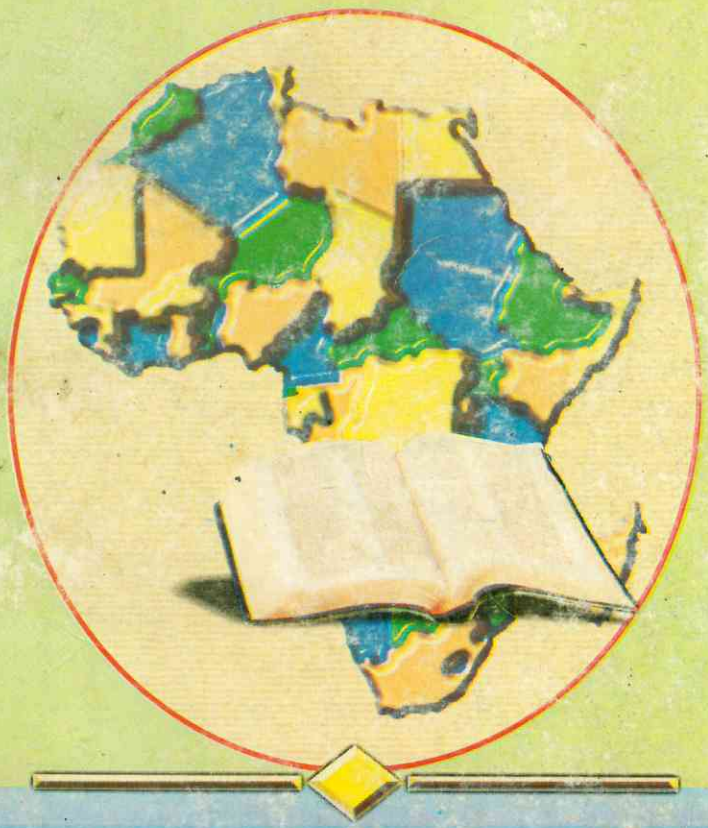
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REV. PROF. S.O. ABOGUNRIN

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CHAPTER 11

ELIJAH AND THE KINGS OF ISRAEL IN THE CONTEXT OF AFRICA TODAY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Dr. Caleb O. Ogunkunle

Introduction

There are three Hebrew terms used to designate prophets and the nature of their work in the Old Testament. The most commonly used term is *nabhi'* which means 'spokesman'; 'speaker' or 'mouthpiece'. The essential idea of *nabhi'* is that of authorized spokesman for God as in Exodus 7:1-2. The second term used for prophet is *ro'eh* (seer) which is from the verb *ra'ah* which means "to see, observe, perceive, get acquainted with, gain understanding, examine or look after".[1] The word is used about twelve times in the Old Testament as an alternate for *nabhi'*.[2] The third term is *hozeh* (seer) which is from the verb *haza* which means "to look, see, behold, prophesy"[3] The word is related to divination and seeing vision. For example, Amaziah in Amos 7: 12 addressed the prophet as a *hozeh* urging him to prophesy in Judah.[4]

Old Testament prophecy attained its normative stage in the life and person of Moses. It is obvious ever since then that a genuine prophet speaks in the name of Yahweh (Deut 18:16) and his predictions come to pass (Deut 18: 21-22). Usually a true prophet receives revelation from God and speaks forth the same message to the people. Incidentally, the kings of Israel, both good and evil, had prophets sent by God to advise, confront and aid them. King Saul had Samuel sent to him; King David had Nathan sent to him; King Ahab had Elijah sent to him; Kings Ahaz and Hezekiah had Isaiah sent to them, etc. God in His sovereignty continues to send His prophets to every

generation as seen in our contemporary African society. The main task of every prophet, either in Ancient Israel or in our contemporary society is reformational. He speaks and challenges people to turn from their sinful practices to the teachings of the Law of God. This concept is corroborated by Chris Manus who notes three things concerning an inspired prophet of God: "he speaks and acts against the established institutions; he brings renewal; and he claims to be directly inspired by the Holy Spirit."[5]

This paper examines Prophet Elijah, one of the monarchical prophets, and who is regarded as one of the greatest prophets. Elijah had a serious confrontation with King Ahab and his son, Ahaziah. The study is done with a view to examining the difficult task before the prophet in the presence of the kings of Israel. Also, the paper examines the challenges facing our contemporary African prophets in their dealings with kings and political leaders.

