

Security Issues in Nigeria: A Re-Reading of LK12:39-42 in the Light of the Terror within and its Consequences on Vision 20:2020¹

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Abstract: *In the wake of the prevailing insecurity generated by the Boko Haram in Nigeria and its neighbours in the last three years, scholars from different disciplines are strenuously engaged in discourse on the impact of the insurgency on the socio-economic activities and life in Nigeria. This paper studies Luke's Gospel, chapter 12 verses 39-42. It adopts the contextual hermeneutical approach now rife in African Biblical Scholarship. The purpose is to unveil the meaning implicated in the text where the ancient author had addressed the readers of his community on the threats and severe persecutions masterminded against them by Judaic extremists and propagandists of the first Christian century. The socio-historical background underlying the Lukan text and its parallel in Matthew, chapter 24 verses 43-44 are exegetically exposed. Our findings indicate that both the physical and spiritual insecurity which awaited the members of the Jesus Movement reflect challenges characteristic of the contemporary terror within Nigeria today. The paper concludes inter alia that Christians in Nigeria should become extra-vigilant in order to guard their national and spiritual heritage given the continuing onslaught so that the envisaged proceeds of "Vision"20:2020 shall become realistic.*

Keywords: Boko Haram, Fundamentalism, Vision 20:2020, Transformation, Q-Logion, Kerygma, Redaction, Exegesis, Evangelization.

1. Introduction

–Security issues are everybody's concern" goes a contemporary jingle in the electronic media to alert the citizens of the challenges of insecurity plaguing Nigeria and the countries in the West African sub-region. Government is fully abreast with the rampancy of this evil pest and is doing its utmost to curtail the menace of insecurity that has so gripped the nation in recent times. Like the endemic corruption, it has become so virulent and getting out of hand to the point of crippling both the political and economic advancement of the Transformation Agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan's the Ruling Party in Nigerian. How can –Vision 20: 2020" become realizable given the present debacle visited on Nigeria by the Islamic insurgents and the *Boko Haram* terrorists who are causing serious mayhem and wanton destruction of lives and property through, among other means, suicide bombing targeted at state institutions, Christian churches, markets and property mostly in the northern part of Nigeria [2]. In spite of *Boko Hiram* mayhems, this –terror within" and its ethno-economic interests for just a few people in the north, its violence and crass depredation on people has engendered fatal consequences. Much of its dastard acts have resulted in more poverty and unemployment in the North; a situation that is unparalleled in the southern parts of the country. Little wonder why the level of poverty and the concomitant rate of underdevelopment consequent upon the dire lack of education, healthcare and employment is attributed to the failure of previous rulers of the North who had failed to provide social and basic public utilities to the citizens, stabilization of the economy, elimination of inequalities, the facilitation of equal access to development opportunities and the provision of the

opportunities for full employment of its teeming youths. Such failures on the part of the misguided elites who the clairvoyant new generation now see as the –self-serving leaders" have begun to cause much consternation and tensions among some of the restive youths. In this context, it is becoming apparent that the *Boko Haram* is manifesting itself as a sponsored terrorist sect with no clear-cut religious doctrines in their agenda. Rather the claim that Western Education and values are *Haram* is Qur'anically unfounded. This is vindicated by the obvious fact that the Yoruba Muslims who had been the beneficiaries of the Western education that had been provided free by the likes of the Awolowos, and their lieutenants had prospered the people who still excel in every mental and social development which western Nigeria exhibit today. The *Almajiri phenomenon* only found in the North bears testimony to the demoralizing absence of youth empowerment which the hated Western education confers. Apart however from the *Boko Haram imbroglio*, there is a marked incidence of sundry criminalities notable in the gory tales of kidnapping, hostage taking, illegal oil bunkering, pipeline vandalism, the menace of armed robbery in the homes and on the high ways, ritual killings, frustrations arising from ethno-religious fundamentalism and extremism, ethnic and sub-ethnic loyalties, existence of Para-military groups and general insecurity which more often than not arise from break down of law and order in virtually all the states of Nigeria. These sundry criminalities have weakened the social fabric that holds the nation together, breed unemployment situations, render employment –unfindable" by the teeming youths who tar-mark our streets and have become easy prey for hire and exploitation by subversive and criminally-minded individuals who, on the payment of a pittance, employ them to commit with impunity several kinds of anti-social

activities in the nation. I visualize the consequences of these shades of insecurity in the light of “Vision 20: 2020” project, which the Federal Government of Nigeria as a social agent in a welfarist economy ought to bear “the responsibility of ensuring optimum employment, equitable distribution of wealth among the citizens, economic development and economic growth...” [3]

