

Title Page

**INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY IN EZEKIEL 18:1-4
AND BLAME GAME AMONG NIGERIANS**

BY

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A PROJECT

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Approval Page

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Dedication

This project report is dedicated

To

My mother Betinah Onah and my siblings

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Abstract

This study examines blame game among Nigerians in the light of individual and collective responsibility in Ezekiel 18:1-4. The idea of blaming others for all the misfortune of today is a problem of a great concern to keen observers as it was to prophet Ezekiel during Israel's exile. Hence, it becomes a thing of concern to every well meaning Nigerian as it was to prophet Ezekiel during his time as to why people always shy away from accepting responsibilities when things go contrary to the anticipated result. Most people point accusing fingers at others without noticing that the remaining fingers are pointing back at them. The present political administration in Nigeria (especially the presidency) has kept heaping blame on the past administrations without making much effort to make a difference. The bulk of blame game in Nigeria has brought set back in almost if not all sectors of the country. Hence the researcher thought it wise to deploy Ezekiel 18:1-4 in tackling the menace of blame game in Nigeria. The researcher adopted Historical-Critical Method. Form Criticism which is an aspect of Historical-Critical Method was specifically used in this research work. The research work revealed the attitude of most Nigerians toward individual responsibility. It is obvious that in Nigeria, most Nigerians understanding of individual and collective responsibility is synonymous with that of the Israelite nation of Ezekiel's time which depicts irresponsibility and shifting of blames to previous generations because of their belief in inherited punishment. Every Nigerian should understand that their destiny is in their own hands and thus strive to ensure that they do not destroy it. Every elected leader should desist from continually blaming past leaders but should take responsibility during their era of government.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A close look at what is going on in Nigerian society today will reveal to every good observer that just like in the days of Prophet Ezekiel, emphasis is being laid on collective responsibility against individual responsibility. During Prophet Ezekiel's days he warned, that the proverb which the Israelite of his days had composed should not be used in the land of Israel again. The proverb goes thus; "the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge," (Ezekiel 18:2).

It is obvious that naturally, people like to be blameless before their fellow human beings and even before God. Following this, the Jews try to avoid blame by all means even to the extent of shifting their responsibilities (blame) to other people close to them. Though it did not start today neither did it start with the exiles of Ezekiel's time, it is as old as the creation of man, in the garden of Eden when God inquired from Adam whether he ate the forbidden fruit, instead of saying "yes or I am sorry." He said "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." (Gen.3:11-12). In this case, Adam defended himself by shifting the blame to God and the woman. It was in view of this that Ezikpe (2005) noted that "people like to take the praises and not the blames, to take the gains and not the pains, they refuse to accept that in life there must be ups and downs ...".(p.1)

However, the people of Prophet Ezekiel's days were not without a reason for

having such belief that they are suffering for the sins of their fathers and forefathers. The fact that the Law of Moses clearly stated that God will visit the sins of the fathers on their children to the third and fourth generations, was cultivated and deeply rooted in their hearts. Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002) vividly put it thus;

The idea of continuing responsibility for ancestral sins is a deeply rooted belief inherited from the Ten Commandments at Sinai "I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generations of those who hate me'(Ex. 20:5). P.20

Just like Israelites of Prophet Ezekiel's time, an intensive study and follow up of what is happening in the Nigerian political, social and economic sector depict a kind of cowardice that blames the governments and people of yester years for the today's social disorder without reflecting on how the present generation had individually contributed to today's problem. Commenting on this attitude, Jon (1994) stated thus:

Yes, they agreed that Manasseh had been a very wicked king and had led the Israelite into the worst kinds of idolatry (collective responsibility). What they fail to realize was that they too had many shortcomings certainly not to the same extent as Manasseh, but things in their own lives need correcting. (para. 4)

But without noticing that there are shortcomings in this present generation to correct, they sing the song. According to Jon 1994 they say "Oh! What misdeeds the

previous generation did to bring us to such. It is all their fault, of course, that we are reeling from the up heavals that plague our nation. It is not our fault! Is it?" (para.3). In the same way, most Nigerians are crying out that what they are suffering today was caused by the past generations without reflecting on their own short comings. For instance, the current president of Nigeria is still blaming his inability to perform credibly well on the past administration after three years in (power) government office. In confirmation of this, Fabiyi, Akinkuotu and Aluko lament that; "Buhari had done nothing but had been giving excuses in the last three years," adding that his penchant for blaming his predecessor was no longer amusing to Nigerians. In line with this, Eweka (2017, para1) comments thus;

His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, Vice President Yemi Osibanjo and their Surrogates continue to heap the blame on former President Goodluck Jonathan for the economic downturn in the country today. They keep telling us that President Jonathan failed to efficiently manage proceeds from higher oil price and left an empty treasury, the blame game need to stop.

Sincerely speaking the blame game need to stop for the country to move forward, the progress of the country is of paramount importance irrespective of whatever the past administration had done.

1.2 Statement of Problem

In the midst of collective (social) responsibility, there are individual responsibilities. The idea of blaming others for all the misfortune of today is a problem of great concern to keen observers as it was to prophet Ezekiel during

Israel's exile. The people of Israel had the belief that it was as a result of their father's sins that the city of Jerusalem was destroyed and they suffered in exile. They thought, there was nothing they could do to effect a positive change on their situation. This same attitude made them to say that "the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezekiel 18:2).

Following the above situation, a critical analysis of what is going on in Nigerian society today, will reveal to every good observer that just like the Israelite of Ezekiel's time, a good number of people in Nigeria do not by any means like to associate themselves with failure even when they have failed to perform their individual responsibilities so as to achieve success. When things go wrong, people blame one another or even their fathers or forefathers for being the cause of their present day misfortune.

Hence, it becomes a thing of concern to every well meaning Nigerian as it was to prophet Ezekiel during his time as to why people always shy away from accepting responsibilities when things go contrary to the anticipated. Most people point an accusing finger at others without noticing that the remaining four fingers are pointing back at them. For instance, people had said that the government does not take care of the littered environment, but this same category of people throw refuse on the road side from their vehicle while travelling on the road. Some others blame past administrations in Nigeria for having nurtured corruption in Nigeria, while they still perpetrate corruption in their respective places of work today. Many Nigerians today are of the belief that what they are suffering at present was caused

by their fathers and yester years leaders; without reflecting on their own misconduct.

The problem which this study explores is the examination and evaluation of individual responsibilities in the midst of collective responsibility among the Nigerian leaders and the lead.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to examine the individual and collective responsibility in Ezekiel 18:1-4 and blame game among the Nigerian leaders and the lead. The specific purposes of the study are hereunder listed.

It is the aim of this research work to investigate the factors that motivated prophet Ezekiel to preach/emphasize the doctrine of individual responsibility, and narrowing it down to the Nigerian context to know how this doctrine will be of need in correcting the negative assumptions Nigerians hold against the country as a result of the belief that Nigeria has been wrecked by people of yester years, and therefore nothing good can come out of Nigeria. Hence, without making any individual effort to correct the problem being caused by the present generation.

The study aims at systematically bringing out the methods employed by prophet Ezekiel in conveying his message of individual responsibilities to the people of his days and to also apply it to Nigerian collective reasonability in the present society.

Finally, it is the objective of this study to teach Nigerian the importance of tracing any problem of theirs, first from themselves before linking it to any other

person or the society at large.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is very important to the present day Nigerian society in the following ways:

It is only when Nigerians come to accept the idea of individual responsibility that Nigerian and Nigeria as a country will be able to subdue the spirit of irresponsibility and "it is their fault attitude" which has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerians as a result of the belief in inherited punishment.

It will help people to understand that their destiny is in their own hands and thus strive to ensure that they do not destroy it. This will foster the spirit of self examination and hard work which seems to have been lost among Nigerians. It is equally meant to prove to Nigerians that through individual responsibility, an effective collective responsibility which will restore the glory of the nation can be achieved.

The study is also of immense importance to Nigerians who we have elected to serve in places of authority, so as not to take advantage of their positions to inflict poverty on the masses by siphoning public funds, knowing that they will be held responsible for their deeds since Nigerians have come to the knowledge of what it means to be individually responsible for one's deed. Hence, hiding under their predecessors' misconduct to perpetrate evil will no longer work for them.

The study can be of much value to the educational sector, in the sense that it will help students to realize that they are responsible for whichever way they

choose to utilize their time and day, thereby fostering a more quality scholarship in our society.

Finally, this study is focused on the necessity of discouraging fatalism and irresponsibility among Nigerians.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The book of Ezekiel is not the only book, neither is it the first book to speak on individual responsibility in the Old Testament, nor the only book that said something about the saying which the Israelite of his days believed in, which says that; "the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002, p.3) affirm thus: "that this was a common proverb in ancient Israel around this time is evidenced by Jeremiah's reference to it (Jer. 31:29)."

However, the choice of Ezekiel for this study is due to his elaborate emphasis on individual responsibility more than any other person/book. Furthermore, the scope of the study is not referring to the entire book of Ezekiel or every teaching of his; it is interested in the doctrine of individual responsibility which Ezekiel used in Ez. 18:2ff to address the persistent problem of that time.

Relating the scope to the Nigerian context it centres on the idea of shifting our responsibilities to other people around us, especially on the area of putting blames on the government and the past administrators for the poor state of Nigeria while we still perpetrate corruption and embezzlement of funds in our own little ways.

It will be wise to devote time and energy to this particular doctrine of

individual responsibility instead of every teaching of Ezekiel in order to confront the problem of irresponsibility among Nigerians, even in the midst of collective responsibilities.

1.6 Methodology

The researcher adopted Historical- Critical Method. Form Criticism which is an aspect of Historical- critical method was specifically used in this research work. It helps the researcher get to the meaning and approach in the interpretation of the Scripture. Obiorah, (2015, p.89) maintains that:

Historical-Critical method mainly follows what is called *diachronic* approach. The term diachronic is derived from the Greek words *dia* (through) and *chronos* (time). Diachronic pertains to an approach to the understanding of a reality (text or event) according to which this reality is understood on the basis of all the moments that preceded it. It has to do with the historical development of a text.

However, she further states that since this method is often incomplete, a *synchronic* approach complements it. It describes a text, as the text exists in its present form.

Historical-Critical method takes cognizance of the historical development of the biblical texts which have diverse audiences in the course of time. It also takes into consideration the modern readers of the bible who are thousands of years apart from these texts.

Furthermore, Form criticism is one of the aspects of Historical- Critical method. It seeks to identify literary genre (*Gattung*) and the social milieu or Setting-in-Life (*Sitz-im-Leben*) that gave rise to them, (Obiorah, 2015).

The reason for employing this approach in this research work is worth mentioning.

Firstly, the Historical- Critical Method was applied because the period between Ezekiel's days which dates back to around 597BC and the present day Nigerian society runs through history.

Secondly, the form criticism is deployed in this study to bring out what the Israelites thought and believe in respect to individual and collective responsibility, also the life situation (*Sitz-im-Leben*) prevalent in their time that made them to have such thought. Hence, narrowing it down to Nigerian contemporary society in a view to note how the same belief had affected Nigerian individually and the society at large is of paramount important.

The method used in collecting data in this research work is secondary method of data collection. This includes sources from the internet, newspaper, articles, magazine and books.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The following key terms are defined for a proper understanding.

- i. **Individual:** One person, considered separately from the group or society that one lives in. According to *Chambers Concise Dictionary* (2009) it means "intended or relating to a single person or thing." Secondly, it explained that it is "particular to one person's unique qualities or characteristics." Furthermore, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines individual thus, considered separately rather than as part of group. Typical of one particular person or thing in a way that is different from

others. The word 'individual' was used in the above context in this research work.