The paper adopts both historical-narrative and comparative methods. The historical-narrative method is used as various scholarly literatures on Elijah, Ahab and Ahaziah are examined. Also, a comparative method is used whereby the activities of prophet Elijah and of King Ahab and Ahaziah are compared to the activities of our contemporary prophets on the one hand and the activities of our kings and political leaders on the other hand[6]. The paper makes use of several illustrations within the Nigerian context with a view to applying such to some other African contexts.

Elijah

Elijah, whose name means 'the LORD is my God', is said to have come from Tishbe in Gilead (I Kings 17:1). He is one of the 9th century preclassical prophets whose prophetic ministry is recorded in I Kings 17:1-19:21; 21:1-28; and II Kings 1-2[7] . The Bible does not give us a comprehensive account of his call but the fact that he was called and sent by God is clear in I Kings 17:1. Robert R. Wilson describes Elijah "as a peripheral prophet who operated on the fringes of the Israelite royal court"[8]. Describing him further, he says: "The prophet is pictured as an ardent opponent of Baal worship, a lonely figure who condemned the religious establishment and advocated reforms".[9] Elijah ministered

during the reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah, a period known for its violent persecution of Yahwism in Israel. But then Elijah "held strongly to the tradition of Yahwism and spoke a word of power to withhold rainfall, thus posing a direct challenge to Baal's claim of authority over storms and fertility."[10]

Elijah's primary concern was to bring the Israelites back to allegiance to Yahweh, an allegiance, which appeared to him to have completely disappeared. Elijah was God's first covenant prosecutor, for he charged Israel with its failure to conform to the covenantal expectations (I Kings 18:2), which, of course, attracted God's judgment on them.[11] It was noted that " Elijah used prophecy to reform Israel's central cult, which had been infiltrated by the worship of Baal."[12] Elijah, in particular, had confrontations with king Ahab as he accused him of religious infidelity and social injustice (I Kings 17:1; 18:18; 21:20-22). In fact, it was noted that there were "no other prophets in Israel who attacked the idolatrous kingdom of Israel as Elijah".[13] He confronted Ahab on his ill-gotten vineyard of Naboth and cursed him for the crime against the innocent man (I Kings 21). Because of his outspoken opposition to the official Israelite worship, he was suppressed and persecuted by the political leaders of the day, especially Jezebel."[14] Though the prophet was at times discouraged as a result of the persecution he experienced yet, he was generally a strong man. He is regarded as "a worker of miracles, a bearer of the word of God, a man who in all his days did not tremble before any ruler, and no one brought him into subjection".[15] Wilson notes that:

> Elijah's characteristic behaviour was that of a Mosaic prophet, who delivered the pure word of Yahweh to the people and who on occasion interceded for them. As a Mosaic prophet, his word always came true, and his attempts at religious reform were ultimately successful. However, his work had the effect of completely disrupting the central cult and the general social structure, and for this reason various unsuccessful attempts were made to suppress his activities.[16]

Kings of Israel: Ahab and Ahaziah

Ahab was the son of Omri, the founder of the fourth dynasty of the Israelite kings. Omri enjoyed a powerful kingdom in Northern Israel to the extent that Assyrian records dating over a century later refer to Israel as 'the land of Omri.' Ahab ruled Israel from Samaria for 32 years (874 –853 BC). He was the most wicked king Israel ever experienced, even worse than his father Omri who was worse than all before him (I Kings 16:15) [17] Ahab's reign was dominated by power struggle with Syria on the one hand and the threat of Assyria on the other hand. Ahab was able to fortify the Israelite cities and he undertook an extensive work at his capital, Samaria (I Kings 16: 34; 22:39).