2. Vision 20: 2020

The architects of the Vision’s philosophy assent to the ideology that “By 2020, Nigeria will be one of the 20 largest economies in the world, able to consolidate its leadership role in Africa and establish itself as a significant player in the global economic and political arena”. The great anticipation of the Economic Planners of the country is that by the year 2020, Nigeria should, if the national economy could maintain the growth rate of 13%, become one of the twenty largest economies in the global village. As earlier insinuated in this paper, progress in worldwide economy is largely guaranteed by sustainable internal peace, determined political will, uninterrupted provision of energy and general acceptance of the rule of law. In the wake of the national threat profile resulting in the present truncation of internal security and peace in the nation, how can we be assured that energy, the main engine of Nigeria’s socio-economic and industrial development, can usher in satisfactory, reliable and affordable power supply that can revamp every sector of the economy in order to create a level ground to tackle Nigeria’s hydra-headed socio-political challenges?

The Yara’dua-Jonathan Seven-point Agenda which has metamorphosed into the Jonathan-Sambo administration’s Transformation Agenda is essentially packaged into a strategy to realize the national developmental vision of 20:2020. Among other things, several issues slated into the Agenda are security, power and energy, food security, wealth creation and employment. While violent agitations of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) as well as other pockets of the Niger Delta militants have largely melted away due greatly to a haulage of government funds that has benefited the Amnesty Programme is now being replicated by the dastardly *Boko Haram* sect. Both phenomena represent sundry and disgruntled groups with contending interests which have constituted themselves into unimaginable sources of threat to national security [4].

Peace and security are doubtless primary requirements in the provision of sustainable economic development that can enhance stable and consistent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in Nigeria. In this light development in the energy sector remains extremely necessary in order to achieve sustainable economic promotion to prosper the “Vision 20:2020”. But the recurrent vandalizations of power towers as well as the constant manipulation of installed meters go a long way to scuttle the socio-economic plans being made in the nation.

Public theology raises the following pertinent questions; how can Nigeria keep up with Goldman Sachs’ identification of the nation as possessing the potentials for

attaining global competitiveness when her demographic data and economic settings are strewn with endemic social disruptions, wanton killings and maiming of innocent citizens and the dastardly destruction of revered spiritual sanctuaries as have become typical of the *Boko Haram*? Did the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and Vision 2010 not fail as previous rolling plans because internal security and peace in the Niger Delta and elsewhere had hindered the implementation of the road-map envisioned to attain those laudable visions? Is “Vision 20:2020”, now the latest rolling plan etched to drive Nigeria to “arrive” as one of the world’s largest economies in the 21st century, not already vitiated by the excesses of *Boko Haramism*? *Boko Haramism* is one single most critical threat to national security. Have we yet not known that *Boko Haram*

... with its string of mindless attacks on government and other symbolic targets, the extremist Islamic sect Boko Haram has left no one in doubt about its intention to make Nigeria’s corporate existence a thing of the past. They are only poised to shatter the already tenuous ties that are holding together Nigeria as a nation [5]

Theologically speaking, I want to assert that to re-position Nigeria to become one of the top 20 stable economies in today’s competitive world by 2020, the goals of the NEEDS Programme must be linked with the Transformation Agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan; especially when the Biblical injunction in Lk 12: 39-42 is religiously heeded to. Can Nigeria become one of the 20 greatest economies of the world, capable of consolidating its leadership role in Africa and establish herself as a prominent player in contemporary worldwide economic order and political fora the way some segments of the nation are being ravaged by thoughtless vandalism when, according to Nnaemeka:

We are living in a Hobbesian state of nature where man is wolf to man, or rather in the Darwinian survival of the fittest? [6]

The above is our context of interpretation. Lk 12: 39-42 and parallels is *re-read* in the light of this scenario. Therefore, the paper attempts to draw the attention to the criticality of the contemporary national security challenges that are fast-tracking the demise of the projected rolling plan for the attainment of national development in the context of Vision 20:2020. It is not a prophecy of doom to warn that the instability and insecurity of the Nigerian environment no longer appears germane to the realization of the “Vision 20: 2020” except that something miraculous happens.

