ensure the deportation of the person. **ANIMISM, MAGIC, MEDICINE (BAD)**

14. An unjust curse will return to the sender. If someone has issued a curse without a reason, it will go back to him. You cannot bless whom God has cursed. **MAGIC, MEDICINE (BAD)**
15. Cursing whom God has blessed earns the person issuing the curse a divine curse in return. So, do not curse whom God has blessed. **MAGIC**
16. A curse does not affect a child of God. **INITIATION**
17. A curse cannot affect a child of God, who is walking in obedience. **INITIATION, TABOO**
18. When you break the vow and covenant of a marriage, you set a curse in motion. This is the reason why many are suffering today. When a woman leaves her husband and marries a rich man, or a man leaves his wife and marries a younger woman, a curse is set in motion. **TABOO**
19. Young girls who go around with married men are placing themselves under curses; because when the angel wants to bring their own husbands, they will turn back when they see the married men they are illegally hooked to. **ANIMISM, TABOO**
20. Married men running around with married women are under a curse. All curses from married women against husband snatchers work like fire. It does not matter whether the women are born again or not. **TABOO**
21. If you are going out with a married man and the wife at home is a witch, any curse she issues against you will surely thrive, whether you are born again or not. **MEDICINE (BAD), MAGIC, TABOO**
22. When you refuse to obey your elders for whatever reason, curses come into place. When you disobey a rightful leader, the same thing happens. If a woman that comes from a rich family tries to disparage her poor husband, curses will come in place. Women should not look down on their husbands. **TABOO**
23. You may have forgotten about it. That is why the Bible has two words for sex, i.e. 'laid' and 'knew his wife.' While the first one (laid) is negative, the second word (knew his wife) is positive. When the Bible says, "laid with him", it means fornication or adultery. When the Bible says, "knew his wife", that is the right thing. All the wrong kinds of sex bring curses. **TABOO**
24. A man that could not get any breakthrough came for deliverance. Three girls turned up in the spirit realm carrying small glasses containing liquid materials. They said, "We trapped him when he was in the university because he was going out with the three of us at the same time." They disclosed that they collected things from his body which they kept in a container under the water. So, there was no way he could prosper. A man might

be running up and down, without knowing that curses have been issued on him.
MEDICINE (BAD), MAGIC

25. A man using his money to buy sex is under a curse. Girls releasing themselves to be used as objects of satisfaction to men in order to get a job, promotion, accommodation etc., come under curses. **TABOO**
26. A woman permitting herself to be abused sexually because of money comes under a curse. **TABOO**
27. A father sleeping with his daughter, or a mother sleeping with her son, comes under curses. **TABOO**
28. People sleeping with animals, their brother's wives or their sister's husbands come under curses. **TABOO**
29. A man places himself under a curse when he sleeps with his father's wife. **TABOO**
30. Fathers sleeping with their step-daughters or parents entertaining guests with their daughters or using their daughters to get contracts, or husbands using their wives for business also remain cursed. **TABOO**
31. Leviticus 19:29, says, "*Do not prostitute thy daughters.*"
Pasting pictures of naked women on the wall, or buying calendars and magazines with such pictures puts a person under a curse. **TABOO, ANIMATISM**
32. Curses from sexual immorality are the strongest curses and very difficult to break. They can take weeks to break during the deliverance of such a cursed person. That is why the Bible says that God is not too worried about sins outside the body as He is worried about sins in the body, i.e. fornication and adultery. **TABOO**
33. The Bible says the blessing of the Lord "*maketh rich without adding sorrow to it.*" That means there is a wealth you can get that will add sorrow to it. All wealth by unrighteous means puts people under a curse. Bribery or stealing the wealth of the dead invites curses. There are so many relatives who let the wives and the children suffer, because as soon as a husband dies, they just come and cart away his property. Such in-laws come under a curse. If you are here and you want to share the property of the dead, you have to be very careful not to get involved. **TABOO, ANIMISM**
34. When you murder someone by witchcraft, you come under a curse. **TABOO, MEDICINE (BAD)**
35. **SHEDDING OF INNOCENT BLOOD.**
All abortions invite curses of frustrations. **TABOO**

36. Purchasing stolen items on which a curse has been placed. This is why any Christian who buys any second hand material must anoint and pray over it. For example, a car was stolen in Belgium from somebody who sweated for 15 years to buy it. When that car was stolen, he removed his clothes and placed a curse on whosoever will use the car. The car was brought to Nigeria and the curse will be transferred to whoever buys it. **TABOO, ANIMISM**
37. **CURSES ISSUED BY SATANIC AGENTS**
Such spirits are sent to do harm. The person cursed will be doing bad things, and will chase away good people who would have helped him. **ANIMISM**
38. People curse themselves every day without knowing it. A woman used to say, "my poor legs, my poor legs" and eventually those legs developed problems. Negative words directed at oneself are a curse. **TABOO, ANIMISM**
39. **TOUCHING UNCLEAN THINGS, OR ANYTHING DEDICATED TO SATAN**
All things that the Bible lists as unclean should not be touched by a believer. When things are like this, there can be mental and physical illness; there can be failure, profitless hard work, defeat, poverty, and family breakup. Even when there is plenty of money coming in, the cursed person is broke. **TABOO**
40. Corruption of the reproductive organs, chronic sicknesses, bad reputation, and oppression are some of the end products of an accursed life. When the situation is like this, you need to break the curse. I want you to know that God wants us to live a curse-free life. **MEDICINE (GOOD)**
41. **STEPS TO RELEASE YOURSELF**
Repent from all known sins particularly those concerning evil covenants. Renounce the sins of your forefathers. Accept God's forgiveness and forgive yourself. Forgive all those who have ever offended you. Do not bear grudges. Renounce all contacts with any cursed or false religion. Destroy all evil and polluted materials. Release yourself from the curses with aggressive prayer. Cast out the demon behind the curse by saying, "I command every demon of the curse to leave me now in Jesus' name." Claim blessings to replace past curses. Give thanks to God for setting you free. **rites, ANIMISM, INCANTATION**
42. Please, put all your strength into praying the following prayer points:
I refuse to drink from the fountain of sorrow, in Jesus' name. I take authority over all curses issued against my life, in the name of Jesus. Ask God to remove any curse he has placed on your life as a result of disobedience. I command any demon attached to any curse to depart from me now, in the mighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **rites, ANIMISM, INCANTATION**
43. Let all curses issued against me be converted to blessings, in the name of Jesus. **INCANTATION**

44. When you mention any of the under-listed curses, you will aggressively say, "Be broken, be broken, be broken, in the name of Jesus. I release myself from you, in the name of Jesus." - Every curse of mental and physical sickness
- Every curse of failure and defeat
 - Every curse of poverty
 - Every curse of family break-up
 - Every curse of oppression
 - Every curse of bad reputation
 - Every curse of personal destruction or suicide
 - Every curse of chronic sickness
 - Every curse of corruption of the reproductive organ
 - Every curse of family strife
 - Every curse of profitless hard work
 - Every curse of evil dedication
 - Every curse of sickness and infirmity
 - Every curse of witchcraft. **rites, animism, incantation**

Analyzing Sermon Five

Title: Deliverance from Evil Altar by Revd. Dr. D. K. Olukoya

Step 3- Labelling the data with the primal religious concepts.

1. Satan and his demons will not give us our benefits without a battle. And it is time we stopped the kind of prayer life which eat the meat and the bones together. God wants us to eat the meat and leave out the bones. It is time to take off the veil and know the true name and fruits of the strongman so we can paralyze them. **MAGIC**
2. When a king was sacrificing at the altar, God sent a prophet to speak against the altar. The prophet ignored all the people standing by the altar and faced the altar, showing the importance of that altar and the spiritual transaction going on there which the physical eyes could not see. But in the spirit a terrible transaction was going on. **ANIMISM**
3. A good Bible student would not be surprised that all the important men of God built altars to God. This is because an altar is a place of communication and fellowship. **ANIMISM**
4. Positive altars are altars raised to the living God for good purposes. Negative altars are altars raised by the enemy to steal, to kill and to destroy. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**
5. You can raise an altar to bless or to destroy, to improve or to demote, to promote or to put down. You can raise an altar to enhance or to frustrate. You can raise an altar for a particular person or for a set of people, those you like or those you do not like. In the Old Testament, altars are built to destroy and to frustrate the enemies. In the passage we have read (1 Samuel 7:7-11), Samuel raised up an altar in the name of the Lord against the Philistines. God became angry with the Philistines and thundered against them from heaven. The altar fought the battle for Israel and it was practically a walk-over. Israel did

not fight. God looked down and fought for his people against their enemies. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

6. Many things that God has designed in the Bible to bless, the devil has their counterfeits. He can always make his own. Just like the cross of Jesus, you will see men and women dropping sacrifices at the crossroads. This is a corruption of the cross of Jesus. **MAGIC**