The greatest influence during the reign of Ahab came from his wife, Jezebel of Tyre in Phoenicia, whom his father, Omri, arranged for him for political and economic reasons. At least, in spite of frequent wars with Syria, there were economic ties with Phoenician ports as a result of the marriage. But, unfortunately, Jezebel was a worshipper of Baal. She brought with her the Tyrian religion. She erected an altar for Baal, made an Asherah and brought with her a large number of priests and prophets connected with Baal worship – 400 priests and 850 prophets. Jezebel encouraged a large group of false prophets together with the devotees of Baal (I Kings 18:19-20). Prophets of Yahweh were persecuted and reprimanded for speaking the word of God. The true prophets were slain; altars of Yahweh were torn down; and prophet Elijah himself had to flee for his life. There were two protest movements at the time of Ahab. The first was the Nazarites who refused to drink wine and vowed to keep themselves separate from the society. The second group was the Rechabites who were a revolutionary group aiming to restore the conditions of the normal age. They refused to drink wine, till fields or live in solid houses.

Apart from religious deterioration, there were social evils, which made life unbearable at the time of Ahab. Even though there was wealth in the nation, it was concentrated in the hands of few individuals. The lot of the peasantry had deteriorated and the poor came to be at the mercy of the rich as illustrated in the story of Naboth.

Ahab was a childish man who brooded for days if unable to get his own way. He took his evil wife's advice, and listened only to false prophets who gave him good news. He surrounded himself with people who encouraged him to do whatever he wanted.

The second king of Israel whom Elijah had dealings with is Ahaziah who was the son and successor of Ahab.[18] Ahaziah reigned for two years (I Kings 22:51). He offered to help Jehoshapat, king of Judah but then Jehoshapat refused because he was afraid of an encroachment by Israel on his territory (II Kings 22:47-49 cf II Chro. 20: 35-37). Ahaziah walked in the way of his father and mother who had introduced the worship of Baal into the kingdom of Israel. He also walked in the way of Jeroboam, who had set up calves in the land.[19]

Elijah's confrontation with Ahab and Ahaziah

(a) ***Elijah's Announcement of drought (I Kings 17:1-6)***

God gave prophet Elijah a special assignment of predicting to Ahab, as a punishment for his idolatry, the coming of a drought and famine. Having been armed with the promise of God, Elijah went to the palace of the king and gave him the ultimatum. Elijah made it clear that Yahweh is the God of Israel and He alone is all-powerful. Elijah declared confidently before king Ahab that there would neither be dew nor rain because God had promised to withhold these from the land whenever His people turned from Him to other gods. Elijah's declaration was a special application and in conjunction with the threats of the law in Lev. 26:18-19; Deut. 11:16-17; and Deut.28:23-24.

This message would have struck at the heart of Baalism because Baal-worshippers believed that their god was the god of rain. The drought, brought on by the true God, showed that God alone is in control of the weather. This was a remarkable demonstration of God's superiority and of the total inadequacy and falsehood of Baal worship.

Having delivered God's special message to King Ahab, God asked Elijah to move eastward and hide himself because he would soon be hunted by the king. He obeyed God who provided for him miraculously. God directed ravens, birds that normally neglect their own young (Job 38:41), to bring bread and meat faithfully to Elijah every morning and evening.

(b) ***Elijah's vindication of Yahweh on Mount Carmel (I Kings 18: 16-46)***

Elijah proposed a test for king Ahab who had seen him as "the troubler of Israel" (I Kings 18:16). He asked the king to gather together all Israel on Mount Carmel, together with the 450 prophets of Baals and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who ate at Jezebels table.[20] The assembly was intended to be a confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal and Asherah, who enjoyed royal protection and were part of the central religious establishment (I Kings 18: 19). Elijah stood before the assembly and challenged them to end their double mindedness. He asked the people to choose between Yahweh and Baal, a choice that would also involve supporting either Elijah and the type of Yahweh worship that he represented or the prophets of Baal, who were the intermediaries of the god of the central cult. The contest, on the divine level was between Yahweh and Baal and on the human level, between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, that is, "the god's intermediaries."[21] Each group would make sacrifice to their God and the God who answered by fire would be shown as the true God. The prophets of Baal accepted to perform the sacrifice required. They solemnly called upon Baal from morning till evening but there was no response, despite the mutilation of their own bodies. It was after their fruitless efforts that Elijah prepared his own sacrifice. He took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of God had come (Gen. 32:29; 35:10). He built the stones into an altar. He requested that the whole sacrifice and its wood be soaked with water with the purpose of showing everyone present that the burning of the sacrifice that was to take place was not a natural phenomenon or a trick but was a miracle.[22] Elijah then prayed by asking God to show the people that he was the true God and to turn the hearts of the people back to Himself. Instantly, the fire of God fell from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of wood. Spontaneously, the crowd cried out in amazement and they all acknowledged Yahweh as the true God because He answered by fire. Having proven the prophets of Baal not to be genuine prophets, Elijah imposed on them the penalty demanded by Deuteronomic law (Deut. 18: 19-22; 13: 1-5). He slaughtered all of them.