- ii. **Collective:** Hornby (2010) define collective as "belonging to or involving all the members of a group." It also defines it as "(something) done or shared by all members of a group of people, involving a whole group or society: collective leadership/decision-making/responsibility". In this work, it was used to mean something done or shared directly or indirectly by a group.
- iii. **Responsibility:** A duty to be in charge of or look after something so that you make decisions and can be blamed if something bad happens. *Chambers Concise Dictionary* defines it as "the state of being or having important duties, or state of being responsible". It was deployed in this same context in this work.
- iv. **Blame:** saying or thinking that someone or something is responsible for something bad that happened. According to Hornby (2010), it is the "responsibility for doing something badly or wrongly; saying that somebody is responsible for something," p.140
- v. **Game:** A type of activity that people do to have fun. It equally implies an activity or a sport with rules in which people or teams compete against each other. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines it as "activity engaged in for diversion or amusement. A procedure or strategy for gaining an end." Furthermore, it defines it as "an illegal or shady scheme or maneuver." The later definition vividly brought out the context in which it was applied in this work.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Corporate Responsibility in the Old Testament and among the Jews.

The Old Testament is the first thirty nine books of the bible. It is different from the New Testament which is the remaining twenty seven (27) books of the Bible. The view which the people that lived within the period had concerning corporate personality differs from what the people of New Testament and the present generation understands corporate personality to be.

According to Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002, p.10),

The reader of the Old Testament cannot help being struck by the importance attached in ancient Israel to the social group or community. The important unit when dealing with morality, law and religion in the Old Testament often seems to be not so much the individual as the group to which he belongs. The Israelite looks to his family as the group to which he belongs.

A Jew sees his nuclear family as fully part of the extended family and the extended family as his own family. This assertion is more obvious in a case where the continuation of a family name is threatened, for instance Deut. 25:6 explains that when a man dies and leaves behind a childless widow, the man's brother was expected to marry her, and the first son of this union was to succeed the name of the dead brother, so that the name of the dead man may not be blotted out of Israel.

The Jews had the belief that they are community of one entity, which

implies that though they are different individuals they are one and united. In other words, what affects one person among them affects the entire community. This means that corporate personality therefore implies the treatment of the family, the clan, or the nation as the unit in place of the individual (Porter, 1966). This explains the reason why the community or group as a whole is deemed to be tainted by and answerable for the sins of any particular member. Also; Ejim, (2006) notes that; “at a glance, it would seem that the Bible presents two directly opposing views regarding generational transfer of responsibilities.” (p.50). As Obodo (2006) observes, the Old Testament is replete with symbolism of curses and divine terror. Njoku (1993) also expresses a similar view pointing out passages like Exodus 20:5 which states that if the Israelites should make idols or worship them, God being a jealous God, would visit the iniquity of their father upon the children even to the third and fourth generations. Very similar injunctions are repeated in other passages such as Exodus 34:7, Numbers 14:18 and Deuteronomy 5:9. In Psalm 51:5, David confessed that he was shaped in iniquity and conceived in sin. This also implies that he is a partaker in the sins of his progenitors and so needed to begin his confession from that point. Ozoko (2009) also points out Lamentations 5:7 where the children of Israel complained that their fathers have sinned and are gone while they (the children) now bore the consequences of their iniquities. Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002) state that "such a possibility rests on the notion that the group, whatever it is, forms a 'psychical whole'. It has a common soul or personality, or however one attempts to render the Hebrew-nephesh, of which the soul or personality of

individual member of the group forms part." (p.13)

Having known this, it becomes imperative to differentiate the role of the individual personality and the corporate personality in the Old Testament, but it remains a single fact that their respective roles are closely interwoven that they can hardly exist independently. According to Ezikpe (2005), "in the Old Testament, one frequently sees that an individual can represent the whole covenant society of Israel or vice versa." (p.33) The community is addressed as an individual who stands in direct personal relation to God (Anderson, 1992). A good example of everything said above is the case of Abraham, who was in the main sense an individual, but biographically represented the whole community of which he is the ancestor. Abraham the man and Abraham the community are inseparably fused in psychic unity. So when Yahweh spoke to Abraham, the community of Israel in its totality was involved in the call and the promises. In Abraham, Israel sees its life reflected, for the father lives on in his sons, the 'one' includes the 'many' in a spiritual unity that binds all generations together. Therefore, secondly Isaiah exhorts Israel to turn to her ancestors in whom the contemporary meaning of her history is represented.

Furthermore, the same matter can be viewed from another angle, the community of Israel is often personalized. A good example of this, is the case of Gomer, prophet Hosea's wife who abandoned her husband and took to adultery, and thus was used to represent the entire community of Israel that abandoned Yahewh (her husband) and took to idolatry (Hosea 1:2ff). Yahweh does not deal with a collection of few individuals but with a people, bound so closely together by

a common history and single covenant obligation that Israel is addressed in the dialogue of "I and thou." However, the most individualized images are applied to the community; a son in relation to his father, a wife in relation to her husband, a servant in relation to his Lord. In Isaiah 46:3-4 and 54:4-8 the Lord says

Hearken to me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly,...., even I will carry and will deliver you For your maker is your husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called. For the Lord has called *you* as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit and a wife of youth, when you were refused,

This can be seen as a good example of this personalized imagery. In other words, the community is considered as an individual. This explains the confusing way in which the use of singular and plural verbs and pronouns continuously interchange. For instance, in Hosea 2, Yahweh begins by addressing Israel in the singular; I loved him... I called him my son. But in the very next line the language suddenly changed to plural; the more I called them, the more they went from me'. On this, however, it is unnecessary and futile to determine between an individual and a corporate interpretation of the servant of Yahweh for both are true to the Israelites sense of community (Anderson, 1992).

Nevertheless, Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002) state that "the Old Testament faith lays great emphasis not only on the group but also the clan, the tribe, and ultimately the nation which are all of fundamental importance both

religious and morally." (p.10). Hence looking at it from Drane's view as quoted in Okwueze and Ugwueye, that the covenant itself is a relationship between God and the whole people of Israel, and both salvation and judgment are corporate experiences. The processes of justice also take account of this corporate personality. The prophets of Yahweh were seen many times laying emphasis on corporate responsibility, pronouncing judgment on the whole nation because of the wrongs of a group.

Owing to this, Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002) state that; "This same connection between the experience of an individual and the state of the community also appears in the Psalms. Here there is an inconsistency in the use of the singular and plural. For example, in Psalm 44, we read in verse 4 "thou art my king and similarly in verse 6, for not in my bow do I trust, and yet in verse 5 we read, through thee we push down our foes, and again in verse 7, thou has saved us from our foes." (p.11-12)

Following this Ezikpe (2005) also note that "this concept of corporate personality in Israel is not only on good tiding, they equally carry the notion along even when things were going amiss." (p.33). They believed that when a finger touches oil, it soils the whole hand, that is to say that sin committed by an individual could lead to the punishment of the whole community. Equally, all the affliction befalling man today are the consequences of the sin committed by Adam. Little wonder they were familiar with the proverb, "the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge (Ezek. 18:2), meaning

that the children suffer the consequences of the sins committed by their fathers, though they (the children) were not the culprits of what they suffer. One tends to ask where this conception about inherited guilt might have come from; it could be traced back to the Decalogue, as recorded in Ex. 20:4-6. According to Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002), "the concept of continuing responsibility for ancestral sins is a deeply-rooted belief inherited from the ten commandments a Sinai I the Lord your God am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me". (Ex.20:5). And again it had been part of Ezekiel's early message that the sufferings of the exile could be traced back to the persistent rebellion, idolatry and unfaithfulness on the part of previous generations of Israelites, (Ugwueye 1995).

The injunction depicts Israel as being monotheistic in nature and that God reacts in jealousy against both idolatry and disobedience of any kind on the part of his people (Black 1986, p.226). The punishment of the wicked and their children to many Old Testament writers is the direct opposite of the blessing of the righteous, which were thought to be long-life, many children and their memory preserved in Israel Hinson in Ezikpe (2005). The people of the Old Testament had no clear idea of life after death and thereby believed that the punishment of the wicked must take place in his life, that is why they were of the view that the wicked and their children should not be kept alive, but die with their evil act so that their memory will perish and nobody will know their names. This punishment had been carried out on people as recorded in the Bible. For example is Joshua 7:24-25, it is indicated that Achan committed a crime for

which he should have borne the consequences alone, but he was punished with his children who were innocent of the crime. This was done as a result of the belief that by so doing the wicked character of the man in question that may have been inherited by his children, which might cause them trouble in future, might be eradicated. In other words, they were afraid of the tendency of the children of a wicked man turning to be as wicked as their father.

The Christian Jew (especially the early disciples) had the same understanding. In the book of John 9:2, the disciples asked Jesus "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" The disciples were however assuming that either the man or his parents must have sinned for him to I have been born blind (Carson, 1994, p.1045).

Through the rabbinic sources, we repeatedly hear echoes of the perceived need for Jewish solidarity. In *Pirkei Avot* (Rabbinic writing), the central ethical section of the *Mishnah*, for example, we hear: Do not separate yourself from the community Pirkei Avot 2:4 (Rabbinic writing), in another occasion it was said in the Babylonian Talmud the Jews are told: "when the community is in trouble, a person should not say I will go into my house and eat and drink and be at peace with myself."

In the midrashic work, *Vayika Raba* (Rabbinic writing), we hear the following well known parable. Some people were sitting in a ship when one of them took a drill and began to bore a hole under his seat. The other passengers protested 'what are you doing?' he said to them, "what has it got to do with you?"

Am I not boring the hole under my own seat?' They answered him, "But the water will come in and drown us all." Such can be compared with the fate of the Jews on issues pertaining to sin: one sins and all suffer, (Vayikra Raba 4:6). The rabbinic world-view that developed as the basis for Jewish culture and life through the centuries is permeated with this same concept: an individual's responsibility for the community. The language of Jewish prayer is a prime example. It is not just that the fate and fortune of the community is absolutely central in the things for which they pray; the very language in which the individual traditionally addresses God is in plural form. The height of this experience on *Yom Kippur* when the individual confesses many crimes that may never have crossed his/her own mind.

Hence, looking at the rabbinical commentary on a verse in the book of Vayikra, in the section of blessings and curses concerning the effects of Jewish behaviour in *Eretz* Israel. In a familiar passage of curses, it read among other things-that "the land of Israel shall be laid waste and its cities destroyed; the people shall be scattered among the nations and many shall die by the sword... And they shall die one upon another, as if before a sword, when there is no one pursuing them." Vayikra 26:36-37. The rabbis understood the phrase "they shall fall one upon another" to mean they shall fall one because of the sins of another," and explained the reason for this as in other words they said that the reason for this calamity of curses on the Israelites was because the entire people was held responsible for the sins of some of its members.

Looking at corporate responsibility among the Jews from economic

perspective, Jonathan Sacks (nd), states that "Judaism cannot accept the principle that markets, business, and corporations are a value-free zone. They are major features of our social concept of covenant tells us that we are severally and collectively responsible for the environment we shape and share." He further stated that Amos was the one who articulated the idea with more passion than any other prophet of ancient Israel.

In the midst of the good aspect of collective responsibility as a result of the Jews conception of this which was deeply rooted in them, the Israelites has a pessimistic and fatalistic attitude towards life, without taking cognizance of their individual sins against God, believing that whatever affliction that befall them was generally as a result of the sins committed by their ancestors, so such fate had been predestined to befall them and that God's hand of judgment against them was not due to their own sins, but as a result of the idolatry and polytheism committed by their fathers. The belief in collective responsibility had a great impact on the life of the covenant community and resulted in a terrible consequence that was telling on them which was the exile. God complained to Jeremiah of the sins committed by his people Israel, and urged them to repent from their evil ways but they gave deaf ears to the warning. Probably, they had not seen themselves as sinners. Thus, in Ezekiel 7, God declared 'a day of judgment on the house of Judah as a result of their sins.

Looking at it from the present day perspective, speaking on collective personality in the aspect of moral responsibility Stanford encyclopedia (2010) states thus; "but, unlike its two more purely individualistic counterparts it does not

associate either causal responsibility or blame worthiness with discrete individuals or locate the source of moral responsibility in the free will of individual moral agents". Instead, it associates both causal responsibility and blame worthiness with groups and locates the source of moral responsibility in the collective actions taken by these groups (understood) as collectives.

Furthermore, while the notion of moral responsibility traditionally understood grounds moral blame worthiness in the will of discrete individuals who freely cause harm, the notion of collective responsibility associates both causation and blame worthiness with groups and construes groups as moral agents in their own right. According Stanford Encyclopedia, many have asked the question, can we understand the notion of collective responsibility as a matter of moral and not just causal responsibility? Is it possible for groups, as distinct from their members, to cause harm in the sense required by moral responsibility to act as collectives? To have intentions? Is it possible for groups, as distinct from their members, to be morally blame worthy for causing harm, to be guilty as moral agents?