7. Many problems of the black people can be directly linked to dark ministrations at altars. The enemy has erected satanic altars of affliction against many and these altars have priests of wickedness ministering regularly on them. You can ask, "How did the devil get to know about all these?" Don't forget, he was with God in the beginning. He saw the order of heaven and understood how things were run. He has now corrupted that order. He has taught his own people the secret of altars they are using for destructive purposes. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

8. An altar is a traffic of evil things which have been erected against a group of people and they are going up and down for the people's sake. Somebody says, "I bring the paper of sickness: you take it. He brings the paper of tuberculosis, you take it; even the paper of demotion." It is a traffic. It goes up and down, that is the dangerous thing about the altar. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

9. Every satanic altar erected against me and my family be demolished by fire, in the name of Jesus. Every vessel submitting my name to the altar be frustrated, in the name of Jesus. I refuse to be a prisoner of any local altar, in the name of Jesus. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

10. Sacrifices are foods given to wicked spirits to seek for their assistance. That is why the Bible says, "Do not eat food sacrificed to idols." If you eat it you are eating on the same table with the devil. The Bible says this because it wants to educate us that food sacrificed to idols is food for demons, and when you share food with demons, you go away with them. Wicked people put food on an altar and ask wicked spirits for assistance to afflict people. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE, ANIMISM**

11. Some of the things that we call migraine and headache are sometimes a result of demonic affliction. That is why before we do anything to our body we should pray. Even if you had so much faith in drugs you had better pray. We Christians rely on the Holy Spirit and angels to fight for us in the spirit world. When names are taken to the altar to monitor and influence people's lives and they do not know what is going on, it is as if someone is following them around and destroying anything that comes. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

12. I am not saying what I am saying to scare people. Many house-helpers, nannies and in-laws are altar priests, and agents passing information to other altar priests. They should not be brought in to your house without prayers. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

13. Demons try to see whether they should waste their ammunition on you or not because there is no point shooting a corpse. When someone has been eaten up, what is the point in shooting him again? They use these altars as control instruments which cause problems for people. Tying a rope to the neck of a cock and mentioning a person's name in the process, and then putting the cock at the crossroads severely limits that person. When there is something good around and you move towards it, something else will prevent you from reaching it. These evil altars can dominate a person; they can tie him down so that he cannot have a mind of his own. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

14. Therefore they are not the kind of thing you look at and you say gentle prayers. It is the kind of thing you face, the way that the prophet in 1 Kings 13 did. He prophesied against an altar and destroyed it. That is the only way out. **INCANTATION**

15. What are the kinds of local altars we have here that are used to destroy people? **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

16. Crossroads altars: These are a perversion of the cross of Jesus. Why the crossroads? The purpose at the crossroads is to be able to summon demons from the North, from the South, from the East and from the West together against the people. **MAGIC**

17. If you get to your office in the morning and find a sacrifice there; it means that demons have been summoned to that place. **MAGIC**

18. If a crossroads sacrifice has been offered against you, you will be bombarded by afflictions, in every department of your life. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

19. There is a difference between authority and power. If you are born again and you have not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit there is no power to back it up. Or if you just have the baptism of the Holy Spirit but you do not have fire and the enemies are offering sacrifices at the crossroads against you, you won't die or if you die you will go to heaven, but they would have denied you so many good things on earth. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

20. Tree altars: This is another local altar. Examples of this are *Iroko* tree, pawpaw tree and banana tree. Sometimes enemies wrap pieces of cloth around these trees thus transforming them into altars. The cloth is tied around the person's life and his case is handed over to the tree demons, the witches and the wizards. **ANIMATISM**

21. Rock altars: A sister who had been in the demonic world, got born again. Although she was in the demonic world she was also a prophetess, laying hands on people and prophesying. She said one day in the church she sat next to a woman, a fellow prophetess, and as they were chatting, the fellow prophetess told her, "My own power is greater than yours. Do not mess up with me." She said before she could say anything, the woman crossed her legs and the two of them found themselves inside a rock. There, she saw electronic equipment, refrigerators, rooms, etc. Then the woman cooked for her. They had left from a church service. *A lot of things are happening that many of us cannot see. If

many of us can see them, when I say pray, they will pray until they know that something has happened in the spirit realm. **MAGIC**

22. Photograph altars: Wicked people can take away a wedding picture, a family picture or an individual's picture, put it somewhere, form an altar around it, and through it a person can be tormented, afflicted or even killed. They can use it to break a marriage or do all sorts of other evil things. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

23. Image altars: A symbol is made to represent a person and whatever is done to that symbol happens to the person in the spirit. If it is given a terrible blow on the head the person will have a terrible headache. They may decide to give the terrible blow during an examination. That is why you find some children falling ill during the examination period. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

24. Reporting altars: In this case a person's name is chanted all day long or regularly at the altar. Such a person may be hearing his name but would not know who is calling him. All that is expected is for him to answer even once and he is in serious trouble. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

25. Clothing altars: The enemy can do all kinds of things to someone through his clothes. They can use the clothes to put all kinds of skin diseases on a person. If at one time or the other someone tore a piece of your clothes, or stole your underwear or some things else and you do not know where they are, you need to pray hard. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

26. River altars: These are altars served by river demons. They sit on people's lives and keep them submerged. **ANIMATISM, MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

27. Forest altars: Enemies go to forest altars at night. A lot of people do not know that when they are sleeping at night their enemies are busy working and planning against them in the forest. They go there to chant people's names. **ANIMATISM, MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

28. Altars of body parts: A person's finger nail, hair, or placenta can be taken away, and the enemy would build an altar around it and use it against the person. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

29. Astral altars: There are people who speak evil words against people's stars. They programme words of destruction against a person's star and they will affect the person negatively. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

30. Altars of evil transfers: Enemies transfer people's virtues using satanic priests and evil thieves that are around. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

31. Any family that has an idol or a shrine has an altar. Through that altar the whole members of the family can be monitored. **ANIMISM**

32. I was praying for a sister and felt so sorry for her. Her mother-in-law brought an idol all the way from Edo State into the sitting room of the woman and her husband. She protested strongly that they were Christians and did not believe in such things. The mother-in-law told her to shut up or she would send her packing from her matrimonial home. Then she worshipped the idol for three months before she carried it back to Edo state. All that the mother-in-law did was to create a traffic of demons inside that house, so that if she needs anything from the house all she has to do is to contact her demons. **ANIMISM**

33. A lot of prayers and deliverance have to be done for that house to get rid of what she brought. I asked why the husband did not remove the idol. She said as soon as it was brought into the house it seemed as if the husband became a fool, as if he had never been going to church. **ANIMISM, MAGIC**

34. Someone was kidnapped and dragged to a physical altar to be killed. He did not know what happened to him that morning. He looked for his Daily Guide and found that his son had thrown it into the dustbin. He got angry and started shouting. His wife tried to pacify him, saying he should pick it out and have his quiet time. He started shouting at her as well. He did not have his quiet time and he left the house angrily. At the bus stop someone moved close to him and slapped him on the shoulder. He followed the man into a bush and there was a satanic priest there, with human parts on the floor round an altar. He called the name of Jesus, and the people began to get confused. They released him quickly. A man in a white garment appeared and shook his hand, and he then found himself in Lagos. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

35. Christian's life is a life of spiritual warfare. If Jesus, the purest man that ever lived, had enemies, it is certain that we are going to have them. **MAGIC, BAD MEDICINE**

36. What are we going to do now? How do we deal with the evil altars? - *Recognize their operations. - Repent of anything you have done to make any evil altar to prosper; - Renounce them whether you know about them or not.* There is no point in saying that we do not have them in our family, unless we are not black people; *Resist them using the word of God and prayer; Kill the priest at the altar.* There must be some wicked priests being used against you. This is what we call slay their priests or kill their prophets; *Withdraw your name, your benefits and your virtues from the altars; - Destroy the altar by cursing it, introducing the fire of God upon it.* Call the East wind upon it. Call the divine hurricane of God to blow it away; *Give praises to God.* **ANIMATISM, ANIMISM, MAGIC, INCANTATION**

37. Every prayer against evil altars has to be said loudly, with violence, with faith and with an aggressive spirit. I hope we understand this. We are working against some terrible things, which we have to paralyze. If you are not going to pray it this way it is better to keep quiet. **INCANTATION**

38. You are going to withdraw seven things from every evil altar. Please, lay your hands on your head. I withdraw my name from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus.

(Transfer the hand to your chest.) I withdraw my blessings from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. (Take the hand back to your head.) I withdraw my breakthroughs from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. I withdraw my glory from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. (Transfer the hand to your chest.) I withdraw my prosperity from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. (One hand on the head, the other one on the chest.) I withdraw anything representing me from every evil altar, in Jesus' name. Mention the organ that you know is not behaving the way it should. When you have done this begin to say, I withdraw you from every evil altar. Say this seven hot times. **INCANTATION, RITES, MAGIC.**

Analyzing Sermon Six

Title: The Trap of Blood Covenant by Pastor Isaiah Olatunji

Step 3- Labelling the data with the primal religious concepts.