(c) ***Ahab's Crimes Against Naboth And Elijah's response (I Kings 21)***

Naboth was Ahab's near neighbour in Jezreel. Apparently, they owned adjoining property. Unfortunately, Ahab with all his wealth was still interested in the vineyard of Naboth. Thus, he offered to buy the vineyard as it was a suitable piece of ground for a vegetable garden he wished to plant. Ahab offered to pay for it with a better vineyard elsewhere or with cash, whichever Naboth might prefer. Naboth, a God fearing man, and in obedience to the Mosaic Law, refused to sell his paternal inheritance (Lev. 25:23-28; Num. 36:7). Ahab refused to respect the tender feeling of Naboth hence he went home sullen and depressed. When Jezebel got to know of this event, she encouraged her husband and they planned the death of Naboth. As Ahab was going down to Jezreel to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, Elijah came to meet him with the word of God that he (Ahab) had committed the crime of seizing property that was not his own as well as killing Naboth. Therefore, he declared to him that "In the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood – yes, yours"(I Kings 21:19).[23] Thus king Ahab was condemned for the abuse of his royal power. Ahab's subsequent repentance in I Kings 21: 29 occasioned the postponement of certain aspects of this prophecy until the time of his son Joram, whose body was thrown on the field of Naboth (II Kings 9: 25-26). Ahab himself was killed in battle at Ramoth Gilęad (I Kings 22: 29-37) and his body brought to Samaria, where dogs licked the blood being washed from his chariot (I Kings 22: 38).

(d) ***Ahaziah's Evil reign (II Kings 1)***

II Kings 1 is an exposition of the reign of Ahaziah, which, though very brief, was characterized by the kind of evil which was found in the reign of his father, Ahab. He served Baal just as his father (I Kings 22:53). It was said of Ahaziah that he continued the pattern of national life established by his father with no improvement during his short reign[24]. Unfortunately, king Ahaziah sustained an injury as a result of his "fall through the lattice covering of a window in his upper story room" (II Kings 1:2). But then, in demonstration of his love for Baal

worship, he sent messengers to Ekron, a Philistine city of about 40 miles away, to inquire of Baal-Zebub whether he would recover.[25] Robert R. Wilson notes that

> This move ran counter to Deuteronomic theology in two ways. First, by seeking an oracle from a foreign god, the king rejected Yahweh, the true God of Israel. Second, the inquiry presumably would have required patronizing one of the intermediaries banned by Deuteronomy 18: 9-14 instead of going to Elijah, the Mosaic prophet through whom one should seek oracles from Yahweh[26].

> It is possible that Ahaziah did not consult the prophet of the living God on the basis that Elijah would not hide God's message, as the false prophets would do. In any case, the punishment of God for consulting a pagan idol rather than Yahweh Himself was that Ahaziah would not recover from his injuries (II Kings 1: 6,16). The confrontation between Elijah and the captains sent to him by Ahaziah raises a fundamental problem as some scholars see the story as an "unnecessarily cruel demonstration of God's power".[27] But then, one must note that the issues at stake justified severe action. Ahaziah showed complete contempt by sending a band of soldiers to arrest the prophet Elijah. Perhaps Elijah's position on top of a hill should have reminded each of the captains of Elijah's victory over the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel and of his great God given power. It is either that these captains did not make this connection or they decided to disregard it. Each one of them acknowledged that Elijah was a man of God (II Kings 2:11), but then ordered him to come down in the name of Ahaziah!