Also it further states that some people have asked "can we distribute collective responsibility across individual members of such a group? In other words can we distribute collective responsibility across individual members of Nigeria? It further asked "does it make sense to distribute collective responsibility in general? Is it appropriate to hold individual group members morally responsible for harm that other group members caused? That the group itself caused? That the group as a whole failed to prevent? If so, under what condition and with respect to what particular kind of groups? Random collections of individuals? Interest based

groups? Corporate entities?" Most probably the Jew might have asked this same question or the like in their confusion about how the fathers sin will not be inherited by the son, or the son not inheriting the righteousness of his father even when the son had done wrong and unjust things.

Finally, concerning the value of ascribing collective responsibility in practice. In some cases, the concern is with the general practice of collective responsibility and its consequences for our ability to sustain the values of individualism, freedom, and justice. In other cases, the concern is with the ascriptions of collective responsibility in particular context e.g. in the contexts of war tribunals, reparation for slavery terrorism and rape, and with whether such ascription are productive and fair to those being blamed.

2.2 The concept of individual responsibility in Israel

The Israelites is not oblivious of individual responsibility. They reorganize that, if a particular person commits a crime, the person that committed such crime is responsible and guilty for the crime committed, in a way that even the closest relation of the culprits may not partake in it. According to Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002), "This is so the greater part of the legal provision of the code which are often described as 'casuistic' that which begin with the formula if a man" that is an individual does so and so." (p.15)

This seem to have applied mostly in criminal code of the convent nation of Israelites, the collective responsibility referred to both by God and Israelite had always been on the ground of infidelity to Yahweh, that is for seeking Yahweh to serve other gods or combining the worship of other gods and Yahweh. In criminal

cases, the individual has always bore the consequence of his or her sin. Not even the wife or son of such offender is permitted to suffer the guilt of the crime committed. For instance the issue of the goring ox in the book of Exodus (21:28ff) may explain this better. Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002) state that the basic principle of this law in essence is that, if an Ox's owner is aware that his animal is in the habit of attacking people and the ox then gores a man to death, the owner shall be put to death, (not the whole family). Verse 31 of the same chapter continues: if it gores a man's son or daughter, he shall be death with according to this same rule," that is, the Ox's owner is still the person to be executed, and not his child. So obviously is individual responsibility envisaged that, in assessing the criminal's guilt, questions can be raised concerning his knowledge or intentions in the case of the goring ox, if it is the animal's first offence, so that its owner could not be aware of its vicious propensities, only the Ox is permitted to be killed and not the owner.

For the great majority of offences within the cult community, the individual alone is responsible and bears the punishment. This is simply the extension of what would be expected in the internal life of a family. The punishment according to Old Testament law codes is frequently death. In a sacral society, in which all wrongdoing is sin requiring expiation, the motive of such punishment is to purge the evil from the community.

Hence, the laws concerning crime start with the fact that a crime has been committed appropriate remedy, solution or punishment are imposed to deter its further occurrence. These laws recognize as well that it is the individual who is

responsible should he violate the laws. The capacity for individual thought and action can be traced to the beginnings of Israelite history. We have only to think of the traditions of the patriarchs, of Moses and the judges, to see that it is so. It is equally clear in the song of Deborah (judges 5:7), which is one of the most ancient pieces of Hebrew literature (Okwueze and Ugwueye 2002). This implies that the consciousness of individual responsibility has been operating in the heart of the Israelite from the time of the former prophets as stated earlier it did not start with later prophets neither did it start with Ezekiel. In the book of the judges Judah said to Simon his brother, "come up with me as one with me in the territory allotted us, he did not say that), that we may fight against the Canaanite, and I likewise will go with you into the territory allotted to you"

Another case of individual responsibility well envisaged in the Old Testament among the Jews, is in the case of Amaziah's treatment of the father's murderers. The bible recorded that Amaziah only killed those who murdered his father the king but did not kill their children as it is written in the book of Moses. As it is recorded in the 2 King 14:5-6

And as soon as the power the royal power was firmly in his hand he killed his servants who had slain the king his father. But he did not put to death the children of the murderers, according to what is written in the book of the law of Moses, where the Lord commanded, the fathers shall not be put to death for the children or the children be put to death for the fathers;..."

This rightly shows that the Law of Moses as well as other books of OT

reorganize individual responsibility. Again, since the Israelite believe in what these books and the law of Moses teach, they equally believe in individual responsibility, especially when it pertains to criminal cases.

Save the case of Achan the son of Zimri (Joshua 7) and few others, every other criminal case in the Old Testament was handled on individual bases. The Law of Moses supported this in the book of Deuteronomy (Deu. 14:16), where the legal law stated that "the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers every man shall be put to death for his own sin." This law demands that individual responsible for any criminal offence should be singled out and punished.

2.3 The Christian view of Corporate Personality

The Christian view of corporate personality could be traced back to the origin of man in the Bible. The events when Adam and Eve sinned by eating the fruit of the tree which they were forbidden not to eat or else face the punishment of death (Gen. 2:15-17). It was recorded that immediately after they had eaten the fruit, their eyes were opened, guilt and shame gripped them, they noticed of their naked bodies and they attempted to hide themselves from God (Gen 3:6-9), (Carson, 1994, p.63). Hence, as a result of this sin of disobedience, "Adam was punished by expulsion from the garden and subjection to the future lot of obtaining his livelihood in painful toil and in the sweat of his face" (Douglas, 1993). Through Adam's sin, suffering and death came into the world and mankind in its totality inherited the effects of the sins of the father figure, which is the idea of 'original sin.'

Consequently, the punishments of Adam's sin were not restricted to him alone, but to the whole of mankind. The entire womanhood also had to inherit the pain of childbirth which is a constant reminder of the first mother's sin on this note, instead of marriage being a relationship of mutual care, tension was often to characterize it (Carson, 1994). However, at a particular time, God sent his only begotten son; Jesus Christ who was the last Adam, as recorded ". . . the first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit", (1 Cor. 15:45). Through the first Adam the whole world were partakers of his sin as a result of idea of corporate personality. The last Adam, Jesus Christ himself partook of flesh and blood (as real as the humanity of Adam) in being born, living and dying and being resurrected as a man (though resurrection is what made the difference).

According to the Christian belief, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). This corporate responsibility shows that man has dropped from what God intended him to be, that is; the glory man has before the fall of man as it can be seen in Gen. 1:26-28. Hence, Christians also believed that all have been forgiven, redeemed and made righteous because of their relationship with the last Adam (Jesus Christ). Since the sacrifice had been made and the price of the original sin had been paid on the cross of Calvary by Christ, Christians therefore uphold that any Christian that deviates from his faith is entirely responsible for his actions. This is clearly stated in the Bible that; "they are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith'

(Romans 3:24-25). Jesus had opened up the way for mankind to be raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:21, 23; 45-49). The last Adam did not sin at all, yet he suffered the sins of others, He died for the sins of the world thereby reconciling man and God and cancelling the sentence of death for all those who believe in him.

In addition, the sin of one man (Adam) put the whole human race into a terrible condition of suffering and death, while the obedience and righteousness of one man (Jesus Christ) delivered humanity from the bondage of death and brought everlasting life to all who believe in him. Paul the author of first Corinthians rightly said "the first Adam and the last Adam" and not the other way "the first Adam and second Adam." Following this closely it means that all the price had been paid, and all reconciliation has been made by the last Adam lest anybody may expect the "third Adam" to complete it (the reconciliation). All humanity is one in the first Adam, similarly, all who believe in Jesus Christ are one because they belong to the same body called the 'church.' By baptism, the old man is symbolically buried and the new man in Christ is born. The inheritance of both the guilt of Adam and the blessings that are available through Christ Jesus to all who believe in him is a belief in corporate personality in the sense that through one man all were condemned and through one man; all were liberated from the power of death.

Furthermore, in Deuteronomy 24:16 for instance, it is written that the children shall not be made to die for sins of their father and vice versa. Every man, according to this passage, would be penalized for his own sins. Ezekiel 18:19-20

and similarly Jeremiah 31:29, played dual roles. While it confirms the former stand that God visits the sin of the fathers on their offspring, it at the same time announced an end to that era. In the words of Okobo (2006, p.12) “whatever God said concerning visiting the sins of the fathers on their sons ... has been nullified by the development in Ezekiel 18:30” (p.12). Nwachukwu (2006) also pointed out that in Ezekiel 18, the oracle of God simply points out freedom from trans-generational retribution and drew attention to covenantal responsibility. She explains that the Israelites suffer, not because of their sins but because they persist like their fathers in breaking the covenant of God. However, it may be pertinent to point out that some Christians do not agree with the above view. For Njoku (1993), trans-generational punishments would have been truly abolished if people are able to totally avoid the sins committed by their fathers; he insists that no one is free in the sense and so in spite of Ezekiel 18, trans-generational punishment is still in force because people still inevitably repeat the sins of their fathers. In spite of Njoku’s strong argument which somehow flows with the latter thought of Nwachukwu’s comment above, the general Christian view seems to be that of 2 Corinthians 5:17, which states that; any man in Christ is a new creature, old things have passed away and everything had become new. Ejim (2006) affirms that; if old things have indeed passed away, it would be incongruous for the sins of the progenitors to be imputed to their offspring. So, for the Christian at least, trans-generational punishment is not feasible. Also 1 Peter 1:18-19 implies that the Christian has been redeemed from the “futile way” inherited from his or her fore-fathers with the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

2.4 Overview of Responsibility

Numerous definitions and explanations of the term "responsibility" abound, as there are many textbooks of ethics and humanities. However, in this sense one can emphatically say that responsibility is central to what it means, responsibility is concerned with human. According to Ezikpe (2005) "other creature have life, consciousness, intelligence, even some limited ability at language but only human being are responsible to choose their manner of life and hence their destiny," (p.11) It is in the light of this that numerous scholars of ethics and humanities have propounded different view of the concept.

Omoregbe (1993) is of the view that: "One should hold himself accountable and be ready to accept blames or praises for what he has freely done. He should be prepared to accept the consequences of his actions, be they reward or punishment..." (p.123-124). It also implies being answerable to an authority who entrusted one with some duty office or some work it is in this sense of responsibility that we say that all men are in the final analysis responsible to God individually for the way they live their lives.

In his own view, Kephart (1961) said that responsibility is a social expectation which members of a group have attached to a given position within that group. These expectations portray for the individual what members of the group feel he should do by virtue of the position he occupies. This could be said to be the reason why the entire country tends to blame the government and president for the high poverty rate and unemployment from which the masses suffer. This is

because following Kephart's view, one can see that it is the responsibility of the government to provide job opportunities for the masses by virtue of the position they occupy.

Furthermore, Donagan (1979, p.43) in his own view thought that:

Responsibility means the obligation to answer for an act done, and to repair any injury it may have caused... it is a general rule that no one is answerable for the act of another, unless he has by some acts of his own, concurred in them. But when he has sanctioned these acts, either explicitly or by implication, he is responsible.

The assertion by Donagan can be used as the base on which a lady can point to man as being responsible for her pregnancy in the sense that he concurred to it through his acts. However, man has a free will. He has the power to say no to evil and yes to good. Therefore, He will be responsible for the action he takes and he can direct the course of his life since he has the power to lay down his life in order to be accountable and responsible.

Having seen different views of the concept as given by the aforementioned scholars, it will be incomplete if we do not by any means seek the connotative meaning of the term in this section. According to the Longman dictionary of contemporary English, the word "responsibility" means, a duty to be in charge or look after something, so that you make decisions and be blamed if something bad happens. It is in the light of this that one can hear people say that it is the

responsibility of the parents to give their children and ward qualitative education and all the good things in life.