1. The Bible tells us that blood can speak because of the life in it; it can communicate. That is why in Gen 4: 10, God said to Cain, "*What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.*" The blood was crying out for vengeance. God Himself always talks of avenging blood. In Revelation 6:10, you will read about the martyrs who have been slain for the gospel and are crying to God. "*And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them lat dwell on the earth?*" God said, "Wait, no problem, let them kill the rest of you then we will avenge in full." That is why Jesus accused the Jews with his strong statement, "You are of the generation that kills the prophets and the blood of all prophets from Abel shall be required from this generation." **ANIMISM**
2. This is why the Bible warns, what God has joined together let no man or woman, or demon or mother-in-law or father-in-law, put asunder. **ANIMISM**
3. There could be a covenant between man and the devil. The devil can promise some people power and say, "All you have to do is to sleep in a cemetery for 200 days, and then you get the power." He can promise you wealth in exchange for a short life. People make covenants with the devil; this is why some people can never repent of doing evil because already they have entered into an agreement with Lucifer that they will do anything he wants, even if they will die doing it. If you have that kind of enemy, you have to be strong yourself. **MAGIC**
4. Men can make covenants with evil spirits but the most dangerous covenant is the one which the participant is not aware of, yet it is binding. **MAGIC**
5. Many of the things we don't think as serious are taken seriously in the spirit world. **ANIMISM**
6. Remember that Jacob and Esau only exchanged words, over a meal, and they were binding. God recognized the words and the devil also recognized them, and Esau lost his birthright. Many people make worse promises with their mouths. **ANIMISM**
7. A lot of people are in trouble today because they met a man or woman a long time ago and entered into a covenant as they fell madly in love if there is that kind of thing. They cut

each other's bodies and drank their blood saying, "Promise me you will not leave me." The blood then flowed into each other. Eventually they did not get married and there is problem. Some people do not understand where the problem is coming from. Well, it is already inside the blood by a simple transfer. They cannot marry someone else and if they do, the marriage will break down. After they drank the blood, a curse was spiritually pronounced on whoever would break the covenant. **MAGIC**

8. When Adam fell, blood had to be used for the remission of sin. The person who could make that covenant had to be both man and God. He had to be a person whose blood did not come from his father and mother, which was polluted. This is why Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, his blood was not from man. And so it was that kind of blood that could make atonement for us. **MAGIC, RITES**

9. During a deliverance session for somebody, suddenly two birds flew into the arena when prayers were going on, and began to fight seriously with each other. They fought until our men went there and stopped the fight by killing and burning them. Why do you think the birds appeared and started fighting? Something had been ignited in the spirit world. Somebody was about to be released from a terrible blood covenant and the battle got so serious that the Lord put confusion between the spirits in charge and they started fighting each other. How did they know that something was happening? It is because there was a covenant. **ANIMISM**

10. I will ask some questions. Sister, who disvirgined you? How did you lose your virginity? Brother, have you ever deflowered anyone? If you are a man who had deflowered more than one lady, and you did not marry any of them, then don't be surprised now if your life is upside down. Because with your reproductive organ mixed with the blood of these girls, you have made a covenant with them. It is with this your organ that you had your other offspring; so by implication, all your children too are polluted. If you are unlucky, like many sinners, and the girl you disvirgined is demonic, you have made a covenant with that girl and her demon. **TABOO**

11. Incision is a strategy for a blood covenant and pollution. You open up your body for a blood covenant with the witchdoctor or demons, and you create holes through which your blood could be drawn. **ANIMISM**

12. What I am saying is this, it is possible that as you are here, a part of your body is in a witchcraft meeting, simply because you slept with a witch, or you woman, because you slept with a wizard. Your present state of holiness cannot deliver you from what I am saying now; neither can your new birth, because you did it when you were in the world. Your present state of holiness can only prevent a re-occurrence. Your new birth opens a door for total deliverance. **ANIMISM**

13. If you have ever offered an animal sacrifice, you have made a covenant with demon spirits and they will harass you until you break the blood covenant and loose yourself from their grip. You must mention the name of the animal you used, and release yourself. **ANIMISM**

14. The disciples in Acts 13 ministered to the Lord in praise, worship, adoration and fasting. God responded in that passage, giving a word of direction concerning what the church should do about Barnabas and Saul. **rites**

15. STEPS TO RELEASE YOURSELF

Repent from all known sins particularly those concerning evil covenants. Renounce the sins of your forefathers. Accept God's forgiveness and forgive yourself. Forgive all those who have ever offended you. Do not bear grudges. Renounce all contacts with any cursed or false religion. Destroy all evil and polluted materials. Release yourself from the curses with aggressive prayer. Cast out the demon behind the curse by saying, "I command every demon of the curse to leave me now in Jesus' name." Claim blessings to replace past curses. Give thanks to God for setting you free. **rites, animism, incantation**

16. All those who always say that a prophet tells them to slaughter a chicken or fowl and distribute, are forming blood covenants. All those whose parents kill something for them every birthday, are thus renewing contracts with demons. **rites, animism**

17. All those who have ever carried out any abortion, including the doctor who did it and the man who gave the woman the money to do it have formed blood covenants. There are spirits that will enter into them and give them frustration and general backwardness. Their children will be affected later, because the blood of the aborted babies will be crying out against them. **animism, ancestral acknowledgement**

18. Please, put all your strength into praying the following prayer points:

I refuse to drink from the fountain of sorrow, in Jesus' name. I take authority over all curses issued against my life, in the name of Jesus. Ask God to remove any curse he has placed on your life as a result of disobedience. I command any demon attached to any curse to depart from me now, in the mighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **rites, animism, incantation**

19. When you mention any of the under-listed curses, you will aggressively say, "Be broken, be broken, be broken, in the name of Jesus. I release myself from you, in the name of Jesus." - Every curse of mental and physical sickness

- Every curse of failure and defeat
- Every curse of poverty
- Every curse of family break-up
- Every curse of oppression
- Every curse of bad reputation
- Every curse of personal destruction or suicide
- Every curse of chronic sickness
- Every curse of corruption of the reproductive organ
- Every curse of family strife
- Every curse of profitless hard work
- Every curse of evil dedication

- Every curse of sickness and infirmity
- Every curse of witchcraft. **rites, animism, incantation**

19. So the Bible that says, "Don't make a mark on your body", warns you because of these blood covenants. The Bible is against skin marks because in the process of making them your blood could get contaminated and covenants would be formed. When you see a man with that kind of demonic mark on the body, and he is not born again, he generally tends to be polygamous and a woman with such a mark generally has marital problems. **TOTEMISM, ANIMISM**

20. You are going to withdraw seven things from every evil altar. Please, lay your hands on your head. I withdraw my name from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. (Transfer the hand to your chest.) I withdraw my blessings from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. (Take the hand back to your head.) I withdraw my breakthroughs from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. I withdraw my glory from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. (Transfer the hand to your chest.) I withdraw my prosperity from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. (One hand on the head, the other one on the chest.) I withdraw anything representing me from every evil altar, in Jesus' name. Mention the organ that you know is not behaving the way it should. When you have done this begin to say, I withdraw you from every evil altar. Say this seven hot times. **INCANTATION, RITES, MAGIC.**

21. The eaters of flesh and drinkers of blood do not sterilize their mouths. They bite sister 'A' and drink her blood; by the time they bite sister 'B' they transfer to her the blood from sister 'A'. In this way they form covenants. When people don't have fire, they are easy victims. **ANIMISM**

22. There are satanic agents operating in hospitals; they are there to hunt for blood. So if you have to go to the hospital, you have to cover yourself with the blood of Jesus and be praying while you are there because of the evil agents that are there sometimes. **ANIMISM, BAD MEDICINE**

23. Receiving communion from the hands of demonic pastors or priests is dangerous. **ANIMISM**

24. When you know that your priest belongs to a secret society, when you know that your priest is becoming strangely friendly with a girlfriend, and is a fornicator; and he gives you communion and you take, you have been initiated into a covenant. **INITIATION, ANIMISM**

25. Inherited Covenant: Through sinful practices evil spirits can terrorize a family for generations and until there is a true repentance and a command to these demons to go, the family will continue to be afflicted. Even though members of the family have given their lives to Christ, they will still suffer because of ignorance. Those covenants our parents entered into, are still binding unless we break them specifically. **TABOO, ANCESTRAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

26. There are some people who actually cook blood and eat it. Others to drink blood mixed with fresh milk. They are all making covenants with the spirit world. **TABOO, ANIMISM**