> Elijah's repetition of the fact that he was indeed a man of God shows that this was an important issue: the reputation of God was at stake. By sending fire from heaven to consume the soldiers of the king (II Kings 1:9), God was reminding Ahaziah that He was the Ruler of Israel and that every king should submit

to his sovereignty. Ahaziah disregarded the tragedy that came upon the captain and his soldiers and he tried the second time to force Elijah to submit to him (II Kings 1:11-12). Again, the fire of judgment fell upon the captain and his men.

Still Ahaziah hardened his heart. It should be noted that the third captain he sent had more respect for Yahweh and His prophet than Ahaziah did. Rather than demanding surrender from a position of assumed superiority, the third captain submitted to Elijah's authority, falling to his knees before him. Apart from the fact that this third captain recognized Elijah as a man of God like the first two captains (II Kings 1:9,11), he pleaded for mercy. He acknowledged that the fire from heaven that had fallen on the first two captains was caused by God. It was at this point that the Angel of the Lord directed Elijah to go down with the captain of which he (Elijah) obeyed. Elijah stood before king Ahaziah to declare fearlessly the massage that God had given to him.

Prophecy In Ancient Israel Versus African Society

In the light of our understanding of the prophetic ministry in Ancient Israel, which includes preaching, prediction and watching over the people, among others; it is obvious that these elements are equally found in the prophetic ministry in Africa today[28]. There are several men whom God has raised up as prophets in their various congregations to warn, admonish and preach to their members. Many of them in the African Independent churches are believed to have a clairvoyant spirit as they are regarded as bearers of God's revelation.[29] Therefore, our goal in this concluding part of the paper is to examine some similarities that exist between the prophetic ministry in Ancient Israel at the time of Elijah and in our contemporary African society. This will be considered under the following sub-headings: prophetic call; confrontation; false prophecy; and poverty and prophecy.

Prophetic Call

The Old Testament prophets experienced divine call and they perceived themselves as a vehicles through whom God spoke to the people.[30]

Elijah in particular considered himself as occupying a divinely appointed societal office, correcting, by divine word, illegal beliefs and practices at the time of kings Ahab and Ahaziah. This he did by the punctuation "Thus says the LORD" or "As surely as the LORD lives" which is repeated several times in his prophecy. Indeed, there are many African Prophets who received the call of God to serve Him in this generation. An example of such prophets is Timothy O. Obadare, of the World Soul Winning Evangelistic Ministry (WOSEM), who has been in the prophetic ministry for over four decades now. There are numerous testimonies as to the divine call of God upon his life demonstrated in many miracles, which God has used him to perform.[31] Another example of a prophet who is making positive impact upon people in our contemporary society is Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. He formerly lectured in Mathematics but experienced the call of God in 1973. He was ordained in 1975 and he assumed the office of the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian church of God in 1981, a year after the death of Rev. Josiah Akindayomi the former General Overseer.[32] One of the special gifts of Pastor E. A. Adeboye is the grace to receive 'word' from the Lord. This gift has helped him greatly to have positive influence in the Nigerian Society in particular and the world at large. Celebrating the 51 years of God's faithfulness in December 2003 it was reported that the church had "more than 6,000 parishes in Nigeria" and that the church was "fully on ground in about 100 other countries"[33]

Confrontation

There were corruption, greediness, wickedness and various forms of evils at the time of Elijah as demonstrated by king Ahab, his wife Jezebel, and his son Ahaziah. In fact, the real issue and the cause of all the trouble in Israel was that Ahab had abandoned Yahweh's commands and had, instead, followed Baal. Elijah did not take issues lightly with these political leaders and he confronted them on several occasions. While confrontation may not be something that is pronounced among the African prophets it should be on record that some of them do speak out on national issues. There are cases where some of the prophets stand out to confront the Government of the day and her policy as it may have negative effects upon the people. For example, the purported plans of the Federal Government of Nigeria under the

auspices of Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to ban miracle broadcast on air received criticism from Prophet T. O. Obadare. He described "such actions as nothing but war against God" and that the Nigeria Broadcasting Commission is "an enemy of God".[34] Also, Rev Samuel Akinbode Sadela, the 104 year old man of God said that it is not proper for the Nigeria Broadcasting Commission to ban miracle broadcast, as there are many true miracles and that many people want them.[35] A further example of speaking out against Government policy is reflected in the recent publication of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria. The fellowship used the medium to express her message of goodwill and solidarity to Christians in the Northern part of Nigeria and to express disappointment against the Government, especially President Olusegun Obasanjo for his open rebuke of Rev. Pam, the Plateau Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria.[36]