3. The Historical Setting of the Text

Here, we wish to present, however brief, the historical context of this Synoptic text in order to determine its complex history in the earliest Christian times from which the event that had occasioned the composition of this particular Sayings tradition had, as an “oral” communication commonplace in our African communities

even today, taken place so that the words spoken can be understood. Indeed, an essential aspect of the process of understanding oral communication involves the exposition of the context and the occasion in which speech had taken place [7]. Here, we go:

Reliable historical sources are weighty on the fact that Antioch, on the River Orontes, the metropolis of Syria with a population of over 250,000 inhabitants in antiquity was the second centre of the early Christian Movement; the *Jesus People*. Because of its location on the expansive routes from Asia Minor, modern Turkey, to the East; a preponderant and an influential community of Jewish extraction flourished there. In Samaria, and Syria; especially in Antioch, some two years after the Pentecost event, that is, quite an early date, around 32 AD, the Christian community was probably established there through the preaching activities of some Greek speaking Christians who had fled from Jerusalem about 31/32 AD. According to Acts, the principal leaders of the church were of Jewish extraction largely from Jerusalem (Acts 13:1). It was here that —~~the~~ Jesus people” were designated *christianoï* by the Roman officials. From 42-44 AD, Paul carried out intensive evangelization programme in Antioch. The initiative for the Gentile mission outreach was single handedly borne by the church in Antioch (Acts 15:2). By 45 AD Antioch had become the robust base of Paul’s missionary operations in Asia Minor and in Greece. Barnabas, by 49 AD had himself found Antioch a suitable centre of his own missionary activities to Cyprus. It is entertained in some scholarly quarters that if Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians was written in 48 AD, it —~~would~~ be the only early Christian text whose composition in Antioch is certain” [8].

Admittedly these *logia* (Sayings) transmitted in the Double Tradition derive from the Q – Sayings source since 1838 considered a hypothetical source [9]. Some Synoptic scholars have agreed that the Q – Source had originated from the Christian community in Antioch; the vibrant faith community which had become so committed to their calling into the Jesus Movement since the 40s. There is no doubt that theirs was the community that had sponsored and underwritten the expenses involved in the First Missionary expedition led by Paul and Barnabas into the region of Galatia, a vast heartland. This community had had a mixed population with an unwavering faith in Jesus as the Son of God and Messiah invested with the power of the Spirit. The conservative Jewish teachers from Jerusalem though not official emissaries of the Jerusalem triumvirate had penetrated into the newly found churches in Syria, Asia Minor and Greece to insist that it was *Kakos*, evil, *Haram* in its Arabic form if Gentile converts be not circumcised and made to keep the Jewish food laws. The trepidation that developed as a result of this —~~ough~~ talking” in the congregations of the faithful was so destabilizing that the parabolic *logion* was articulated to calm the nerves of many of the dissipated members who, in the light of the threats and the imminent and suffocating persecution leashed out by those Judaic extremists and propagandists, would wish that the *parousia*, the coming of the Lord, had become so much a reality so that they would escape from both the physical

and spiritual insecurity generated by these agents and their cronies.