2.5 Social Responsibility

Daft (1988) is of the view that societal survival is dependent upon a series of exchanges between the society and its citizens. These exchanges and continual interaction with the environment gave rise to a number of broader responsibilities to society in general. The broader responsibilities which are both internal and external to the society are usually referred to as social responsibility. These social responsibilities arise from the independence of individuals, society and the environment. In other words social responsibility is an individual's obligation to make choices and take actions that will contribute to the welfare and interest of the society. It is in line with making choices that will contribute to the welfare and interest of the society that the citizens are obliged to exercise their franchise and elect themselves good leaders that will work towards the betterment of their society.

According to Wueste (1994) when we speak of social responsibility, we direct attention to or invoke norms that express legitimate and stable expectation, respecting the conduct of persons in position of public trust or power within a social practice or institution. He went further to say that the principles governing official actions are different from those governing private actions. Because a person who accepts a public role runs the risk that fulfilling her responsibilities will require actions on her part that fly in the face of other obligations she has or principles that she accepts.

One has to understand that in discussing social responsibility, it implies an

issue of obedience to the law and in this sense, it will be wise to know what some scholars also think about the legal aspect of social responsibility, because it is this aspect that determines one who has lived up to one's responsibilities.

Feirnberg in Ezikpe (2005) says that judgments of legal responsibility are strongly influenced by ulterior practical purposes, and so much that it practically hinges on them that there is often no way of avoiding them by remaining silent or by qualified hedge. He went further to make it clear that in problematic cases, legal responsibility is something to be decided not simply discovered. And this often comes down to who ought to be punished and who ought not.

Social responsibility can also be said to have an ethical aspect just like it has a legal aspect. According to Gert in Ezikpe (2005), a person is responsible for some actions that fall under the scope of the moral system and judgments of moral worth, which are usually made up of morally good actions, judgment of responsibility which are usually made up of morally wrong actions. Also Vertefuille (1988) sees moral responsibility as "living in response to the commands of God in reaction to what is right or wrong." (p.24)

One can say from the above that moral responsibility comprises of all those acts which we are by the Divine law or by our conscience forbidden to partake in, for the good of ourselves and the society in general. Finally, according to Farge (1992), social responsibility is a "doctrine that claims that; entity whether it is a state, government, corporation,, organization or individual has a responsibility to society." (p.348). This responsibility can be negative in that it is a responsibility to refrain from acting, or it can be positive meaning a responsibility that obliges

individuals to participate in some social acts like; voting, being law abiding etc and also obliges individuals to refrain from acts like; robbery, cultism, examination malpractices, theft etc, so as to make the society a better place to live.

2.6 Individual Responsibility

Talking of individual responsibility, there is a popular saying that "guns don't kill people, people kill people." This implies that every individual is solely responsible for whatever act of his. Man has the free will to choose good or bad, right or wrong and be responsible for either one he chooses.

Aronson (1992), states that, an experiment carried out shows that persons who are anonymous and unidentifiable tend to act more aggressively than person who are not anonymous, showing that they do not wish to face responsibility for their actions. He went further to note that anonymity induces 'deindividuation', which is a state of lessened self-awareness, reduced concern over social evaluation and weakened restraints against prohibited form of behaviour. The researcher concurs to this view owing to the practical example of 'Boko Haram' insurgence in Nigeria. For the fact that the sect is "faceless" motivates them to behave the way they do. According to Donagan (1979), "individual responsibility means an attitude of self criticism." (p.58) This implies that we should not blame others for our own difficulties, but rather look for the cause within ourselves. In the same vein, Haskins (2009) states that "personal responsibility is-the willingness to both accept the importance of standards that society establishes for individual behaviour and to make strenuous personal efforts to live by those standards".

Looking at it from this view it stands that the society had set down a rule

which an individual must follow and by following/obeying the rule, one is responsible (in the society). Hence when one fail to recognize this standards/rule, the person is irresponsible. Therefore the need to "make strenuous personal efforts to live by those standards is paramount as a good member of the society, or to be a good member of the society.

Furthermore, he is also of the view that personal responsibility also implies that when an individual fails to meet the expected standards, they do not look around for some factor outside themselves to blame. In line with this, the demise of personal responsibility occurs when individuals blame their family, their peers, their economic circumstances, or their society for their own failure to meet standards.

The statement above implies that individual responsibility does not accept blaming others for the failure or misfortune which one is passing through. When one fail to meet an expected end. The best solution is to look inwardly not outwardly when such occurs. For instance, a student blaming his lecturer's poor skill in teaching as a cause of his poor performance in an examination, even when the student has failed to study hard, which is the major cause of his failure in the actual sense. Hence Jon (1994) is of the view that "the destiny of each soul directly relates as to whether, one is willing to accept his or her responsibility for any conduct and turn away from sin...". By this we can say that each individual (just like the book of Ezekiel 18:2 is saying), is directly responsible to whatever one chooses to do or not to do. He further stated,

My father's righteousness will not save me, nor will his wickedness

condemn me. I do not inherit my spiritual standing with God from my ancestors. Though I may suffer some of the consequences for their sins, as well as enjoy some of the consequences (reward) of their righteousness, my standing with God is based upon my own actions.

The assertion above can be seen from these three angles;

Firstly, standing on one's parent action to judge one is not ultimate. Each individual is responsible for whatever he chooses to do on the planet earth. Even one's spiritual standing cannot be determined by one's parent spiritual standard. It is not hereditary; each person determines and builds his or her own standard.

Secondly, we may enjoy some reward of your father's righteousness, in the sense that if our fathers lived just life and favoured people, one day those good they had done will favour us, the people they helped might be the one to help us tomorrow, in one way or the other. However, in this case it is just like school certificate or post graduate degree honour, we may enjoy what our parents acquire through their school certificate but we cannot inherit their certificate after they are no more or even when they are living. Everyone is responsible for one's own certificate.

Thirdly, one may equally receive the repercussion of what one's father has done. The people they offended may be in position to help us today or in future, but when they remember what our fathers did to them, they may not be willing to offer such help again.

Finally, this implies that individual responsibility directly or indirectly leads

to collective responsibility be it reward or repercussion for what one has done or fail to do.

In the same vein, David (2004) asked in his article; "can individual personally choose to be saved?" After this, he further asked, "is each individual responsible to choose for himself whether or not to accept salvation?" Hence, he is of the view that, each person is accountable before God for his own life, be it praise worthy or blame. However he further argues that, "some teach that babies or infants can be baptized on the basis of the faith of the parents". Though the child has the right to change to whichever faith he or she pleases when the child grows up but for the child to know what faith or religion is all about, parents can bring up their child in faith of theirs. So it is the responsibility of the parents to train their children. But in the case where, People act as though they should be treated as righteous because they have family (parents) members who are godly or because they are member of a faithful local church and where others think that their relationship to God is hopeless if they come from a sinful family, is a different issue. He emphatically said, "each person is a free moral agent before God." No one else can be saved for us, and no one else can decide whether or not we will be saved. Each person's eternal destiny will be decided by his/her personal choices and conduct. In other words, each person's conduct is his individual responsibility.

In his own view, Ron (2009), states that personal responsibility involves the willingness to both accept the importance of standards that establishes for individual behaviour and to make strenuous personal efforts to live by those standards. He is equally of the opinion that personal responsibility also means that

when individuals fail to meet expected standards, they do not look around for some factor outside themselves to blame rather they look inside to see how they have caused the "genesis" of the problem or better put how they originated the problem.

Hence, from education point of view, Ron (2009) states that personal responsibility means that, students accept the responsibility to study hard in order to make his result and to learn as much as they can in courses that press against the limits of their capacity, rather than blaming it on any other person. From another perspective, students' personal responsibility for him is that students should accept that it is their responsibility to take courses that will prepare them for higher learning. In this case, hard work is a must because the most accurate predictor of higher learning performance is the present performance. Hence students who choose not to prepare for higher learning must prepare for the world of work, a goal that also requires strenuous personal effort. This implies that the destiny of the students are in their hand and if any students fails, it is the persons fault not actually the secondary causes who may be the lecturers, councellors, guidance or parents.

Finally, he is of the view that student who do not go to college (now referring to secondary school students) should enroll in training courses after secondary school, since they know that it is their personal responsibility to do so and that without job training, an apprenticeship, or a two year or more degree, most young people are destined to a life of marginal employment and income. This means that being personal responsible as a student is not focusing only on making it to any

level of your choice academically, but equally realizing that it is our responsibility to engage in work when the hope of further education is no longer there for us.

When applied to sex and marriage personal responsibility according to Ron (2009) is that "young people should avoid sex...", in other words, when young people do initiate sex at whatever age that might be pleasant to them, it then become their personal responsibility to take all necessary measures to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. This implies that a single act may have more than a way of being responsible for it. For instance one can make it a personal responsibility not to engage in premarital sex or choose to engage in it, but with the personal responsibility of being infected with sexually transmitted infections and getting impregnated; or lastly, taking all necessary measures to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Furthermore, Webees (2004), is of the opinion that "the greatest enabler of rights and freedom is individual responsibility." He also said that; "without personal responsibility, rights are meaningless." This implies that without individual responsibility, one may not realize one's right and even when one recognize one's right and there is no individual responsibility, the right realized is of no use. For him, many people especially freedom lovers, wonder what is the highest right that people posses. They wonder what is the ultimate right that enables them to enjoy freedom. Many will argue that the right of self defense is the greatest enabler of freedom; others will say that it is the right of self expression, or some other rights. But greatest

enabler of rights and freedom is individual responsibility, (Weebies 2004).

It will be right to point out that all the religions of the world emphasize, in one way or the other, individual responsibility in matters of faith and practice. However, the meaning and limits of individual responsibility are discerned differently by various religions. Theravada of Buddhism, Jainism and non-theistic Hinduism regard the journey on the path to liberation as entirely the responsibility of the individual. Each person is a lamp unto himself. On the other hand, in Christianity, Judaism and Islam, individual responsibility as a person works out his own salvation. Salvation is offered as a gift, but it is our responsibility to receive it and not reject it. It is in this light that all religions have these to say on the issue of individual responsibility.

In Christian faith, it is vividly seen in Philippians 2:12, where we are urged to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Islam in Quran 5:105 says, "O ye who believe, you have charge over your own souls." In Jainism, Acarangasutra 5:36 says; "I have heard and realized that bondage and salvation both within yourself." To the Hindus, in the law of Manu 4:240 it says, "single is each being born, single it dies, single it enjoys the reward of its virtue, single it suffers the punishment of its sin." To be lamps unto yourselves, rely on yourselves; not rely on external help. Do not look for refuge to anything besides yourselves." It is in this same context that the book of Ezekiel 18:20ff, says that "the son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son... Therefore I will judge you. O' house of Israel everyone

according to his ways says The Lord God," (www.unification.net). From the above examples, it is good to note that all religions reorganize and accept individual responsibility in one way or the other. All the statements extracted from the holy books of most world religions show that the place of individual is a very important one in the construction of the moral values and attitudinal orientation of the society because good individuals make good society.,

In its own view, Christian scripture has many other quotations that support individual responsibility as follows: "For each will have to bear his own load" (Gal. 6:5). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." (2Cor. 5:10). "whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper but he who confesses and for sake of them will obtain mercy." (Prov. 28:13). "the Lord said to Cain, "why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door, its desire is for you, but must rule over it." (Gen 4:6-7)

For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at word, but busy bodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother... (2 Thess. 3:11-18).

"Like a muddied spring or a polluted fountain is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked." (Prov. 25:26). "And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all..." (Deut. 28:1-68). "my son, keep your father's commandment and forsake not your mother's advice." "see, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work," (Rev. 22:12). "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap," (Gal. 6:7). "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully," (2 Cor. 9:6) "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much," (Luke 16:10). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only son, that whoever believe in him should not perish but have eternal life," (John 3:16). "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in sheol, to which you are going," (Ecc.9:10).

Here are some other biblical view on individual responsibility; Ezekiel 18:20. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither will the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself." A father and son are each responsible for his own wickedness or righteousness. Matthew 7:21-28 for everyone (individual), not just one who confesses Jesus will enter the kingdom, but he who does (individual) the will of the father. Whether or not a person's spiritual house stands or falls is determined by who hears and does (or does not do) what

Jesus teaches.