False Prophecy

It should be mentioned, though unfortunately, that there are several prophets in our contemporary African society that have affinities with the prophets of Baal at the time of Elijah. Perhaps some are in the prophetic ministry to enhance their economic gain and this may explain why so much emphasis is given to 'fore-telling' at the expense of 'forth-telling'. An example is the case of two fake prophets and a prophetess who had been identified by the police as fraudsters. They were accused of "deceiving their victims that the latter's money had evil aura and needed to be made clean with special prayers".[37] Two other examples of fake prophets/pastors include the case of two pastors of the Redeemed Christian Church of God who were accused of stealing about N50 million[38] and the case of one Taiwo Onabanjo who claimed to be a pastor. The latter is in police custody over alleged robbery of which he claimed that the Devil used him.[39]

Poverty and Prophecy

There seems to be a development of prophetic ministry in Africa today arising from what was obtainable in Ancient Israel as a result of poverty, which unfortunately, has been created by political and military

leaders. This issue of poverty has become a major concern for African political leaders. President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria has admitted that "abject poverty constitutes a major threat to the survival of democracy in Africa".[40] He stressed further that "unless the poverty question is tackled, democracy cannot flourish".[41] In fact, speaking of poverty in the Nigerian situation, it has been reported statistically by Mr. Boye Ilori, of the National Planning Commission that "67.7 percent of Nigerians are living below the poverty line. Put differently, he said, over 80 million Nigerians, based on the 120 million population estimate, survive on less than $1 per day".[42] Also, the 104 year old man of God, Rev. Sadela has called on President Obasanjo to provide food for the masses as the immediate solution to the poverty that has overtaken the land and which he also claims to be affecting the will of God.[43] Therefore, in the light of this threatening situation in the African continent, many people are afraid not only of the enemies or death but also of the uncertainty of the future, of what to eat, where to live, etc.[44] This situation, to some extent, has influenced the prophetic ministry in Africa as many of the prophets have had to encourage their members, during special programmes and services like 'Night Vigil', that the future is bright for them. Pastor Samuel Adegboyega gave a prediction that "Nigeria is on the way to total economic and political recovery from her problems if the citizens could draw closer to God and be obedient to His word".[45] Prophet T. O. Obadare declared to his members that " today is the day the Lord has ordained for you to go free from all evils and problems, provided you accept His covenant as your Lord".[46] Furthermore, in the light of the various problems confronting the nation, Pastor J. A. Olaniyi, the Oke-Ado Area prophet of the Apostolic Church has called on the Christian faithfuls to always shun evil acts and do good. [47] He predicted that " this year [2003] is a year of great reward, God is ready to reward everyone according to his deed"[48] Also, it is highly probable that the current situation of poverty and various forms of evils in the African society has made it possible for many contemporary African prophets to give much emphasis to healing, prosperity and supernatural breakthrough.[49]

Conclusion

It is obvious from this paper that prophecy occupied a special position in Ancient Israel as well as in our contemporary African society. God raised up His men like Elijah to teach ethical monotheism; to demonstrate His power over Baalism before the people; and to condemn social evils in the society. It is obvious that Elijah recognized himself as the prophet of God as he declared consistently the word of God to the people in general and to kings Ahab and Ahaziah in particular. He was not enticed with material benefits which was common to the false prophets. In other words, Elijah did not prophesy for political or material purposes but he worked for spiritual purposes for God and the nation of Israel. Elijah did not speak on what people wanted to hear but he spoke only on what God told him to tell the people – no matter how unpopular the message was. As such, the life and ministry of Elijah to kings and the people of Israel remains a challenge to the contemporary African prophets. In other words, there is the need for African prophets to re-evaluate their 'prophecies' and 'revelations' in the light of Elijah. They must see God as the source of prophecies hence they "must speak out today and at all times against our multifarious social ills; against all forms of oppression and man's inhumanity to man"[50] Above all, African prophets should not limit their message to 'healing', 'prosperity, and 'breakthrough' especially in the light of poverty that is threatening the life of most people in the continent. They should lead people to God regularly. They should declare to our political leaders by saying "Thus says the Lord".[51] They should stress the importance of obeying His word.