27. It is bad enough to have holes in your ears, it is even worse when you increase the ones your parents put there to three. All you have done is to triple the covenant. **TABOO, ANIMISM**

28. Those who are actually hunting for blood are everywhere because the devil has a satanic blood bank, which must be supplied regularly with blood. When blood is low there, the hunters go to a country cause a war or accident to get blood. They cause all kinds of evil things; they can even make husband and wife to fight and beat themselves until blood starts to flow. They collect their blood and the husband and wife will reconcile, not knowing that they have already formed a covenant with demons. **ANIMISM**

29. Bind the spirit in charge of the evil covenant. **ANIMISM**

30. Speak destruction to their products. The covenants can produce evil things because of their long stay. **INCANTATIONS**

31. Decree what you desire, by aggressive faith. **INCANTATIONS**

32. It took her six aggressive hours, and the two girls ran out of her house and peace was restored. **MAGIC**

33. Therefore, you have work to do. The work may not stop with praying once. Some people may spend quite some time because some covenants take time to break. **rites**

34. Put one hand on the head, and the other on the stomach. All prayers to renounce covenants, whether consciously or unconsciously entered into, are to be said aggressively, vigorously and loudly because you might be fighting a battle that is two thousand years old. The Bible says, "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*" (Hosea 4:6). Say this with holy aggression. **rites, INCANTATIONS**

35. "Holy Ghost Fire, boil spiritual contamination out of my blood (boil as boiling water for purification; as it boils the water vapour condenses and it becomes pure water). Say this once and repeat, "Holy Ghost Fire, boil it out." **INCANTATIONS**

36. I release myself from every satanic blood covenant, in the name of Jesus. **INCANTATIONS**

37. Grip your head with your two hands and pray very aggressively, "I release my head from every evil blood covenant, in the name of Jesus." Still gripping your head with your two hands, "I dismantle every stronghold of evil covenants, in the name of Jesus." **rites, INCANTATIONS**

38. I apply the blood of Jesus to break all curses. Sing this song: *"There is power mighty in the blood (x2). There is power mighty in the blood of Jesus Christ. There is power mighty in the blood."* **MEDICINE, MAGIC, RITES**

39. When somebody enters into an evil covenant, a curse is issued on him. As he is breaking the covenant, the curse too is there; he is bombarded by two different things, the covenant and the curse. So, pray like this. "I release myself from every covenanted curse, in the name of Jesus." **INCANTATIONS**

40. Let the blood of Jesus speak against every unconscious evil covenant. **INCANTATIONS**

41. I speak destruction unto the fruits of unclean spirits in my life, in the name of Jesus. I break every evil covenant linkage, in the name of Jesus. I dismantle every stronghold of evil blood covenants, in the name of Jesus. I nullify the effects of evil access to my blood, in Jesus' name. I release myself from every covenanted-curse, in Jesus' name. I release every organ in my body from the grip of evil blood covenant, in the name of Jesus. I dissociate myself and my family from every territorial blood covenant, in the name of Jesus. I dissociate myself from every tribal blood covenant, in the name of Jesus. I dissociate myself from every inherited blood covenant, in the name of Jesus. I withdraw my blood from every evil altar, in the name of Jesus. I withdraw my blood from every satanic blood bank, in the name of Jesus. I break every unconscious evil blood covenant, in Jesus' name. Let the blood of any animal shed on my behalf loose its covenant power, in the name of Jesus. Let every drop of blood speaking evil against me be silenced by the blood of Jesus. I release myself from every collective blood covenant captivity, in the name of Jesus. I release myself from every conscious or unconscious evil blood covenant, in the name of Jesus. Let the blood of every evil covenant loose its power over me, in the name of Jesus. I defy and destroy every evil covenant agreement, in Jesus' name. Let the blood of the new-covenant speak against the blood of any evil covenant militating against me, in the name of Jesus. I receive the mandate to disqualify the right of all evil blood covenants, in the name of Jesus. Every evil blood covenant formed with any organ of my body be nullified by the blood of Jesus. I recover all the good things stolen through evil covenants by the enemies, in the name of Jesus. Let every evil blood covenant along my blood-line be neutralized, in the name of Jesus. I release myself from every curse attached to evil covenants, in the name of Jesus. I release myself from the grip of curse-covenant breakers, in the name of Jesus. Let every repercussion of breaking unconscious covenants be washed away by the blood of Jesus. **INCANTATIONS**

42. All the children of a former or present priest or priestess of the devil have been dedicated to the devil. It is like what obtains in Christendom when a child is dedicated in the church at the end of 40 days. For instance, in 1991 when my wife was pregnant, I laid hands on her tummy regularly and dedicated the twins unto God. I did this regularly until they were born. When they were eventually born, I laid hands on them; spoke in tongues, prophesied over them and again decreed that they should be filled with the Holy Spirit. After 30 days, we took them to our church and our Pastor officially dedicated them to God. A child dedicated to God this way can never be compared with the one dedicated to the devil. **INITIATION, RITES**

Analyzing Sermon Seven

Title: Believer's Power Instrument by Bishop David Oyedepo

Step 3- Labelling the data with the primal religious concepts.

1. The name of Jesus is a strong tower, an institution of power. Once you invoke that name in faith, a strong tower is erected round about you. **INCANTATIONS, MEDICINE**
2. The name of Jesus gets things done. It is not just a title; but a possession. That is why Peter said, "Such us I have." You need to be possessed with that name. **INCANTATIONS, ANIMISM, MEDICINE**
3. The name of Jesus has inbuilt power, that allows anyone who possesses and uses it to walk in dominion. It is a gift to the Church, for our reign here on earth. **INCANTATIONS, ANIMISM, MEDICINE**
4. There are situations in which you find yourself, where you cannot easily carry the Bible or any book to encounter the Word of God. There is also probably not enough time to pray at that time, and no one around to lay hands on you, but you need liberty from the devil's oppression. In such situations, you need to remember that you carry a name that is loaded with the unction required for your rescue - the name of Jesus! **INCANTATIONS, ANIMISM, MEDICINE**
5. The name of Jesus destroys challenges and brings every opposition down. Every time you are confronted with a challenge, look at it with the eye of faith, and from the depth of your heart release the name of Jesus in faith; that opposition must bow! **INCANTATIONS, ANIMISM, MEDICINE**
6. *Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.* Revelation 5:9-12. The blood of Jesus, apart from cleansing from sin, also delivered to man power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing. **ANIMISM, MEDICINE**
7. When you have a good understanding of what the blood stands for and its' potency, then you will become unstoppable and can no longer be molested by anyone or thing. *As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.* **ANIMISM, MEDICINE**
8. As long as you are under this blood cover, you remain impenetrable and inaccessible. **INCANTATIONS, ANIMISM, MEDICINE**
9. Every occultic sect has blood connections, but whatever is from above is above all. No man born of a woman can be compared with Christ in any form. If there is any blood covenant that initiates people into any occultic sect, none can be compared in efficacy with the one that connects us to heaven. **INITIATION**
10. The bold declaration of, "The blood of Jesus!" by any heavenly citizen must work. **INCANTATIONS, MEDICINE**

11. There is tangible power in the blood, as it is God's last card. **MEDICINE**
12. You turn on a switch in heaven every time you plead the blood of Jesus, as the blood immediately begins to speak, "Passover". **INCANTATIONS, ANIMISM, MEDICINE**
13. God revealed in Hebrews 12:24 that we have access in mount Zion, the city of refuge, to the blood of sprinkling that speaks for us. **ANIMISM**
14. There is a continuous sprinkling of the blood, twenty-four hours of the day, in Zion. Therefore, whenever a child of God appears there, whether alone or with other believers, he gets sprinkled with the precious blood of the Lamb. So, if the devil comes to you with depression or any form of oppression, just blast the atmosphere with the blood. Declare vehemently, "The blood of Jesus is against you, Satan!" **INCANTATIONS, ANIMISM, MEDICINE**
15. *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.* Revelation 12: 11. The blood and testimonies are instruments of triumph. Testimonies eradicate trials. **ANIMISM, MEDICINE**
16. Stop talking about trials; instead, talk testimonies! Locate relevant testimonies, wrap them up in the blood, and begin to shoot them as missiles at your targets. David shot testimony arrows at Goliath, and collected Goliath's head (1 Sam. 17:37)! **MEDICINE**
17. The blood of Jesus and testimonies are two powerful weapons commonly used even in heaven. **MEDICINE**
18. The anointing oil is not a chemical product. It is the Spirit of God mysteriously put in a bottle, and mysteriously designed to communicate the power of God bodily. It is the power of God in the person of the Holy Spirit, placed in a tangible form in the hand of man to humiliate Satan, making an open show of him. **ANIMATISM, MEDICINE**
19. The anointing oil carries mysterious virtue. **ANIMATISM, MEDICINE**
20. God introduced the mystery of the anointing oil in Exodus 30:23-31, where He gave Moses details on how it was to be mixed. **MEDICINE**
21. In 1 Samuel 16: 13, we see that it is the Spirit of God. *Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward ...* **ANIMATISM, MEDICINE**
22. David was anointed with oil, but what came upon him was not oil, but the Spirit of the Lord. So the anointing oil is a medium through which the Holy Spirit, the power of God, is invoked to intervene on man's behalf. The Holy Spirit goes into manifestation when the oil is applied. **ANIMATISM**
23. The anointing oil is able to end all frustrations in your life. When it touches the barren, she becomes abundantly fruitful. When it touches anyone chained by the devil, the person

becomes automatically free. There is no sickness or disease of any kind that can escape the power in the anointing oil. So, discover the mystery in the anointing oil, and it will put you over always, causing you to walk in dominion! **MEDICINE**