Matthew 16:24, 25ff; anyone (an individual) who desires to come after Jesus Christ must deny himself (individual), take up his cross (individual) and follow Jesus. Whoever loses His life for Christ will find it. Jesus here discusses the basic issue of whether or not one is His disciple. That choice is an individual choice. Acts 10:35 in every nation whoever (individual) fear Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. In this case the person who is accepted is the same person who fears God and work righteousness, this is true for everyone (whoever) in every nation. James 1:23-25 - if anyone (individual) hears God's word and does not do it, he is like a man (individual) who observes himself in a mirror but then forgets what he saw. But he who (individual) looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues doing the work, this one (individual) will be blessed in what he does (individual). "Note that the one who is blessed is the same one who continued doing what he saw in the word" (David, 2004). All these verses fully evidenced the Christian scriptural support for individual responsibility.

Some Other Quotes on Individual Responsibilities: Personal responsibility is the key factor in life; both the Christian scripture and scholars have agreed to this, to some extent. According to Jackson (nd) "if you can defeat yourself doubt and disappoint your distracters by not listening to their negative opinions, you will discover that you were born to win." This implies that, the ability for one not be disappointed, yielding to self doubt lies in one's hand, and equally the ability to be responsible is one's choice. Again, he states that "people who believe that the devil is the only trouble maker in their lives are ignorant of their own contributions." And

that "what the devil does outside of you is of little effect, compare to what you permit him to do inside your mind." Furthermore, "there is nothing you want to do that you can't, if only you can retain the conviction that you can." Finally, when you work for your money, you might sweat a little, you might lose a little energy, but your dignity will be." This implies that each individual is the chief architect of what happen to them.

In as much as the individual seems to be center of concentration in terms of responsibility, May (1972) is of the view that an "extreme emphasis on individual responsibility can become an egocentric manipulation of others, a compulsion that defeats genuine morality and yields only a counterfeit sense of significance" (p23). Most people are oppressed by the sense of individual responsibility not only for general humanitarian reasons, but for the facts that the law demands 'I do them so.'

In summary, to foster peaceful co-operation and coexistence in the Nigerian society, every individual is to be conscious of every action of his. Knowing that only him is to be praised or blamed for whatever way he chooses to act, as Omoregbe and other scholars above have rightly emphasized on this. This awareness in the psyche of the masses will do a lot to produce accountability and responsibility as its result. This will finally lead to effective collective responsibility in the Nigerian contemporary society.

Many scholars who wrote on blame game and individual responsibility pay more attention on the societal aspect not really in relation to the Old Testament. The few that relate it to the Old Testament did not look at the original text (Hebrew text) of the Old Testament. Also, they did not cover

some of the blame game in the present political dispensation. Hence, this is the gap in knowledge which this research tends to fill.

CHAPTER THREE

Exegetical study on Ezekiel 18:1-4

Analysis of a biblical text is indispensable in the study of the Canonical books of the Bible including Old Testament and New Testament. In order to achieve this aim, the knowledge of Biblical Languages is very crucial. It is on this note that Ugwueye (2007) avers that if Hebrew is ignored, Old Testament student destines himself to second hand information. More so, in order to explore the original message of text of both the Jewish and Christian scriptures, the original languages of the text, which is Hebrew in most cases, and Aramaic in few cases, as well as Septuagint for Greek translation of Old Testament, for Old Testament; and Koine Greek for the New Testament. Hence, for better understanding of the text of investigation, the Hebrew text must be put into consideration.

3.1 Hebrew text of Ezekiel 18:1-4 with its English Translation

׀rmo*ale yl;îae hw"βhy>-rb;d> yhiîy>w: 1
 laePr"f.yI tm;îd>a;-l[; hZ<ëh; lv'äm'h;-ta,
 ׀~yliy.mo) ׀~T,a; ~k,ªL'-hm; 2
 `hn"yh, (q.Ti ~ynIßB'h; yNEïviw> rs,boê Wlk.ayOæ
 ׀tAba' rmo=ale
 lv'îM'h; lvo±m. dA[ª ~k,øl' hy<"h.yI)-~ai
 hwI+hy> yn"ådoa] ~auPn> ynIa'§-yx; 3
 ׀lae(r"f.yIB. hZ<βh;
 hN"he+-yli !BEβh; vp,n<ik.W ba'²h' vp,n<ôK.
 hN"heê yliä ׀tAvp'N>h;-lK' !hEÜ 4
 ׀tWm)t' ayhiî tajePxo; vp,N<ih;

English translation: New Revised Standard Version

1 The word of the LORD came to me:

2 What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"?

3 As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel.

4 Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

3.2 Historical and Literary Background of the Text

The author, whose name means "God strengthens", is identified as the "Priest Ezekiel, son of Buzi" (Ezekiel 1:3). Although this identification has been put into doubt, there seem to be no reasons to doubt it. Ezekiel was probably part of the Zadokite priesthood, which achieved prominence with the reforms of Josiah (621BC). He settled in Tel-abib, next to the river Chebar, near Nipur (1:1). His ministry briefly coincided with that of Jeremiah. There were no records as to the time and place of his birth. All that one knows about him dates back to the exile period (597BC) when he was taken away from the temple where he had been all along, and resettled in the dusty plains of Babylon towards the northern area, in a place called Tel Abib.

According to (Ezikpe 2005, p.23) many scholars of the Old Testament saw Ezekiel as a man of abnormality because of his unusual personality and action in which was probably as a result of the inspiration of the spirit of God. As he will usually say "The word of God came to me saying son of man."

Despite the fact I that he seemed abnormal in character, he was one of the outstanding spiritual persons of all time. He was a man of octagonal personality in the religious history of the Israelites. In him, one can find combined in unique fashion the activities and interests of the prophets, priests, watchman, apocalypticist, theologian, architect of the new temple and the organizer of the ecclesiastical community (Black 1986, p.569).

However, concerning the date of his birth and the circumstance surrounding his birth no one knows for the reason that it was not recorded in his book nor in any rabbinical writings discovered so far. The much that was said about him was his call (Ministerial call) which was dated 563BC. In his own view, Taylor (1973) comments thus:

If we are right in thinking that the thirtieth year referred to in 1:1 was the thirtieth year of his age, it follows that Ezekiel was a young man in his mid-twenties when the exile began and this would allow for the considerable period of time over which his ministry extended.(p.21)

The date and how he died was not equally recorded in his book, the latest date that was given in his book was the twenty-seventh year of the exile (29:17) and this would possibly take him to the age of fifty two. Nevertheless, Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002) state that:

One thing alone is certain, that he ended his life among the exile, where God assigned him, his sphere of labour. His wife died at the time of Jerusalem's fall (24:18). He was a man of influence being consulted by the elders among the exiles (8:1,20:1); and although this

may be due to his prophetic ministry and the reputation which he quickly acquired, it is just as likely that it is attributed to his social standing derived through his father, Buzi.(p.5)

Furthermore, they stated that the Old Testament scholars wonder about prophet Ezekiel's unusual personality and action which some scholars have referred to as abnormality. He is one of the strangest persons in the Old Testament among the Old Testament writers; no other person has received such varied, even diametrically opposed, interpretations of his person and writing. He has been described with different kind of personality by different scholars for instance in Ugwueye (1995) quoting Broome, Ezekiel has been psycho-analyzed Broome and found to be a victim of "catatonic schizophrenia... unconscious sexual regression, schizophrenic withdrawal, delusions of persecution and grandeur." (p.7)

In fact, he has been many thing to many people some see him to be the only prophet have sounded more like a priest, some sees him as a holy man and stalker sees him as a "cataleptic, a neurotic, a victim of hysteria, a psychopath and even a definite paranoid schizophrenic, as well as being credited with power of clairvoyance or levitation." (Stalker 1968, p.23). Hence he has been described as a prophet whose spiritual experiences also constitute an anticipation of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament and has the right every right to hold the title of "charismatic"

However, in our judgment; according Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002, p.5).

It is mistaken to try to categorize Ezekiel in modern psychological terms.

For a prophet, a certain degree of "abnormality" is "normal". Two Spheres intersect in the person of Ezekiel, the life of priest and that of the prophet. So his life is filled with strain and tension between the tradition he inherited and the demands of his call to be a prophet.

Prophet Ezekiel combined in a unique way the priestly anointing and sense of holiness of God, and the prophet's sense of the message that he has been sent to proclaim, and the pastor's sense of responsibility for his people. As rightly put Howie (1962, p.15); states that Prophet Ezekiel is "as a sensitive human soul caught in the cross currents of history, driven by a burning zeal for God and painfully aware of the tragedy in which his people were involved."

The Book of Ezekiel has been viewed from different perspectives by different scholars. Looking at the structure, a scholar stated "although Ezekiel is a long book of 48 chapters, it has a logical orderly structure that makes it easy to analyze and understand. After a brief introductory section about Ezekiel and the nature of his mission, the book falls naturally into three main divisions:

1. Judgment on the nation of Judah (Chaps. 4-24);
2. Judgment on the surrounding nations (chaps.25-32); and
3. The nature blessing of God's covenant people (chaps 33-48).

However, the structure and simply understating of the book as claimed above did not come without a sacrifice. Following the difficulties connected with the book of Ezekiel Tkacit in Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002, p.6) states thus:

The Rabbis at the time of the closing of the Canon found it difficult to reconcile its prescriptions with the Torah. Has it not been for Rabbi Hananiah Ben Hezekiah, who closed himself in a room with food and three hundred jars of oil for light to work, according to the Talmud until he had explained all the discrepancies, the book would have been suppressed.

The work of Rabbi Hananiah Ben Hezekiah must have played a great role in making the book of Ezekiel simple and easy to understand as some scholar claim it to be. Nevertheless, modern scholars should not expect the book of the ancient days to have the same composition and features as that of the modern days, unless when it have been interpreted by modern scholars who will give it a (shape) modern interpretation to suite the modern days without changing or distorting the real meaning of it.

According to Raphael (nd), "A stranger book than the Book of Ezekiel does not appear in the Jewish canon." Jerome in Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002, p.6) is of the opinion that no one was permitted to read the beginning and the end of the book until he reached the age at which priests began their ministry i.e. thirty years, because full maturity of human nature is necessary for perfect knowledge and mystical understandings such as called for by material in these passages prophet Ezekiel employed greatly, allegory, vision, and symbolic acts, which might have resulted to its being difficult to interpret without biblical exegesis.

However, the book of Ezekiel maintained its concern on Holiness, the cult

and the temple with the key words which include judgment, blessing, moral and individual responsibility.

Delimitation of the text

Delimitation of a biblical text entails a segmentation of a given biblical text with each having sub-themes. This segmentation could “show that the text in question is a distinct literary unit from what precedes it and from the one that follows it” (Poucota, 2012,p33). Ska (1990) comments that delimitation of a text takes into consideration the dramatic criteria: change of place, change of time, change of characters; and the stylistic criteria which include repetitions, inclusions, and a shift in vocabulary. Delimitation is very important because it prepares the pericope for a proper exegetical study to be carried out.

The text of Ezekiel 18:1-4 emphasizes the need to avoid innocent suffering of children as a result of sins of their ancestors. It captures intention of the LORD concerning retribution. There is also eloquent expression on supreme ownership of human soul. Human as long as the LORD lives shall be reprimanded based on individual’s way of life. One’s sin(s) alongside its consequences is peculiar to one. On the other hand, one’s righteousness or good deed(s) is equally peculiar to one.

Form of the text

Every text of the Old Testament exists in one style or the other. Obiorah (2015, p.91) states as follows “form criticism seeks to identify literary genre and the social milieu that gave rise to them.” Another moniker for form of a text is *gattung*. The form of a biblical text can appear in the form of the following: story,

song, prophecy, poem, prayer, proverb, myth, parable, aetiology, saga etc. Ezekiel 18:1-4 is a collection of conversation between the LORD and prophet Ezekiel which is arranged in a narrative form.

Structure of the text

The text of investigation is divided into three. The first part begins the entire passage with word of the LORD which came to Ezekiel. It is followed by interrogation concerning the intention of the proverb concerning the punishment of subsequent generation by the mischief of their ancestors. The proverb as recounted by the text is “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.” The content of the message shows that the LORD does not support recompense of the sins of the fathers by their offspring. This part can be summed up in the subject matter “Prevalent proverb in Israel.”