In the 80s or the 90s, as many commentators agree, the Gospel of Matthew was written —by a Greek-speaking Jewish Christian” from Antioch of Syria [10] and much later, Luke on the basis of his knowledge of the Jerusalem destruction due to his description of the events as was recorded in Lk 21, has been assigned a post-70 date in Caesarea or Rome where a preponderant number of Christians of Gentile extraction had lived and where the Gospel of Mark was already in circulation [11]. By this time, the so-called Q-Document had become regarded as a reservoir of —the collections of sayings of Jesus preserved by his disciples for use in teaching or preaching” [12]. This preaching tradition had become received by the two evangelists who, each on his own, had incorporated and re-interpreted the *logia* to address new situations in the beleaguered churches of their time. It seemed that this was consequent upon the slamming of the doors of the synagogues against the Christians by the late first century which closely followed the decrees of the Council of Jamnia about AD 90, like ours today. And as Donald Senior correctly opines,

A church threatened with persecution would be sure to remember and to reflect on particular words of Jesus that soothed his disciples’ fears or that confidently predicted the survival of his church no matter what the future would bring. A church fractured by divisions would need to recall Jesus’ pleas for unity and selfless service [13].

Given this insight, and at that point in time, the evangelists insisted on the importance of *vigilance* and *alertness* among the Christians against —the thief who comes at an unknown hour by night” which expression reflects the intrusion of the law-exerting Jewish persons with Gnostic tendencies that rocked the unity of the nascent Christianity as are alluded to in Acts 15:1-2 and Gal 2:11-16.

Now at our own age and time and in the wake of recent happenings in Nigeria and the dastardly consequences to Christians congregations, church buildings and civil institutions, what does this Q- *logion* say to us? Has it still any relevance for us who live out our faith and hope in the 21st century? Does the text provide us any meaningful succor in this time of threats, spiritual anarchy and physical insecurity? How may we re-evaluate the saying in the light of today’s horrendous happenings in a nation whose peoples have bonded them to live in —one nation bound in freedom, peace and unity” and where —no man is oppressed”?

4. The Q - Text

Lk 12:39 tou/to de. ginw,skete o[ti eiv h;|dei o` oivkodespo,thj poi,a| w[ra] o` kle,pthj e;rcetai(ouvk a'n avfh/ken diorucqh/nai to.n oi=kon aurtou/Å 40 kai. u`mei/j gi,nesqe e[toimoi(o[ti h-| w[ra] ouv dokei/te o` ui`o.j tou/ avnqrw,pou e;rcetaiÅ 41 Ei=pen de. o` Pe,troj(Ku,rie(pro.j h`ma/j th.n parabolh.n tau,thn le,geij h' kai. pro.j pa,ntajE 42 kai. ei=pen o` ku,rioj(Ti,j a;ra evsti.n o`

pisto.j oivkono,moj o` fro,nimoj(o)n katasth,sei o` ku,rioj
evpi. th/j qerapei,aj auvtou/ tou/ dido,nai evn kairw/| Îto.Ð
sitome,trion;

Lk 12:39 But know this, that if the householder had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. 40 You also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an unexpected hour." 41 Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?" 42 And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time?"

Matt 24:43 evkei/no de. ginw,skete o[ti eiv h;|dei o`
oivkodespo,thj poi,a| fulakh/| o` kle,pthj e;rcetai(
evgrhgo,rhsen a'n kai. ouv k a'n ei;asen diorucqh/nai th.n
oivki,an auvtou/Å 44 dia. tou/to kai. u`mei/j gi,nesqe
e[toimoi(o[ti h-| ouv dokei/te w[ra| o` ui`o.j tou/
avnqrw,pou e;rcetaiÅ 45 Ti,j a;ra evsti.n o` pisto.j dou/loj
kai. fro,nimoj o)n kate,sthsen o` ku,rioj evpi. th/j
oivketei,aj auvtou/ tou/ dou/nai auvtou/j th.n trofh.n evn
kairw/|È

Matt 24:43 But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect. 45 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time?"