24. Look beyond that common chemical called, "Olive oil", into the mystery that it carries. The anointing oil is not mere oil; there is a person mysteriously packaged inside it. **ANIMATISM, MEDICINE**

25. That bottle in your hand is no ordinary liquid, but fire! In other words, its content is highly dangerous. What natural explanation can you give that will justify its catching fire when poured on the ground? The Person inside the oil came alive! **ANIMATISM, MEDICINE**

26. I blessed a bottle of oil for a cousin in 1991, and he kept it away in his wardrobe. His business was about to hit the rocks when suddenly he remembered the oil. He brought it out of his wardrobe, and anointed all his signposts with it, and business immediately picked up for him! The Holy Ghost is THE comforter, not A comforter. There is no situation he cannot handle. Every hardship in life answers to his authority. **MEDICINE**

27. Note that we are not only to anoint people with the oil, but can also anoint things. The children of Israel anointed their tabernacle, laver, offerings, etc. with the oil. *And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, And the table and all his vessels and the candlestick and his vessels and the altar of incense, And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations.* Exodus 30:26-31 **MEDICINE**

28. Stop carrying the bottle of anointing oil about for fun; use it! It is not enough to be seen carrying the bottle of anointing oil around; you must put it to work. Moses never parted with his rod, as it was his only weapon of defence. **MEDICINE**

29. Whenever you sense evil around you, stand to your feet and pour the oil on the ground. Speak to the situation and let it know you are in charge. **INCANTATION, MEDICINE**

30. Any day you are on your way out and you've left your oil at home, go back for it. Somebody might need your help on the way, and you will be able to manifest your glory. **MEDICINE**

31. The man Smith Wigglesworth was a man of one book and one bottle - the Bible and the oil. He died at the age of 87 and never needed to use any form of medicine. **MEDICINE**

32. It will be recalled that at the time of Elijah's departure, Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him. When he got to the bank of Jordan and could not cross over, he smote the waters with The mantle that fell from Elijah, declaring, "Where is Lord God of Elijah" and the waters parted, and Elisha went over (2 Kgs. 2:13-14). **INCANTATION, MEDICINE**

33. Any material that has come in contact with the anointed of God carries the unction for manifestation. **ANIMISM, MEDICINE**

34. The virtue that operates in the mantle (the handkerchief or clothe from an anointed man of God) is God's virtue. **ANIMISM**

35. The virtue in the mantle is from God, not from any prophet or man of God. All we need do is to provoke Him with our obedience. **TABOO, ANIMISM**

36. Friend, God has not changed. He is still working by the hands of men today. These are men who carry transferable unction, and are sent for the deliverance of mankind, the liberty of the captives, the opening of blind eyes, raising the dead, and for the blessing of the people. **MEDICINE**

37. In 1989, a brother's wife ran mad in another town that was some distance from where I was. Since I couldn't go with him to where she was, I took my handkerchief, spoke some powerful words into it, and gave it to him, saying, "Get down to Ekpoma with this, and the power working inside me is going with you now. Wipe her face with this handkerchief when you get there, and the madness will be gone." He left, believing, and later testified that as soon as the mad woman saw the handkerchief, she ran to grab it, but he held her and wiped her face with it, and the madness vanished instantly! She became pregnant that same month, and nursed her baby all by herself. Till today, she's doing fine in the Lord. **MEDICINE**

38. As I speak forth, the anointing for special miracles and casting out of devils to go into the handkerchief (even as Jesus spoke to the fig tree and it heard Him). **INCANTATIONS, MAGIC, ANIMISM**

39. It is a carrier of divine energy and heavenly virtue. It always produces signs! **MEDICINE**

40. There is no drink, capsule or medicine that can be compared with the flesh and blood of Jesus. The communion is a supreme capsule and a supreme injection that cannot be compared with any other. **MEDICINE**

41. In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam and Eve all kinds of shrubs and herbs. For what purpose did He give it to them? It was for food (Gen. 1:29). He never intended for these plants to be for their healing. If only men would eat what God intended for them to eat, they will not experience sickness and disease. When God created man, He never made provisions for his healing. He only gave man what to eat. **MEDICINE**

42. It was after man was corrupted and dethroned that Satan's wicked rule and oppression began. God then had to send his only begotten Son with another type of food, designed to make us never need drugs of any kind. **MEDICINE**

43. If you partake of the communion table with this understanding, you will never need to take any drug for the remaining days of your life! **MEDICINE**

44. The apostles continued in the breaking of bread daily, so sickness was far from them. *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.* Acts 2:46 **MEDICINE**

45. Don't esteem the communion table lightly, as everything you will ever require for your total health is found in it. It will make you live like Jesus here on earth, where Jesus becomes the One working out all things for you, and you operate in His class. *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* John 6:57 **MEDICINE**

46. The children of Israel ate manna in the wilderness, and as they went from nation to nation, from one people to the other, God suffered no man to manhandle them. He cursed kings for their sakes, tying, "Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm" (Ps. 105:13-15). **MEDICINE**

47. The communion infuses God's kind of life into your blood stream, bones, marrows, mind and spirit-man. It instantly destroys whatever is contrary to life inside your system. **MEDICINE**

48. By this mysterious exercise of feet washing, Jesus was restoring to the new generation of human race (the new creation) the dominion that was lost in the first Adam. So, as your feet are dipped into water, you step into the plan of God, through the mysteries of His wisdom, and walk into the realm of dominion. If all things given to Jesus are handed over to you, tell me what devil will ever be able to challenge you? **INITIATION**

49. Jesus washed His disciples' feet so they too could enter the realm where the Father had put Him. Evidently, dominion was passed onto the disciples through this mystery of divine transference, such that when Jesus left, they represented Him, spirit, soul and body. Everything bowed to them, just as they did Jesus. **INITIATION**

50. From now on, as you observe this ordinance, every evil will bow before you, and whatever part in Christ that you are yet to experience will be delivered unto you. For example, you certainly need unbeatable intelligence in the things of God, so you can run the affairs of this life. It will be delivered to you via this mystery. Jesus had such amazing wisdom that sounded in heaven and answered here on earth also. The same Jesus said to us, "The works that I do you shall do, and greater works shall you do" (Jn. 14:12). Your inheritance of the Jesus order of wisdom shall be delivered to you, in Jesus' name! **INITIATION**

51. The feet washing mystery is simply God's wisdom on display. What do people stand to gain from it? They will gain their complete inheritance in Christ. And what is this inheritance all about? Mysterious dominion for mysterious triumphs! It is time to resume our rightful positions in redemption. **INITIATION**

Analyzing Sermon Eight

Title: The Holy Spirit Power by Bishop Kehinde Adelokun

Step 3- Labelling the data with the primal religious concepts.

1. "What is this power for?" you might ask. It is for subduing the enemy. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* **MAGIC**

2. *The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.* Psalm 110: 1. The Spirit of power you are endowed with is for subduing the enemy. It is so you can dominate the region of darkness, and say to Satan, "You are no longer in charge here. Your judgment is sealed already." The Spirit of power is to enable you rule over your enemy, Satan, so he can't bring sickness and failure to you or stand in your way when you're on the move. Satan can't stop your progress, neither can any witch challenge your destiny. That is the essence of the Spirit of power. It is to make you walk in dominion here on earth! **MAGIC**

3. With the Spirit of power breaking forth on you, you will become a recognized master anywhere you are found. **MAGIC**

4. All the exploits of the Father God are tied to the wisdom that is operational in Him. It therefore means that for you to be a candidate for His kind of exploits also, you must be connected to His kind of wisdom. Paul the apostle prayed a very special prayer for the Ephesian Church in Ephesians 1: 17: **MEDICINE**

5. *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.* The Spirit of wisdom enlightens your understanding, using you to know what God has in store for you. It enables you to be mentally productive by illuminating your mind, and imparting you with creative abilities for exploits. It offers strange skills for you to excel in whatever area God has placed you. That is why the Bible says: *I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.* Proverbs 8: 12 **MEDICINE**