The second division concerns itself with the need to reverse the proverb for the ultimate purpose of better society. In fact, there is a divine order to quit the usage and effect of the proverb. And this will be made possible as long as the initiator (LORD) still lives. The members of the ancient Israel society by implication are compelled to abate and abrogate this obnoxious rule in the form of a proverb. This unit can be tagged “divine command to quit the proverb.”

The third as well as the last unit captures the major reason and result for the abrogation of the proverb. The LORD wills that neither the younger generation would suffer for the iniquities of the older generation and vice versa. Every individual will be requited for any atrocity committed. This part can be succinctly called “individual retribution” or “law of retribution.”

3.3 Exegesis of verse (1-2)

Prevalent proverb in Israel

The Hebrew phrase $\text{hw}^{\text{b}}\text{hy}^{\text{>}}\text{-rb;d}^{\text{>}} \text{yhi}^{\text{i}}\text{y}^{\text{>}}\text{w:}$ *vayhi debar-yehvah* which is literary translated “and the word of the LORD”. The use of this phrase in this text indicates that prophet Ezekiel was not on his own but particularly an emissary of God. *Yehvah* as is represented in the text has variety of meaning depending on the form in which it appears. With vowel pointing, the word is often translated to mean *Yahweh (Yehvah)* which is the proper name attributed to the God of the Hebrews in respect to their language, Hebrew; but without vowel pointing, the word is translated to mean *Adonai* which is the proper name given to the God of the Hebrews as revealed to one of their patriarchs, Moses at the burning bush. This word when used as *Adonai* is often translated LORD (all in capital letters). The implied meaning concerns itself with the fact that among other respected lords among the Jews, there is one and only universal and supreme one who is the Master of other lords across the globe. With this understanding, one can surmise that message given to Ezekiel was not for the ancient Hebrews alone but for all human globally. This is clear expression of the fact that Ezekiel was under divine influence while communicating the message. James (2004) concurs to this claim in the following words, “in these simple words the Prophet was directed to

answer the sad proverb in which the popular voice had summed up the teachings of Hebrew history”. The word of God coming to Ezekiel was based on the Israelites belief or unbelief in divine justice. According to Jamieson (n.d), their unbelieving calumnies on God's justice had become so common as to have assumed a proverbial form.

The interrogation $\sim\text{T}, \text{a}; \sim\text{k}, \text{aL}'\text{-hm}$ *mah-lakem* ‘*attem* which literary means “what do you mean?” is worthy of analysis in this study. It shows the unsatisfaction of the LORD for use of the proverb that encourages younger generation to suffer as a result of the sins of their fathers. The Hebrew word $\sim\text{T}, \text{a};$ ‘*attem* is pronoun independent 2nd person masculine plural. Consequently, being in the plural confirms that the message was not a personal word for Ezekiel but for entire Israel in particular and at the moment, as well as for the entire universe in general and subsequently. This proverb according to Benson (2004) reveals that the present generation is punished for the offences committed by their forefathers, particularly for the sins committed in the time of Manasseh, king of Judah 2 Kings 23:26; Jeremiah 15:4. The Jewish people were very prone to plead their innocence, however great their crimes were. In view of this, Ellicott (2004) opines that; on the contrary, from the time of Job to that of our Lord, this was one of those pernicious views of the Jews which the inspired word takes great pains to combat.

3.4 Exegesis of verse 3

Divine command to quit the proverb

Adonai made it a point of duty to ensure that this proverb is not used in Israel, the immediate setting and the entire universe, the subsequent setting. $\gamma n \Gamma a' \S - \gamma x$; *hay-‘ani* translated “as I live” authenticates the personal interest of the LORD in that matter. The following sentence $l a e (r " f . \gamma I B . h Z < \beta h ; l v ' \hat{i} M ' h ; l v o \pm m . d A [^ a \sim k , \emptyset l ' h y < " h . \gamma I) - \sim a i$ *'im yihyih yakem 'od hammasal hazzeh beyisra'el* “this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel” is an evidence of apodictic command for total transformation of a practice. The practice was both terrible and obnoxious, and needs to combat for the welfare of innocent generation and retribution in form of punishment for wicked generation. Calvin (n.d, para1) maintains that:

the Prophet now convinces them of this unfairness, and shows that they had no reason for transferring their faults to others, or to thrust them away from themselves, since God was just in taking vengeance on them. We know that men willingly shuffle so as to free themselves from blame, and then afterwards accuse God of cruel injustice.

William (2004) agrees that Adonai has determined to end the proverb in the land of Israel as he asserts; “Henceforth He would take them on their own terms; and as they complained of the hardship of suffering for the delinquencies of their fathers, He would now give them their own deserts.” Gill (n.d) further buttress that this expostulation with them suggests that they had no just cause, or true reason, to make use of the proverb; that it was impious, impudent, and insolent in them, and daring and dangerous; and that they did not surely well consider what they said.

Exegesis of verse 4

Individual's retribution or law of retribution

תאִּפְּקֹד אֶת־כָּל־נְפֹשׁוֹת הַיָּדָיִם הַחַיִּים *hen kol-hannpasot* “behold all souls are mine.” The accurate and careful use of the Hebrew word כָּל־kol is in construct relationship with definite plural noun according to the rule of Hebrew grammar. The vowel under the kaf is qamets chatuf and not qamets. In the context of this work, this word strengthens the claim that the need for the change of use of the proverb is for all human beings across the globe. Hence, to validate this, Darby (2007) asserts in confirmation to the word of the LORD that, “Every one shall be judged according to his ways.”

According to Cambridge (2017), Holman (2009) every individual soul stands in immediate relation to God. The law of nemesis is hereby restored from being abated and made stronger. Everyone is now required for what one did instead for what another did. Furthermore, Henry (2010, para1) states that:

As to eternity, every man was, is, and will be dealt with, as his conduct shows him to have been under the old covenant of works, or the new covenant of grace. Whatever outward sufferings come upon men through the sins of others, they deserve for their own sins all they suffer; and the Lord overrules every event for the eternal good of believers. All souls are in the hand of the great Creator: he will deal with them in justice or mercy; nor will any perish for the sins of another, who is not in some sense worthy of death for his own.

If a man who had shown his faith by his works, had a wicked son, whose character

and conduct were the reverse of his parent's, could it be expected he should escape the Divine vengeance on account of his father's piety? Surely not. And should a wicked man have a son who walked before God as righteous, this man would not perish for his father's sins. If the son was not free from evils in this life, still he should be partaker of salvation. The question here is not about the meritorious ground of justification, but about the Lord's dealings with the righteous and the wicked.

Prophet Ezekiel concludes v4 with this statement $\text{tWm)t' ayhi\hat{i}}$ $\text{tajexoh; } \nu\text{p,N<ih}$ *hannepes hahote'n hi' tamut* meaning “the soul that sins will die.” The Hebrew word $\nu\text{p,N<ih}'$; *hannepes* has variety of meaning among which are soul, living human being, life, emotion, appetite. It eloquently expresses that one's life determines one's fate. The pattern of life one desires to live transcends to the consequence of such attitude. Therefore, neither the sin nor the righteous of the forebear henceforth determines the destiny of an individual; current generation will neither be blamed nor praised for mischief or goodness exhibited by ancestors. Hence the individual retribution. Clarke (2004) summarizes it thus:

All souls are mine - Equally so; I am the Father of the spirits of all flesh, and shall deal impartially with the whole. The soul that sinneth, it shall die - None shall die for another's crimes, none shall be saved by another's righteousness. Here is the general judgment relative to the righteousness and unrighteousness of men, and the influence of

one man's state on that of another; particularly in respect to their moral conduct.

CHAPTER FOUR

Application of Ezekiel's teaching on Blame Game in Nigerian Contemporary Society

4.1 Issue of blame game in Nigeria

As stated earlier in this study, individual responsibility is the willingness to accept both the importance of standards that society establishes for individual behaviours and to make strenuous personal efforts to live by those standards. But personal responsibility is not restricted to this, it also means that when individuals fail to meet expected standards, they do not look around for some factor outside them to blame rather they look inwardly to know where they have got it wrong (Ron 2009).

Ezekiel understood this principle and what it really means to be responsible for one's action when he rebuked the Israelite for the attitude of irresponsible and fatalism, which they exhibited as a result of their believe in inherited punishment. Hence, it is wise to note that Ezekiel condemned the contemporary belief of his time among the Jews. Raymond, Joseph, and Roland (Eds) (2000,p318), posit that;

“The theme of Individual responsibility plays an important role in Ezekiel’s thought.” He came up with new ideas about condemnation and salvation and immensely disagreed with his contemporaries that they were suffering for the sins of their fathers and not their sins, they forgot their own misdeed and focus on the past generation, as Jon (1994) notes:

yes, they agreed that Manasseh had been a very wicked king and had led Israelite astray into idolatry, but what they fail not recognize was that they too had many short comings to settle with God though not to the same extent as Manasseh, but things in their own lives need correcting.

Prophet Ezekiel condemned this belief with the mandate that "the soul that sin shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20)

In the same way the present generation of Nigerian leaders and the led excuse themselves from responsibility of the bad situation of the present Nigerian society by a repeated and boring reference to the past while they continue to fail to make their own positive contributions. For instance, Jannah (2018) observes that: “President Muhammadu Buhari has blamed past leaders, especially the immediate past administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan, for the rot in the nation’s health sector.” In the same view, Oluogunjobi (2016,para1) notes that:

In June 2015, President Buhari blamed the outgoing government of former President Goodluck Jonathan for delaying new ministerial appointments. ‘I agreed with former President Jonathan that the

ministers of the outgoing government should hand over their notes or their documents to this interim committee so that a position can be prepared for the new government to start from with clear records from ministers but unfortunately, the outgoing government did not cooperate.’

Furthermore, Oluogunjobi (2016,para3) in order to buttress this notes that:

President Muhammadu Buhari took oath of office as Nigeria's civilian leader 29th May, 2015 after his fourth trial. All seems not working under his government, with visible flaws in major sectors of the economy. President Buhari has only on few occasions taken responsibility for these wrongs, but consistent in apportioning blames for these failures....In August 2015, the President blamed all the past administrations from 1985 from Gen. Ibrahim Babangida’s to President Goodluck Jonathan’s for allowing the infrastructure in the energy sector to collapse so that their cronies can steal by bringing in refined products from overseas.

Again, these are some other cases where the present administration has blamed the past for the failure being experienced in different sectors of the country today, as outlined by Oluogunjobi;

In December 2015, the President remarked that “we uncovered that billions of naira and hundreds of millions of dollars were expended by the previous government to acquire good equipment and ammunition so that the military can use, but unfortunately, there was abuse of trust at various levels that cost Nigeria a

lot of lives and goodwill.”

In a BBC interview in February 2016, President Buhari blamed the ‘death’ of the Naira on former military President Ibrahim Babangida’s Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). “I went through the devalue in 1984, its SAP that killed the naira, I have asked the governor of Central Bank and others to sit and see if they can convince me to murder the naira.”

In March 2016, President pinned terrorist sect Boko Haram’s activities on telecoms company, MTN’s inability to disconnect unregistered users. “You know how the unregistered GSM are being used by terrorists ... that was why the NCC asked the MTN, Glo and the rest of them to register GSM. Unfortunately, MTN was very slow and contributed to the casualties, that was why NCC looked at its regulations and imposed that fine on them.”

Also, in April 2016, President Muhammadu Buhari held PDP’s 16 years rule responsible for the poor state of the Nigerian economy. He said there was an all-time rise of crude oil prices at \$100 per barrel but the PDP failed to put that to good use. “We showed a lot of indiscipline in managing our economy and that is why we are where we are today....” in May 2016, President Buhari blamed the international community for not paying attention when corrupt Nigerians stashed stolen funds in bank accounts abroad. “When it comes to tackling corruption, the international community has looked away for too long. We need to step up and tackle this evil together.” In June 2016, the incompetence of the most recent past administration was yet again blamed for turning the country into a mono economy.

“We refused to save for the rainy day, now the rain is beating us. No money, no savings, nothing. And we are thoroughly wet from the rains,” (Oluogunjobi 2016).