End Notes

1. Merrill F. Unger & William White (Eds.), *Nelson' Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), pp. 357-8.
2. Robert D. Culver, Ra'ah in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980) 2:823.
3. It was noted that of the twenty-two occurrences of the word, eleven times are connected with the name of a particular person,

indicating his office as prophet (Gad, II Sam 24:11; I Chro. 21:9; 29:29; II Chro.29:25; Heman, I Chro.25:5; Iddo, II Chro.9:29; 12:15; Hanai, II Chro. 19:2; Asaph, II Chro. 29:25; Jeduthun, II Chro.35: 15) cf. Robert D. Culver, "haza" in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer & Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago; Moody Press; 1980). 1: 274-5.

4. Ibid. cf. S.C. Mbang "The Agony of the Ethical Prophets and the Nigerian Response" In *Religion and Ethics in Nigeria* Edited by S.O. Abogunrin. (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1986, pp. 94-5.
5. C. U. Manus, "Elijah – A Nabi Before the "Writing Prophets": Some Critical Reflections" *African Journal of Biblical Studies* Volume 1, Number 1 (April 1986): 25. See also Douglas Stuart, "The Old Testament Prophets' Self Understanding of their Prophecy" *Themelios* 6 (1980): 9-14.
6. See Justin S. Ukpong, "Inculturation as Decolonization of Biblical Studies" A Commissioned Paper read at the 17th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) held at Lagos State University, Ojoo on July 6th-9th, 2004, pp.7-8; and Gerald West, "Decolonizing (South) African Biblical Scholarship: The Bible in (South) African History and Culture" A Commissioned Paper read at the 17th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) held at Lagos State University, Ojoo on July 6th-9th, 2004, pp. 6-8.
7. Other pre-classical Prophets include Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Ahijah and Elisha cf. J.Carl Laney, "The Role of the Prophets in God's Case against Israel." *Bibliotheca Sacra* (October-December 1981), p.314.
8. Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel,* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) p.145.
9. Ibid.
10. Jerom T. Walsh, "Elijah" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary.* Edited by David Noel Freedman, Volumes (New York: Doubleday, 1992): 2: 463.
11. William A. Van Gemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word: An Introduction to the Prophet Literature of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), p. 37.

12. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, p. 201.
13. C. F. Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes, Volume Three* (Grand Rapid: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, nd.) pp.229-23.
14. The Persecution motif in implied in I Kings 17:3 where God commands the prophet to hide himself. But this was fully developed in I Kings 18:3-4 cf. Wilson *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, p. 195.
15. T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, Texas: (Word Books, 1985) p. 13
16. Wilson *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, p. 201.
17. Thomas L. Constable, " I Kings" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament* Edited by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1985), p. 522.
18. There was another Ahaziah, King of Judah. He was the son and survivor of Jehoram, who was murdered by Jehu.
19. Keil, *Commentary on the Old testament in Ten Volumes, Volume Three* p. 283.
20. Carmel was a mountain ridge with many peaks intersected by hundreds of larger and smaller ravines cf. Joshua 19:26. See Keil & Delitzch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, p. 243.
21. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* p. 196.
22. Thomas L. Constable, "I Kings" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary. Old Testament*, p. 527.
23. Dogs licking up one's blood was a disgraceful death, especially for a king whose body would normally be carefully guarded and buried with great respect cf. Ibid, p. 532
24. Hobbs, *2 Kings* p. 7.
25. Baal-zebub was regarded as one of the many local male fertility gods which was credited with healing powers. See Thomas L. Constable, "I Kings" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, p.538.
26. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* p. 201.
27. Ibid.
28. Laney, "The Role of the Prophets in God's Case against Israel", 315. This understanding of prophetic ministry qualifies every

pastor of a local congregation to be a prophet.