5. The Text in Its Context

The text under study, Lk 12: 39-40/Matt 24:43-45, is located in Matthew's gospel within the concluding section that 'houses' the speeches recorded before the Passion Narrative. In Matthew, this catena of parables provides insight into the Coming of the Lord that goes on to anticipate Matthean eschatological discourse. Within this block, there are intercalated the following episodes: (a) the Parable of the Flood and the Exhortation to Watchfulness (Matt 24:37-44/Lk 17:26-36 (Lk 12: 39-40) (b) The Parable of the *Fidelis Servus et Servus Malus* (Good Servant and the Wicked Servant (Matt 24: 45-51/Lk 12: 41-46 (c) the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1-13/Lk 12:35-38 (d) the Parable of the Talents (Matt 25: 14—30/Lk 19:11-27 before the account of Matthew's Last Judgment scene (Matt 25: 31-46) [14]

6. Exegetical Discussion on Lk 12: 39-42/Matt 24: 43- 44

Let us turn to an exegetical discussion on the text. It is noteworthy that the word, *exegesis* comes, from the Greek original, *Exhghomai*, —to lead out". When applied to religious texts, exegesis supposes the —reading out" of the meaning of a text. According to Hayes and Holladay, —Only when there is exegesis is there communication and understanding" [15]. Over the years, exegesis has come to be widely accepted as a critical explanation or the

scientific interpretation of any ancient text; especially a religious text [16]. Since exegesis primarily focuses on the written text, I need an analytic tool to assist me peel back the layers of interpretation Q 12: 39-42 had accumulated in the attempt to uncover the original meaning of the very earliest form of the text [17]. The goal is, as Law asserts, to lead me —to uncover excavatively the original meaning and use of the words and life situations" [18] in which the text was used and the source from which the Matthean and Lukan longer versions had been developed. Like an archeologist, I wish to strip away layers of soil to reveal the original form of the logion on vigilance and watchfulness in time of insecurity as ours today. This search does not however deny the text its canonical status as the final version of it recorded in both Matthew and Luke are still used by our churches and —ordinary readers" today. The main purpose of the exercise is to lead me to discover the significance or the relevance of the text in our time [19]. Since my topic falls within the ambit of Synoptic Gospels Criticism, I prefer to adopt the *Redaction Criticism*. What do Biblical scholars know of *Redaction Criticism*? [20] *Redaction* is the act of revising or editing. Puskas and Crump inform us that —Redaction is concerned with the selection, omission, addition, correction, or abridgement of information to produce a final written document" [21]. Hays and Holladay rehearse an ongoing *opinion consensus* that *Redaction Criticism* —presupposes the insights and perspectives of tradition criticism and form criticism" [22]. Indeed by *Redaction Criticism* Q 12: 39-42 and parallel is examined to detect and re-construct its pre-history that can lead us, as the editors of the *Hermeneia* (F.M. Cross and H. Koester) advised —to lay bare the ancient meaning of a biblical text or periscope. In this way, the text's human relevance should become transparent, as is always the case in competent historical discourse" [23]. The approach provides us a reliable degree of certainty of its usage in the formative Christian era. With the methodology, I seek to find out what the later authors; Luke and Matthew had done with their source, namely the Q as a *Vorlage*? If we are convinced that this approach is viable, the paper makes bold to draw from the findings of those earlier disciplines that had detected and demonstrated the ways in which the Q Logion in Lk 12: 39f had incorporated some additional facts during its transmission from generation to generations of Christians. The literary activities of Luke and Matthew as the final composers of this Q *logion* is examined on (a) how the evangelists had employed, reviewed or edited the Q — source, (b) their particular emphasis and distinctive viewpoints and (c) the life settings and the needs of the specific audience or readership being addressed by the evangelists [24]. In the light of these transformations in the form, content and function of the text, I wish to concern myself with pointing out the changes made and to account for their meanings in their latest version in both Luke and Matthew. To outline the task of the discipline I am adopting in this paper, I wish to examine the Q 12: 39f; examine how it had been received by Luke and Matthew and on the basis of my investigation reach out to how Luke and Matthew had redacted the Q-saying for the later churches.

The consensus agreement by most Synoptic scholars that when Matthew and Luke are following a common source like Q, Luke remains the more original, appears to peter out, otherwise why does Matthew, with his usual allocation of a place of prominence to Peter in his gospel [25], omit the dialogue between Peter and Jesus from which discourse the reader comes to recognize that the saying of Jesus is a parabolh... The best position I wish to maintain is to agree with Puskas and Crump that Luke's —*sc* of Q appears to have undergone fewer modifications than we find in Matthew" [26].