6. God's wisdom is creative; so when the Spirit of wisdom is at work in you, you will find heaven just directing you on very mysterious frequencies, to cause you to improve continually on where you are per time. God's wisdom is the ability to form and reform, the ability to create and recreate. We are going to have waves of inventions these last days in the body of Christ, ingenious waves of creativity. Things will just be happening, by reason of God's wisdom at work in His Church. People will begin laying hold on hidden wisdom, to do outstanding exploits. **MEDICINE**

7. God is set to bring a mental revolution to you, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There is a Spirit called the Spirit of wisdom. It is one of the seven spirits of God, and is delivered to you on request. **ANIMISM, MEDICINE**

8. You can't operate the Spirit of wisdom and not be creatively productive. There's a better way of doing that job, and a better approach to that assignment. All you need do is to call on Him, to show you the better way, just as Solomon did: *Give me now wisdom and knowledge that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people that is so great!* 2 Chronicles 1: 10 **DIVINATION, MEDICINE**

9. No one has encounter with the Spirit of wisdom without making outstanding marks in life. Joseph took over government in Egypt by the Spirit of wisdom. Pharaoh could not help but declare: *...Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet all wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.* Genesis 41:39-41. The Spirit of wisdom established Joseph's prominence in a strange land. It also established Daniel in a place of prominence among his enemies. The wisdom at work in him was described as the wisdom of the gods (Dan. 5:11). **MEDICINE**

10. Worthy of note is the fact that everyone that operated in the Spirit of wisdom lived a clean life. This is because the Holy Spirit will not relate with filthy men, Daniel lived a clean life. He purposed in his heart not to defile himself (Dan. 1: 8). When cornered by Potiphar's wife to lie with him, Joseph said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? " (Gen. 9: 39). They lived extraordinary and very productive lives because of the wisdom of God at work in them. But first of all, they were men of pure of hearts. God said in Proverbs 1:23: *Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.* **TABOO, MEDICINE**

11. *Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.* Proverbs 13: 15. There is a Spirit of understanding. It is the excellent Spirit that causes men to excel cheaply. It makes one become outstanding on the earth. **ANIMISM, MEDICINE**

12. There's a level of understanding you walk in that every hierarchy of darkness will have no choice but to give way when you're coming. Concerning Jesus the Bible says in Luke 2:47: *And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.* **MEDICINE**

13. Friend, there's a spirit called the Spirit of understanding. It is also known as the excellent spirit. It distinguished Daniel in the land of captivity. You are now in a free land, that same spirit will much more cheaply distinguish you, in the name of Jesus. **MEDICINE**

14. The Bible says that gift knows what is in the darkness. That's unusual insight! No wonder Daniel knew what was in darkness, and light dwelled with him. **MEDICINE**

15. The Spirit of counsel divinely orders your steps, so you will be free from all regrets. **MEDICINE**

16. Also, when you invoke the release of the Spirit of counsel, all wariness, frustrations and regrets come to a final end - "for (His) counsel it shall stand." **MEDICINE**

17. You need the Spirit of counsel to do exploits, because you need His guidance and visions to have manifestations. The Spirit of counsel is the force behind visions in life (Prov. 29: 18). It offers guidance and direction, so that God's purpose for your life is not lost. **MEDICINE**

18. Jesus knew what He came for, but He still enjoyed the ministry of the Spirit of counsel throughout His time here on earth. When He was told that Lazarus was sick, the Bible says, "He abode two days still ill the place where he was" (Jn. 11:6). Then on the third day, He said, "Let us go ..." That was when the Spirit of counsel said to Him, "Move!" If He had moved earlier, Lazarus may not have woken up from the dead. **MEDICINE, DIVINATION**

19. Friend, the Spirit of counsel will always lead you to the region of exploits. How we need that spirit today. King David always received counsel from God before he went forth to any battle; and every counsel from God produced results for him. When you are guided, you are guided into greatness and prominence. Let us lay hold on the ministry of the Spirit of counsel. **DIVINATION**

20. But how can we put this Spirit to work in our live? By constantly inquiring of the Lord before you make any move. Before every move, always ask, "Spirit of God, this is what I'm thinking; but what are You saying?" And the Spirit of God will respond with specific instructions and direction. **DIVINATION**

21. I command the same grace to come upon you, in the precious name of Jesus. **INCANTATION**

22. There is a Spirit of might. By this I mean that inner strength and tireless energy, the kind Jesus possessed. No vision can deliver results without strength, unique strength. You cannot walk in dominion if you are own today and up tomorrow. Paul knew this too well, hence he again prayed this prayer for the Ephesian Church: *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.* Ephesians 3: 14-16 **MEDICINE**

23. You need strength to run. God is going to deliver unusual strength to the end-time Church. Daniel 11:32 says it is those who do know their God that shall be strong and do exploits. You need strength to do exploits; and this strength can only be delivered to you by the Spirit of might. **MEDICINE**

24. As long as the Spirit of might was upon him, nobody could handle him. Receive that Spirit of might now, in Jesus' name! **MEDICINE**

25. Paul stayed in the deep (of the sea) for one whole night! At another time, he was stoned and left for dead. But no sooner had his "killers" turned their backs, than he jerked back to life! The man of war stood up and continued on his mission! Very strange strength - it was the Spirit of might at work. **MEDICINE**

26. Every great accomplishment requires great strength to bring it to pass. Jesus taught for three days at a stretch; He was always on duty, "about my Father's business," yet He never broke down. The Spirit of might was heavy upon His life. **MEDICINE**

27. Revelation is the ability to take delivery of instructions from God, as vision without instruction equals frustration. Knowing where you're going is good, but knowing how to get there is equally important, because you never get to your destination by just knowing where you're going. You also need to know how to get there. **DIVINATION**

28. Please note that the Spirit of knowledge is the same one called the Spirit of revelation in Ephesians 1: 1 7. This Spirit unfolds the mysteries of the kingdom of God. **DIVINATION**

29. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:10, "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon." So we have the power to build on where they stopped. I never saw where Paul breathe into someone, but I caught something brighter than he did - that God breathe into clay, and it became a living being (Gen. 2:7). Operating in this revelation, I met a woman who was suffering from AIDS, in Kampala, Uganda, and I said to her, "Open your mouth!" She did, and I breathe into her mouth and cursed AIDS. I told the people around, "Watch it, she's alive!" **MEDICINE**

30. Again, there was this little girl who hadn't had a bowel movement for five days, and her father was in tears, because her stomach was already protruding. Again, I breathe into her mouth, and few minutes later, she emptied the whole junk inside her into the toilet. Something penetrated the regions of darkness and shattered it! **MEDICINE**

31. A pregnant woman met me and was crying. Hospital report said her baby was breech, and she was due for delivery and was full of agitation. I asked her, "When do you want to have your baby?" And she replied, "I'm already due." I told her to open her mouth, and breathe into her, instructing her to, "Go and have your baby now!" They didn't get home from church before labour started! They had to drive into the nearest hospital. By the time her husband returned with the baby's things, he heard the cry of their newborn baby! **MEDICINE**

32. Revelation is developing life equations from scriptures, for outstanding solutions. It is knowing what God is saying, and putting them together in order to punish the devil and give him a technical knockout! **DIVINATION**

33. Also, please note that no one who enjoys sin can ever have access into the mysteries of the kingdom of God, because they are in parables to them that are without (Mk. 4:11). They will sound as mere stories to those who wallow in sin. So it is important that you stay clean, so that the access remains open to you. **TABOO.**

Analyzing Sermon Nine

Title: Deliverance from Repeated Unpleasant Circumstances and Situations by Pastor Tunde Aremu

Step 3- Labelling the data with the primal religious concepts.