In the same view, Afegbua (2018, para13) comments that;

It took six solid months without a cabinet to set the ball rolling on how to recover a nation that had suffered economic trauma. The blame game easily crept into the discourse and suddenly occupied a central theme in the affairs of government. From accusation of no money in the treasury to absence of savings, so said the president, Nigeria suffered some losses during the period of oil boom. According to the President, from 1999 to 2014 oil per barrel sold for between \$100 and \$163 during which time not much was saved for the rainy day.

Following the above situation, a critical analysis of what is going on in the Nigerian society today reveals to every good observer that just like the Israelite of Ezekiel's time, a good number of people in Nigeria do not by any means like to associate themselves with failure even when they have failed to perform their individual responsibilities so as to achieve success. When things go wrong, people blame one another or even their fathers or forefathers for being the cause of their present day misfortune. For instance, concerning 2019 election preparation Omoniyi (2018) observers that; “More worrisome is the ongoing blame game between the executive and the legislature.” According to Omoniye (2018), the organisation had accused Saraki of postponing the resumption of the Senate in spite of the ongoing issues in the country such as the INEC budget and approval for foreign loans tied to several

critical infrastructures. In a release by its Chairman, Niyi Akinsiju and Secretary, Cassidy Madueke, the group accused Saraki of laying siege to the whole country by using his position to undermine the administration of the president.

According to Obijiofor (2018, para1):

In 2013, former opposition leader and now Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago since 2015, Keith Rowley, said: ‘Any time a government resorts to blaming the opposition for its failure to deliver on their mandate and their responsibilities to the people, it is a clear sign that they have accepted that they have outlived their usefulness.’ The statement could very well be referring to the situation in Nigeria, since the All Progressives Congress (APC) won the presidential election in 2015. It would appear that, right from the time the election result was announced, President Muhammadu Buhari and the APC leadership set out a working manual that instructs them to attribute every failure on their part to the immediate past government led by Goodluck Jonathan of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP).

He further states that, for the past two (now three years and three months) years, the APC government has perfected the art of using every press conference and every public forum to blame the previous government led by Jonathan. The country is experiencing economic problems because Jonathan’s administration failed to plan for the future. The exchange rate of the naira has been wobbling because of the poor financial policies of the previous government. The quality of teaching and research in universities has collapsed because the previous

government had no higher education policy. Infrastructure is dilapidated because the previous government did not provide sufficient funds in the budget to take care of roads, water and health care. Unemployment has worsened because Jonathan's government did not care about the welfare of youths. Agriculture, the manufacturing sector, small-scale businesses and housing were suffering because of negligence by the previous government. The power sector is what it is because of Jonathan's government. Now the question is must we continue to hear this same story? The masses understand that the past administration failed to take up their responsibilities, hence; this is the main reason they elected a new one hoping that things will change for good but unfortunately all they see and hear are blame games.

Ojo (2016, para6-7) presents it in innuendos form thus:

I know why; but do you? Maybe it's been whispered in your ears once or twice too; but I heard a funny reason as recent as this morning. It is the People's Democratic Party's fault! A party that was in power for 16 years and now out for almost 500 days. Yes; It's Goodluck Jonathan's fault. It's Olusegun Obasanjo's fault. It's the militants' fault. It's Boko Haram's fault. How dare the United States stop buying oil from Nigeria? It's America's fault too. Really? No; it's Buhari's fault. He could have stopped the bleeding within 24 hours of ascending the throne. No; let's blame his Chief of Staff and members of his cabinet. Who else is to blame? Jagaban of Borgu, Bola Ahmed Tinubu! Aha! It's really his fault. He was the one who

colluded with the North and robbed the South of a continued Presidency.

Instead of charting new courses and mastering the art of forgetting the things of the past and pressing on to higher purposes, the flame of the blame game burns on. In the other hands, it goes thus; if the Presidency had remained in the South, Nigeria would have landed on the moon and we'll be in Eldorado by now! Nigeria would have become as Japan and dollar will be selling for N1. All the abandoned road projects would have been completed, and Nigeria Airways would have been running two flights a day to New York and Washington D.C. from Lagos and Abuja. Crude oil prices would have remained stable; electricity would have been running 24 hours and millions of Nigerians abroad would have returned home. It would have been party here, party there, party everywhere if the South had continued in the Presidency. The blame game and finger-pointing can travel as far as a fool desires. What a wishful thinking!

Therefore, it becomes a thing of concern to every well meaning Nigerian as it was to prophet Ezekiel during his time as to why people always shy away from accepting responsibilities when things go contrary to the anticipated. Most people point an accusing finger at others without noticing that the remaining fingers are pointing back at them. For instance, people had said that the government does not take care of the littered environment, but this same category of people throw refuse on the road side from their vehicle while travelling on the road. Some others blame past administrations in Nigeria for having nurtured corruption in Nigeria, while they still perpetrate corruption in their respective places of work today. We should

note that blame game could not solve the problem of the Israelites of Prophet Ezekiel days rather it brought divine rebuke to them. In the same way Nigerians should not expect Yahweh's approval of their blame game rather they should equally expect a divine rebuke. In view of this, Ojo (2016) states that:

A rich country which for many years made money, also failed to make progress. Retrogressive minds have always been in power. But blaming is not the Balm of Gilead that heals diseases. Blaming doesn't pay off the nation's international debt of \$60bn; or Domestic Debt of N8.51tn. Blaming doesn't fight terrorism neither does it increase food output. It's time to quit the blame game and get on the real game of rebuilding men and nation. Those who lead and follow must not rest on their hunches. Don't let your leaders intimidate you; it's time to speak up! Loyalty to Nigeria trumps loyalty to any human being who is alive today and may die tomorrow while Nigeria lives on. (para11)

Therefore, Ezekiel's message is not only for the Israelites but equally for the present day Nigerians. The idea of individual responsibility may seem a frightening conclusion as it strips off the comforting cocoon of irresponsibility so many Nigerians seems to enjoy as they recklessly blame the ills of the society on the past government, the leadership, colonial legacy or any other convenient scapegoat that may suit the occasion (Ezikepe 2005). Speaking on this, Jon (1994) laments:

How do people come to the point where they can treat one another so

badly as many do today...A favorite way to deal with one's misdeeds today is to simply blame them on somebody else. It is the parent's fault, or the husbands, or the wife's.... (para9)

Nevertheless, of the truth at least up to a certain point, the individual's shortcomings and responsibilities may credibly be blamed upon externalities. The world is aware of the level of corruption in Nigeria. According to Akinyemi 2018, para.5, Nigeria's type of corruption, has graduated to the level that a former British Prime Minister, David Cameron said, "...Nigeria is a fantastically corrupt nation...If UK were to have been that badly looted, UK would not have been able to survive it!" It is unfortunate that Nigeria's ugly stories of corruption are told and bemoaned almost everywhere. The past administration had looted our economy, the present administration is not spared out the matter. However, the line must be drawn and the individual must be prepared to face the consequences of his actions. Just like Ezekiel, through the doctrine of individual responsibility, annulled the belief in the ancient proverbial destiny of guilt laid on the Israelites by their fathers and replaced it with a new offer of grace, every Nigerian should believe and adopt this doctrine of individual responsibility so as to be given freedom to break out of the collective guilt of past administration and generations to a new beginning which puts him in a personal relationship of service and loyalty to the Lord Almighty as well as to this great nation Nigeria

However, this is not an extreme individualism as if the collectivism of the former days were to be dissolved and forgotten through the operations of pure individualistic, without concern for the Nigerian nation and striving solely after

complete self expression which may led to selfishness, rather we should realize that the community formed by putting into practical effects the divine standards of life, bridges the opposition between individualism and collectivism (Okwueze and Ugwueye, 2002, p.25). In the light of this, the concept of individual responsibility aims at bringing the people to the idea that despite the fact that they all live together in a society, everyone should be careful of one's actions, since everyone will be responsible for one's deed be it good or bad. Chinwokwu (2018) states that, "God is ready to replace anyone who fails to carry out the responsibility demanded of him as the case with David replacing Saul as King of Israel (1 Samuel 15)" p.15

Therefore, it is important that every Nigerian comes to the understanding that divine call for salvation has been proclaimed. Each man must decide rightly in the face of this salvation. "It is the combination of the above fact and the knowledge that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ez. 18:30) that will lead us to understand Yahweh's intention of coming to the rescue," (Okwueze and Ugwueye 2002, p27). It is clear that what God wants is the repentance and conversion of a sinner and not his death, this fact should be in the mind of every Nigerian. In line with this, Jiko (2014) maintains that, "what people think and act in the individual responsibility make them to think about their action carefully."

For instance, if Nigerians understand the position of Jiko above very well they would have apply more caution in whatever they do, hence; Blank 2017 will be saved of reasons to lament as he laments thus:

As a people, we are adept at passing the buck and blaming others for our failures. We hardly own up to our misdeeds or take responsibility for our actions and inactions. We see the faults always in our stars and never in ourselves. “He,” “she,” “they” or “them” caused it and never “I,” “me,” “we” or “us” that caused it. When it is convenient, we even blame God, the ancestors, the elemental beings and any other thing but ourselves.

Not surprisingly, our leaders have taken this buck-passing attitude into governance and it is a ready defence for their inactivity, lack of vision and misdeeds in office.

In the early 60s after we gained Independence, our leaders blamed the colonialists for every hindrance or misfortune we encountered in the daunting task of national building. Even problems that they caused by sheer recklessness and incompetence were blamed on colonial rule and the colonialists. We accused the colonialists of sowing the seed of disunity among our geo-political and ethnic groups. We accused them of planting corruption in our polity, and blamed them for failing to lay a good foundation for good governance, mass literacy, the development of science and technology, etc.

In the mid-60s when the military intervened in our politics, the new military leaders found it convenient to pass the buck and put the blame of our numerous social-economic problems on the ousted civilian regime. Naturally, we joined the chorus and blamed the politicians for entrenching, corruption, nepotism, divisiveness and all the other negatives. By the time the civilians returned in 1999,

it was payback time as they in turn blamed all our woes on years of military adventure into politics. It didn't matter to the politicians that they actively participated and indeed were co-travelers with the military in the governance of the nation. It is against this background that we can situate the penchant of the Buhari administration in passing the buck and blaming previous administrations for the myriads of social-economic problems bedeviling the country. It does not seem to matter to this regime that the bulk of its members were active and key participants in the regimes it loves to blame for our current economic woes.

The expectation of the citizenry from this administration is understandably huge and the pressure on it to perform is to say the least, stifling. It does seem that deflecting the pressure by putting the blame on previous administrations is an inevitable survival strategy for this administration. It must be pointed out that treasury looting and maladministration have been the hallmark of governance in Nigeria since the 70s or perhaps beyond. It certainly did not start with the last administration. Ask any Nigerian President or Head of State alive about the state of the economy he inherited. It is the same tale of woes, of looted treasury and hopelessness that they would recant. President Obasanjo for instance, was clear on this when he reminded President Buhari recently that the national treasury was in a worse state when he took over as President in 1999 than how it was in 2015 when Buhari took over as President.

It suffices to say that governance is about problem solving and not problem elucidation or analysis. It is about the formation and execution of policies geared towards improving the lives of the governed. Leaders at all time owe the governed

the duty to inspire confidence in them of their ability to find solution to their common problems. Even when things are patently bad, it is still the lot of good leadership to instill confidence in the populace and assure it of an imminent, bright future. But when leaders begin to create the impression that they are overwhelmed by the problems they were elected to solve and there is little they can do because so much damage had been done by previous administrations then they cannot instill confidence in the governed of their ability to lead and solve their problems. Listening to President Buhari on Christmas Day complaining for the umpteenth time that, “there was no money saved, no infrastructure built and power is still our main problem” does not inspire confidence in the Nigerian citizenry of a leader that will lead them to the Promised Land.