29. J.O. Adeogun, "Psalter: A Tool of Liberation in Aladura Churches" A paper presented at the 17th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) held at Lagos State University, Ojoo on 6th-9th July, 2004, p.12.
30. Some of them are: Moses (Exod. 3-4); Elisha (2 kgs. 2); Isaiah (Isa. 6:1-13); Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4-19) Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1-3) etc.
31. Some of the healings that authenticated proofs of apostleship of Prophet T. O. Obadare include:
    (a) "A long time insanity healed" – see T. O. Obadare "Apostolic Signs (11)" *Sunday Tribune* 9 November, 2003, p. 24.
    (b) "12 years Barrenness Destroyed" see T. O. Obadare, "Be Thankful to God Always" Sunday *Tribune* 25 April, 2004, p. 24.
    (c) "Couldn't walk for 68 Years, but now a freed Woman" Ibid. etc.
32. See "Wind of change" A publication of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Holy Ghost Congress, 13th –15th December, 2001, pp. 6 – 9; and "A New Song" A publication of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Holy Ghost Congress, 15th – 20th December, 2003, pp. 6 – 12.
33. "A New Song" p. 6.
34. T. O. Obadare "NBC: Enemy of God" *Sunday Tribune* 25 April, 2004, p. 25. Also Rev. Paul Tunde Oginni, President, Bible Way Chapel, Ibadan said it is wrong for Government to dabble into religious matter particularly on miracle, rather, they should set up modality to prove the authenticity of such miracles". Cf. Ibid.
35. Samuel Akinbode Sadela *Sunday Tribune* 13 June, 2004, p.13.
36. See *Sunday Punch* 13 June, 2004, p. 50. the document was signed by 16 men of God, four of them are Dr. Mike Okonkwo, Dr. Wilson Badejo, Dr. Joseph I. Ojo, Pastor E.A. Adeboye.
37. Charles Nwachi "Fake prophets and prophetess Fall into trouble". *Saturday Sun* (15 May, 2004), p.22.
38. Richard Elẹsho, "Stealing from God" *The News* Volume 20, No.26 (30 June, 2003), pp.24-28.
39. See Ademola Adegbamigbe, Bamidele Johnson, Earnest Omoarelojie and Idowu Ogunleye "The Devil Used Me". The

News Volume 22, No.9, (8 March, 2004), pp.21-25.

40. Olusegun Obasanjo, "Poverty, threat to Democracy" *Sunday Tribune*, 7 March, 2004, p.5
41. Ibid.
42. Quoted from the Punch Editorial titled "Rising Youth Unemployment" *The Punch* (Tuesday June 10th, 2003), p.16.
43. Sadela *Sunday Tribune* 13 June, 2004, p. 13.
44. G.O. Folarin has expressed this in another way when he stated that "Prophets in Africa are contributing immensely to allaying the fears and anxiety of their adherents and clients. Many Africans live under the perpetual fear of enemies, sickness, childlessness and uncertain future". G.O. Folarin, *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy* (Kaduna: Baraka Press and Publishers, 2004) p. 146.
45. Samuel Adegboyega, "Nigeria will Bounce Back" *Sunday Tribune* (16 May, 2004) p.25.
46. T.O. Obadare "time to go free" *Sunday Tribune* (16th May, 2004), p. 24.
47. J.A. Olaniyi, "Your Rewards await you" *Sunday Tribune* (9 November, 2003), p.25
48. Ibid.
49. A careful study of some of the Nigerian contemporary pastors shows that some of them have given special attention certain aspects of the prophetic ministry. For example, the focus of C.F. Oyor is on healing ministry cf. *Sunday Tribune* (9 November, 2003) p. 24 and *Sunday Tribune* (25 April, 2004) p. 24; the focus of Pastor E.A. Adeboye is "Prosperity"; while the focus of Bishop David Oyedepo 'supernatural breakthrough' as demonstrated in the yearly themes.
50. Manus, "Elijah – a Nabi Before the Writing Prophets: Some Critical Reflections". p. 32.
51. G.L. Lasebikan, "Ethical Revolution – The Prophetic Model" In *Religion and Ethics in Nigeria* Edited by S.O. Abogunrin (Ibadan: Daystar Press 1986), p.90.