1. There are people that suffer unnecessary hardships, handicaps, misfortunes and attacks in their family or business without any clear explanation as to why those things are happening. They work hard, pray and fast, yet there is no significant result. In cases of couples who are waiting on God for the fruit of the womb, some have gone through every possible medical test and surgery, yet the story is still the same. In some cases, even doctors have confirmed that a couple is medically fit for conception, but nothing happens. To some, contrary to what the Bible says that whatever we put our hands on to do shall prosper, they experience failure in all their business undertakings. They have tried their hands on almost every type of business venture, yet they are still trying to live. In a few cases, some have noticed the same trend in the lives of other members of their family - both immediate and extended. For instance, cases of ladies not getting married early enough, several people not having children after marriage, some marry after they have had children out of wedlock, some marry and divorce no matter how hard they try to save the marriage, a constant record of failure in examinations in spite of hard work, the list is endless. Some of these examples and several others suggest that witches or wizards or a curse is operating. **ANIMISM, MEDICINE**

2. Jesus told the unbelievers that they are of their father, the devil (John 8: 44). Apostle Paul said, the devil perfects his works in the children of disobedience, (Ephesians 2: 2). Under pressure, our loved ones who are unbelievers can obey their father, the devil, despite the fact that they care so much for us. Of a truth, the days are evil. *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassion fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22, 24)* **MEDICINE**

3. Please do not get me wrong. The fact that someone is not born again does not mean he is a witch or wizard. **ANIMISM**

4. I decree destruction upon every household enemy that is resisting my breakthrough in the name of Jesus. **INCANTATION**

5. Every spirit of disobedience and rebellion in my life, I torment you out by fire in the name of Jesus. (Deuteronomy 15:5). **ANIMATISM**

6. I command that any part of my body in the custody of my enemy be-released now in the name of Jesus. **INCANTATION**

7. Every satanic power binding me with sicknesses and diseases, I overcome you by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 12: 11). You spirit of hardship, loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus. Let every unseen hand working evil in my life wither in the name of Jesus. I frustrate every power frustrating my life by fire in the name of Jesus. I reject every spirit of failure in every area of my life and family in the name of Jesus. I reject, bind and cast out every spirit of acute poverty in my life in the name of Jesus. You that demon of Mammon, loose your

hold upon my life in the name of Jesus. I reject and cast out the spirit of Asthma in the name of Jesus. **ANIMATISM, INCANTATION**

8. I reject you spirit of unforgiveness in my life and I command you to come out of me in the name of Jesus. I reject you, spirit of bitterness, loose your hold of my life in the name of Jesus. I challenge every strongman of anger in my life by fire, loose your hold of my life in the name of Jesus. You spirit of lust and immorality, come out of my life now in the name of Jesus. I command every lying spirit to come out of my life in the name of Jesus. **ANIMATISM, INCANTATION**

9. You deaf and dumb demon, jump out of my life by fire in the name of Jesus and come back no more in Jesus' name. I reject every spirit of stealing in my life (conscious and unconscious). Come out of my life by fire in the name of Jesus. I reject every spirit of blindness (physical and spiritual blindness) in my life; be flushed out by fire in the in the name of Jesus. Let every evil root of poverty be destroyed out of my life in the name of Jesus. Any problem arranged for the future for me, receive total destruction in Jesus' name. Human beings have the will to either accept a situation, if it is good, or reject it, if it is bad. The things we want to reject are usually dealt with in deliverance ministrations. **ANIMATISM, INCANTATION**

10. *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. (3 John 2) But thou shall remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. (Deuteronomy 8:18)* Throughout the Bible, God never promised his children poverty or a life of suffering at any time, as long as we obey His word. In fact, He promised that poverty will be removed from us. *However, there should be no poor among you, for in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you. (Deuteronomy 15:4 - NIV)* Now, since these passages are in the Bible, why should acute poverty and suffering be among God's people? Why do Christians lose all their capital in business, their jobs find it difficult to pay rent or their children's school fees? Many Christians cannot even boast of eating balanced diets. Many live on charity. For how long shall all these be? God's promises are not served on a platter of gold. **MAGIC**

11. If you want to live in abundant prosperity, you have to obey God in all things. If you disobey God, you automatically obey the devil and in a way acknowledge him as your master and you have given him the licence to lead you on. And what does the devil have to offer you? Destruction (John 10: 10a) **TABOO**

12. Disobedience to God as I have said can open a door to the devil, thus inviting the spirit of mammon and the spirit of poverty. They operate in several ways. In some cases the people concerned will experience itching sensation on their palm when the devil is stealing their money. Some people experience physical dis-appearance of their money; some cannot give an account of how or on what their money was spent while some realise that it takes a lot of effort and time on their part to make money. To some others still, they always have mounting problems that always make them live a life of continual insufficiency. **TABOO**

13. When a case transcends all medical efforts, going to Britain, United States or Germany to see another experienced medical specialist is not the answer. The satanic powers and principalities behind that case must be cast out. Much praying, speaking in tongues, fasting and making positive confessions are all temporary measures. Jesus removes such cases totally during deliverance ministrations. **MEDICINE**

14. Between the 5th and 8th of March, 1995, I was preaching at a meeting in Abuja. It was a programme organised by the First Baptist Church, Garki. When I finished preaching, I told the brethren to pray targeted, and specific spiritual warfare prayers, and the atmosphere changed. The brethren prayed like their lives depended on it, and they got their desired results. There were lots of testimonies to the glory of God. Jesus Himself said, *And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. (Matthew 11:12)* **INCANTATION**

15. We have to be violent and specific when we pray against the host of hell. This is called balanced deliverance prayer. This balanced deliverance prayer of being violent, and praying targeted, strategic and specific prayer, works faster than all methods known today. From experience, once the individual is fully fired by the word of God, and fully understands the authority he has as a believer, the balanced deliverance prayer will just cut across the soul and marrow of any demonic affliction. **INCANTATION**

16. Knowledge has a major role to play when we want to receive our blessings from God. One lady in the meeting started shouting, "Come out. You are an idiot. No compromise at all. No dialogue." It was so loud that in a congregation of about 800 people her voice was heard, and I was forced to look towards her directly. She ran around, shouting and pointing to an object or somebody which she alone saw. **INCANTATION**

17. After the prayers, I asked for testimonies. The lady was the first to run forward. She said, "I have suffered from asthma for 21 years. In every prayer meeting or fellowship, I have prayed against it. But tonight, I got to understand who I am and how I can deal with the devil. As I opened my mouth to say, you asthma, come out in Jesus' name, somebody jumped out of me and said, "Please let's negotiate. Let's settle." That was why I started shouting at him and pursuing him and the moment he disappeared, I got my total healing." That testimony shook all of us. Asthma, a spirit being? Oh yes! **ANIMISM**

18. When the Jews accused him of healing on a Sabbath day, He said, *And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day? (Luke 13: 16)*. Satan binds people with sicknesses and diseases, and in some cases, leaves a demon in that person to torment him or in some other cases, he attacks from outside and afflicts. **ANIMISM**

19. Fourteen years ago, 1981, I was preaching in a crusade on the subject, "With God all things are possible". I had hardly finished preaching when an elderly woman brought one girl to me for prayers. This woman said, "This girl is deaf. You said, God can do anything, he can solve any problem and heal any sickness." I could not deny this because I had just finished preaching that message. Fear almost gripped me. It was about 2 years in the Lord. Prior to this time, I had

seen God heal headache, stomach-ache, etc., but no deaf, dumb or blind person had ever been healed in my meeting. How do I go about it? I was still at a loss, when the Holy Spirit spoke quietly in my heart, "Cast out deaf spirits." That was the first time in my life that I knew that whatever sickness or symptom the devil manifests is the demon's name. So, there are spirits of anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, immorality, lying, stealing, prayerlessness, blindness, dumbness, poverty, etc. I spoke out, with my eyes closed, "You deaf demons, come out of her and enter her no more in Jesus' name." Immediately I heard a sound as if somebody felt I opened my eyes only to see her on the floor. I had never seen, heard nor been told that people fall under the anointing. If it were now, I would have left her on the floor until she regains her consciousness. But I quickly carried her up and asked, "What happened to you?" She replied, "When you spoke that command, I saw one man with a sword coming towards me and I fell. When I fell, five black creatures ran out of me and immediately, my ears opened." **ANIMISM**

20. I learnt another lesson, that, the deliverance minister should not close his eyes when ministering deliverance. You are not praying to the devil, you are commanding him to leave. **MAGIC**

21. Every power of poverty, jump out of my life in Jesus' name. Mammon, I disgrace you out of my life in Jesus' name. I fill every hole dug in my palm by demons with the blood of Jesus mingled with the fire of God. **ANIMATISM**

Analyzing Sermon Ten

Title: Deliverance From Occult Practices by Pastor Mrs. Toyin Okehi

Step 3- Labelling the data with the primal religious concepts

When such people repent and become born again, it is not sufficient for them to only invite Jesus into their lives but also to break every link and contact they had had with the devil. **INITIATION**

Most Muslims have an anti-Christ demon. So if an individual or his parents have been Muslims before, they may have a demon of anti-Christ by virtue of their former religion. With the activities of that demon, they just hate Christianity with passion. When anybody repents from following Islam, he or she needs deliverance. Whether he has been a Christian for a long time or not, as long as he has not formally renounced that demon and been ministered to, it sometimes affects his relationship with God. **INITIATION**

I reject every anti-Christ demon in my life, and I command you to come out now in the name of Jesus. Any evil thing planted in my life by the spirit of antichrist, loose your hold and come out in the name of Jesus. I flush my conscience of all evil knowledge I had about Christ by the blood of Jesus, in the name of Jesus. I reject and break every covenant with the spirit of anti-Christ and its works in the name of Jesus. **INITIATION, INCANTATION**

All those who have served demons at any time as priests or priestesses need serious deliverance after they receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. Burning the shrine charms etc., although shows a genuine, willingness to serve the Lord, but the things that demons have

planted in the body of the person, the satanic powers and the authority the person had in the spirit realm, should be destroyed. **INITIATION**

I renounce and nullify my priesthood to any strange god or Baal, in the name of Jesus. I flush out by the blood everything working contrary to the love of God in my life by the blood of Jesus. I destroy every work of Baal in my life by fire in Jesus' name. I renounce every authority given to me against the will of God by the blood of Jesus. Jesus is my authority. Every position that is exalting itself against the knowledge of God I relinquish you in the mighty name of Jesus. Ecclesiastes 8:4. I apply the blood of Jesus to my foundations and flush out evil mark working against me. I blot out very effect of satanic marks in my foundation by the blood of Jesus.