Ours is not the worst case of economic downturn in World history. Many world leaders had faced greater economic challenges and succeeded in steering their countries from depression to prosperity. Franklin D. Roosevelt for example had the misfortune of ruling the United States of America during the time of unprecedented economic depression and war. What he did was to put in place a well articulated and ambitious programme for relief, recovery and reform called “the Great Deal”, which began to yield considerable dividends in a short time and Americans were the better for it, (Blank, 2017). Such a well thought-out and articulated policy to get Nigeria out of her economic downturn is clearly absent in the Buhari administration. It further states that; “Indeed, I am of the firm belief that policy flip-flops, a slow and lackadaisical approach to governance as well as a near absence of policy direction by the Buhari administration, are factors that have

contributed more to the economic recession that we face than the misdemeanors of the previous administrations.”

Treasury looting and other misdemeanors of officials of previous administrations should and must be looked into and appropriate sanction applied as the law dictates. To that extent, probing or prosecuting officials of the last administration as is being done by the Buhari administration is in order, commendable and rightly appreciated by the Nigerian masses. However, this should not be seen by the government as the panacea to all our problems and a means to get us out of the economic meltdown, The Federal Government should and must do more than this. It should take responsibility and charge of governance by instilling confidence in the masses through execution of articulate, well-thought-out and practical programmes and not a daily sermon on the damage done to the economy by previous administrations and *ipso facto*, how unwholesome and hopeless our situation has become.

The call for salvation through individual recognition of their sin and repentance is for everybody, but unfortunately just like in Ezekiel's days many people are contented with the old order, that they did not want to welcome the divine promise of new order. Thomson (2017) made it clear that “...so far as responsibility is concerned; God deals with men as individuals.” According to Okwueze and Ugwueye instead of welcoming the divine order, with joy, “they go on obstinately maintaining the son's inheritance of paternal guilt”. In the same vein, Jon (1994) states that, “it had become a fashionable thing to say a common excuse to blame the plight of the nation on the previous generations”. It is not that those

generations were without fault, they were not, it is just that salvation has been offered to the present generation not to share from their fault only if they will accept the new divine order of salvation which states that, it is the soul that sin, who will die not another person dying for the sin of another man. The people of Israel had drawn a clever picture of a parent eating a sour grape but the children's teeth being set on the edge as if to say they were only innocent victims and not to be blame for their suffering and error.

Hence; the Lord told the Israelites to stop using the ridiculous proverb because it was not true. It is not true today either, rather it is false that cannot be seen even as collective responsibility. The researcher concurs with Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002) that, "with this concept of individual responsibility, Ezekiel has broken through the conventional theory of a divine retribution prolonged through succeeding generations...", (p.31) prophet Ezekiel's exposition is to be read in the light of present urgent pastoral situation in Nigeria society. Those who make light of sin to gain wealth, fame, population e.t.c, are to be warned of the stringency of divine justice. The mind of God in this message is that those who are in distress because they see no hope are to be encouraged in the obedience which represents the right response to Yahweh's purpose. Ezekiel being the watchman to the people of Israel in exile shows God's concern for his people, both the just and unjust need the watchman's warning. The just and righteous ones need the warning in order not to trust in their righteousness as an excuse for playing with evil. The researcher finds it interesting to end this section with these words of Weebies, "History teaches us that states that have emphasized

collective responsibility over individual responsibility have always been the worst at human right abuses". Individualism and individual responsibility are key elements of freedom. Hence, freedom for improvement of one's self and country not freedom for destruction.

4.2 The message of the text for individual responsibility in Nigeria

The saying by Pratte (2004) that, "No one else can be saved for us, and no one else can decide whether or not we will be saved." Seems to be of no meaning in the heart of the Jews and the exiles in particular during prophet Ezekiel days, as well as in the heart of the contemporary Nigerians. The word "Retribution according to Gadsby (2003, p.1213) means a severe punishment that is deserved by someone for the wrong one has done. In other words, it is the dispensing or receiving of reward or punishment according to the deeds of an individual. Ezekiel, quite like other prophets who preceded him, had a message for the covenant community known as the 'house of Israel' about the wrath of God that was to befall them. Despite the fact that the community of Israel deserved suffering divine judgment, there were within the community, persons who were caught in the coils of the tragedy. This led to the question about the destiny of the individual in Israel, it should not however, be assumed that Israel's faith up to this point in time had stressed only on the collective responsibility of Israel without minding the individual members of the house.

Nevertheless, at the time the house of Israel was in interim disentanglement with God and was in exile, the question as regarding the destiny of the individual

becomes a very serious issue than ever before. The book of Genesis (18:22-33) talks about Abraham's intercession for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, where he pleaded and convinced God to promise not to destroy the city if he could find ten righteous persons there. In second Samuel 24, David acknowledges his guilt and protested against Yahweh's affliction of plagues on the innocent ones. In the same way, every elected leader in Nigeria should desist from continually blaming past leaders but should take responsibility during their era of government. Thus in the time of Ezekiel, the suffering of the assumed innocent came to be a burning issue.

They were insisting on not being the primary cause of the evil that evoked God's punishment and therefore should not be blamed. They took the easy way out and shifted the blame to earlier generations. In the same way, the present political administration in Nigeria is shifting their blame and responsibility to the past generation and administration. Oluogunjobi (2016) notes that:

In his Sallah message on last Sunday, President Buhari's had another blame-riddled speech for Nigerians. "This present recession is as a result of cumulative effects of worldwide economic downturn and failure in the past to plan and save for difficult times. It is impossible to separate the present from the past to appreciate the extent to which mistakes of the past are affecting everyday life today. (para.12)

It is true that the present cannot be separated from the past and even the future, but the present administration/dispensation must take up their challenges without making boring references to the past. Ezekiel took the challenge to defend God's justice against those who say that 'the way of Yahweh is not fair' (Ez. 18:25

& 29; 33:17-20). It was this mood of pessimism and fatalism that Ezekiel sought to correct in the psyche of his generation who were caught in a fateful situation. With some oversimplification, he argued that the acts of the past generations did not determine the response of the present generation, because a good father' can have a bad son and vice versa. He emphasized that in each case; individuals were responsible for their own destiny and were not puppets of heredity. Each individual must answer to God personally. This brought the saying that the soul that sin shall die (Ez. 18:4).

Using this concept of individual responsibility prophet Ezekiel had broken through the conventional theory of divine retribution prolonged through succeeding generations (Okwueze and Ugweye, 2002). This concept had been in existence as could be seen in king Amaziah's refusal to slay the children of his father's murderers, believing them to be innocent of the offence. And also in the Deuteronomic code which had made it illegal to punish children for the sins committed by their fathers (Deut.24:16). Ezekiel, therefore, had to deal with the question of divine justice in a historical arena where it was assumed that the deeds and decisions of one generation affects later generations, because the people of Israel who were in exile thought their fathers were responsible for what had led to their exile. The present 'political exile' in Nigeria is equally been shifted to the past generation as buttress by Fabiyi, et al; "When Obasanjo became President in 1999, there were many challenges he inherited from the past military governments but he was working. Buhari has been in power for nearly three years and he continues to blame the past government." Ezekiel, through the concept of

individual responsible, aimed at bringing light into the dark path the people were walking, and by so doing, prove Yahweh's uprightness, fairness and unbiased policies before those who thought Yahweh was unfair, (Ezikpe 2005).

This is clearly put in verses 20ff of Ezekiel 18 thus: "the soul who sin shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." It is no longer the idea that a son will suffer for the sin of his father as Yahweh had said that he will visit the sins of the father on the son, to third and fourth generation. Following this, Okwueze and Ugwueye (2002) state that; prophet Ezekiel expressly rejects this practice of inherited quit. He tells his immediate audience to stop blaming past generations, but as the community of the house of Israel alive today, they should turn to Yahweh in repentance bearing in mind that each person must henceforth be held accountable for his deed by God.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary

Following this work closely, one will see the attitudinal orientation of Nigerians towards facing their responsibilities in all aspect of live. The work investigated into the belief of the Israelite on individual and collective responsibility, and bringing it down to Nigeria contemporary society in which Nigerians are always in search for one excuse or the other when they have failed in what they were supposed to do. Nigerians always seem to take solace in heaping the burden of their responsibility on the past administration or whichever factor that may be in position to receive such blame at that particular time.

The study investigated into the reasons for the Israelites of Ezekiel's time believes in inherited sin which was traced back to the Decalogue. As it is clearly stated and pronounced in the Decalogue that God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him. However, God through Prophet Ezekiel warned that it should not remain so again in the land of Israel rather, the soul that sins shall die. The children shall not suffer for the sins of their father neither shall the fathers suffer for the sins of the children.

The proverb which says that "the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge" had been abolished by Yahweh Himself. Furthermore, the work portrays how irresponsibility had affected Nigerians and Nigeria as a country. It equally proffers solution to the situation by calling everyone to realize their individual responsibility which in turn will lead to effective collective responsibility.

Finally, the call for repentance and recognition of individual responsibility has been made in this work even as salvation is individually attained.

5.2 Contributions to knowledge

This work has been able to justify that the sad nature of Nigeria is due to the blame game among Nigerians. Also, the work has added to body of literature on blame game panorama in Nigeria. This work looks into the original text of the Old Testament (Ezekiel 18:1-4) in order to understand the concept of blame game in Nigeria.

5.3 Limitation

The study had to face some difficulties which include insufficient materials in the area of the study. Many scholars who wrote on individual responsibility focus more on societal aspect not really in relation to Old Testament. Finance was another challenge that posed a big threat to this research work. However in the midst of all these challenges, the work came out victorious.

5.4 Suggestion for Further Research

In carrying out research on individual responsibility it is suggested that one should blend it with collective responsibility, that is; state how individual

responsibility will lead to effective collective responsibility. Some scholars went extreme in emphasizing individual responsibility which according to May (1972:23), "can become an egocentric manipulation of others a compulsion that defeats genuine morality and yields only a counterfeit sense of significance". Nevertheless individual responsibility is a concept which every Nigerian has to accept and live out. Boosting individual responsibility in the country which will make it a better place to live is very important and it is in this light that we suggest that research should be conducted on the following.

Firstly, the role of morality and individual responsibility towards national development. It is obvious that a society that has little or no regard for moral values is a dead society, in the sense that human beings do not care about what is right or wrong, it may also in one way or the other head towards violence, insecurity and destruction.

Secondary, Christianity and overemphasis on ancestral curses, Christians today stress much on ancestral curses and do all form of things in form of prayer, physical excavation of charms, house cleansing e t c, to put of their evil effects on new or present generation.

Finally, research should be carried out on the place of the individual in a modern society. People are to be brought to the realization of their duty and what is expected of them in each and every society they exist.

5.5 Conclusion

Individualism and individual responsibility are key elements of freedom. Hence, freedom for improvement of one's self and country not freedom for

destruction. The idea of individual responsibility brings focus and hard working in life and removes fatalism and irresponsibility. With this concept of individual responsibility Ezekiel has broken through the conventional theory of a divine retribution which had existed through succeeding generations. Though the point of Ezekiel is unique in the Old Testament, for the reason that it depends on an artificial abstraction. It is not always possible to isolate a generation's life time in the same way as an individual's, but it was proper for Ezekiel to have used the concept of individuality in the situation which permeate his days and with which he was dealing with for it was dangerous to allow the exiles to hide behind an unbalanced view of their national responsibility in order to avoid the prophetic demand of repentance. In the same way, Nigerians which have like view of inherited punishment just like the Israelites of Ezekiel's days should come out of such thought and embrace individual responsibility knowing that they are answerable to whatever way they choose to live their lives. The fact remains that the fathers and fore-fathers were gone; the present generation is responsible for whichever way they choose to go.

Prophet Ezekiel's Exposition is to be read in the light of present urgent situation in Nigeria. Those who make light of sin in order to gain population or for any other purposes are to be warned of the stringency of divine justice. Those who are in distress because they see no hope are to be encouraged in the obedience which represents the right response to God's purpose,

Finally, every Nigerian should have it in mind that individual responsibility leads to effective collective responsibility and not selfishness. For instance if every

teacher should ask his/herself this simple question 'who shall teach my child when I am no more', such teacher will realize that it is his/her responsibility to teach every child he/she comes across very well since that child may in turn become a teacher tomorrow and most probably his/her children's teacher. Likewise every pastor should ask himself, if I mislead the entire congregation, who shall pastor my children. In the same way, every Nigerian should ask his/herself this question in any profession one finds oneself. When this is done, both individual and collective responsibilities will work effectively.

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