INITIATION, INCANTATION

Many Christians were ignorantly dedicated to the devil when they were born. This is apparent in the type of names some people bear, names ascribing praises or glory to the devil and his works. Some have marks on their faces and incisions on every part of their body. All such people dedicated, to the devil may find things extremely difficult unless they go for deliverance.

INITIATION, TOTEMISM

All the children of a former or present priest or priestess of the devil have been dedicated to the devil. It is like what obtains in Christendom when a child is dedicated in the church at the end of 40 days. For instance, in 1991 when my wife was pregnant, I laid hands on her tummy regularly and dedicated the twins unto God. I did this regularly until they were born. When they were eventually born, I laid hands on them; spoke in tongues, prophesied over them and again decreed that they should be filled with the Holy Spirit. After 30 days, we took them to our church and our Pastor officially dedicated them to God. A child dedicated to God this way can never be compared with the one dedicated to the devil. **INITIATION, RITES**

Just like I dedicated my twins to God, majority of juju priests or priestesses if not all, dedicate their own children to their own gods in whom they believe. All such children dedicated to the devil have a measure of satanic presence which is supposed to guide and protect them just as the Holy Spirit does for those dedicated unto the Almighty God. **INITIATION**

When such potential satanic agents turn to God for salvation, they must consciously renounce these demons if they want to experience progress in their lives. If they don't and they eventually pass on, they will still go to heaven, but the devilish covenants and things deposited in them, could delay their miracles and make things very tight and difficult for them while on earth. **INITIATION**

I reject every evil dedication of my life in the name of Jesus. Every mark of incision (occultic or satanic), be erased by the blood of Jesus in Jesus' name. I challenge every monitoring spirit assigned against my life by fire in the name of Jesus. I rededicate my life to the Lord God in the name of Jesus. I terminate every satanic rite, I renounce your effect and break your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus. **INITIATION, INCANTATION**

Each time we are to hold our night vigils (second and last Fridays of the month in Lagos and Ibadan respectively), we usually fast and pray, and in most cases sanctify the hall of meeting,

and pray over each bench or chair that whoever comes to the meeting would receive a measure of God's touch and miracle. Many have come back to testify that the moment they entered the hall of meeting, their sicknesses or problems disappeared. This is done in most Churches and Ministries. **ANIMISM, INCANTATION**

In the same vein, juju priests and priestesses usually prepare themselves before their god; they arm themselves with incantations to release on their clients. A specific demon called Baal follows such people home to ensure that the agreement signed in the priest's shrine holds. When anybody decides to follow Jesus, it is mandatory to go for deliverance to be free from all such contaminations and get purified. Even if that agreement was signed 50 years ago, it makes no difference. There are trillions of demons in existence so several demons can be assigned to follow an individual for life and the devil will see to it that this work lacks no demonic backing. So everyone who has been to juju houses need to be delivered from Baal demons.

INITIATION, ANIMISM

I revoke every satanic incantation working against my life in the name of Jesus. I challenge the activities of Baal spirit in my life by fire in the name of Jesus. You Belial spirit and you associate, loose your hold upon my life in the name of Jesus. I clear off every evil cloud following after my life by fire in the name of Jesus. I reject and break every blood covenant existing between me and demons through incision by the blood of Jesus. **INITIATION, INCANTATION**

I reject every occultic material in my life and I destroy you by fire in the name of Jesus. I renounce my membership of any occultic group (mention the name) I belong to in the name of Jesus. I redeem my life from the grip of every occultic power by the blood of Jesus in the name of Jesus. Any blood covenant between me and any agent of the devil, break now by the blood of Jesus (Isaiah 28: 18). I release myself from every covenant working against my breakthrough in Jesus' name (Isaiah 28:18). Any abnormality programmed into my spirit, soul and body through evil covenants, be evacuated by the blood of Jesus. I reject and renounce membership of any group I had been involved within the past with the blood of Jesus. Blood of Jesus, speak protection on my behalf (Revelation 12: 11). **INITIATION, INCANTATION**

The reason these threats must be neutralised by fervent prayers is that anyone who has ever been a member of an occult church unknowingly enters into satanic covenant and a doorway is therefore opened for baal and religious demons to enter. **INITIATION**

Also in the case of a former member who has undertaken the more serious covenant of bathing in the river, during deliverance ministrations, the person should be cleansed with the Blood of Jesus. He should also say, "I cleanse myself externally by bathing with the Blood of Jesus Christ," there is no ointment, power or principality that can resist the power in the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. The Blood of Jesus Christ will neutralise and destroy all the effects of poisons taken in these occult churches. The word of God says, *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Revelation 12:11) Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. (Hebrews 13:12)* **INITIATION, INCANTATION**

Prayer Points:

I frustrate the activities of religious spirits in my life in the name of Jesus. I reject every satanic anointing upon my life, and I command you to dry up in the name of Jesus. Every incense I burnt (or the one that was burnt on my behalf) standing against me in the heavens, be dismantled by fire in the name of Jesus. I declare every doorway opened to Baal or religious spirits in my life, closed by the blood of Jesus. I withdraw all my virtue locked up in the water through evil baths by the wind of the Holy Ghost in Jesus' name. Every satanic object moving in my body, be melted by fire and come out now in the name of Jesus. I release myself from every evil sacrifice written against my name (Isaiah 13, 30:7, 22). **INCANTATION, ANIMISM**

I drink the blood of Jesus and swallow the fire of God to purge my system. **INCANTATION, ANIMISM, MEDICINE**

I revoke every evil decree upon my life and family by the blood of Jesus (Isaiah 10: 1). You mountain of evil covenants and curses, be made plain by the power of the Holy Ghost (Zechariah 4:7). I will not return to my vomit in the mighty name of Jesus (Proverbs 26: 11, 2 Peter 2:22). I overcome every evil by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 12: 11). **INCANTATION, ANIMISM, MEDICINE**

If usually, or once in a while you hear voices telling you strange things, or perhaps you see strange beings talking to you or you discuss with them or with those you know have died, it means you need urgent deliverance ministrations. Some people discuss with these beings in their subconscious while some "sleep-talk" i.e. they talk in their dreams. And when they wake up, they are as stupefied as the people who heard them speaking, when confronted with the facts. **ANIMISM**

As I counselled this man, I got to the root of the problem. He had a friend who was a great footballer like him. They had an accident on their way from a football session in Kaduna, and this friend died. Since-then, his dead friend started appearing to him, both in his dreams and in the physical. Anytime this dead friend comes, he will lose his physical senses and do anything he says or wants until he goes. After the counselling session, I led him to Christ and we started deliverance ministrations proper: As we were binding the demons influencing him, he started saying to nobody in particular, "Don't go please, come, come." After the prayer, we asked him who he was talking to, and he said it was his friend. He accused him of wickedness saying he brought him to a place where he could be destroyed. **ANIMISM**

Prayer Points:

I cut off every strange line of communication with demons and all their associates to my life in the name of Jesus. I break every evil link with the spirit of the dead in the name of Jesus. **INCANTATION, ANIMISM**

Summary of Elements of Primal Religion in the Ten Sermons

Faith Gospel Paradigm	No. Of Primal Elements of Religion	Demon Possession Paradigm	No. Of Primal Elements of Religion
Sermon 1 Prophetic Prayer Works by Pastor Moses Olanrewaju Aransiola	20	Sermon 2 Ancient Ancestral Covenants and Strategic Warfare by Prophet (Dr.) Samson Ayorinde	20
Sermon 7 Believer's Power Instrument by Bishop David Oyedepo	77	Sermon 3 Dealing with Territorial Strongholds by Pastor Sola Folaranmi	41
Sermon 8 The Holy Spirit Power by Pastor Kehinde Adalokun	38	Sermon 4 Release from Curses by Pastor Sola Akorede	70
		Sermon 5 Deliverance from Evil Altar by Revd. Dr. D. K. Olukoya	70
		Sermon 6 The Trap of Blood Covenant by Pastor Isaiah Olatunji	46
		Sermon 9 Deliverance from Repeated Unpleasant Circumstances and Situations by Pastor Tunde Aremu	25
		Sermon 10 Deliverance From Occult Practices by Pastor Mrs. Toyin Okehi	38
TOTAL	155	TOTAL	247