Luke represents the interest of the Q-community that had endeared itself to the prophetic tradition traceable to Jesus in the earliest church [27]; hence Jesus' word is a parable for all. In v. 39, Luke presents us with the New Testament concept of the *unpredictable thief* that prowls around at night. Matthew in 24:42-43 shares this metaphor; especially —*the breaking and entering of a thief to portray the return of Jesus*" [28]. The imagery of the —*thief*", o' kle,ptj was so evocative that it was employed to reflect the unknowable events of the end-time. The time of the end can not be predicted as much as the time of the thief at night is not knowable by the householder, o' oivkodespo,tj. [29]. For Matthew, our inability *to know*, is good enough reason for vigilance.

But the one who does know, the Commander in Chief and our chief security officers, who claim to know must be extra vigilant [30]. The onslaught of the *Boko Haram* is often unknown by any one of us, not even by the Security Chiefs and operatives [31]. What we know is that the sect has promised the people of this nation a —*Sunday-Sunday*" bitter pill. We do not know when and where they would hit next. The unpredictable and incalculable nature of the end and the unexpected coming of the Son of man [32] prescribed in the instruction of Jesus had inspired the evangelists to transmit a teaching to their communities so that the members should always be red alert to escape dangers.

On security issues, the *logion* is demanding Christians to be intensively vigilant to guard their lives, families, property and institutions and as well to carry out their Christian mandate of evangelization in readiness of the assailant. For Luke, the post-Easter *re-reading* and *re-utilization* of the saying is to emphasize the fact that the motivation for Christian living presupposes that the unsuspecting Christians should not allow themselves to be taken by surprise. The Q people's wish that the end should speedily come to pass to help them escape from tribulation has become in churches of Luke and Matthew a stress away from —*speculation about when the end might come*" [33] to an impending danger from extremists who might have come from official Judaism in the late 80s [34].

In Lk 12: 41, we find one example of Lukan compositional and redactional techniques; one that bears witness to his use of sources [35]; namely his addition of the question from Peter to Jesus in the original Q text [36]. We are told that what Peter tells is a parabolh one of the —*pictures depicting scenes of daily slave life and householder readiness* [37]" in agrarian Palestine; admits

the Social-scientist commentators. Despite that, the critical and exegetical questions one can pose here are multitude: What exactly is a parable? If a parable is a short story that teaches a moral or spiritual lesson; what is Luke driving at in reporting the question parable? But if we accept the more recent flexible interpretation of a —*parable* as an evocative metaphor, sufficiently imprecise that it will draw the hearer 's/reader's mind and imagination to actively wrestle with its elusive message [38]" then this parable from the mouth of Jesus was taken over by Luke to make a strong point in the Saying. Or why would we not see the parable as one of the —*minor agreements*" in Synoptic Studies as defended by the Leuven School? [39] Can it not be understood as a Lukan redaction and compositional artistry, one made to tie the *logion* to the apostolic authority of Peter as the basis for an —*instruction to the leaders of the church*"? [40] Or is Luke, here, not making a distinction between Jesus' words and Peter's? Perhaps, we can take solace in the fact that the evangelist as in Lk 12: 1-12, here betrays evidence of his technique of combining a Q — *Sayings material* with a —*source*" framework (Mark). Neatly put, I agree with Puskas and Crump that Q; and of course, Mark, function as precursors to the finished stages of the Synoptic tradition in which the Gospels of Matthew and Luke are classified [41]. The political and religious leaders of this nation are mirrored in the *wise stewards* of the Lord's work. They ought to be found active and red alert by the time the master comes while the authorities who presume on the delay of the coming of the master shall be caught up unawares and severely punished. The eventual Lukan theology here which I find pertinent in our time is that expressed by William Baird; namely that —*the leaders of the Church who have been granted special knowledge of the divine will*" [42], are expected to fulfill higher standards of responsibility in the context of contemporary social and political challenges confronting our nation.

7. Observation

The research on the Q — *logion*; namely Lk 12:39-42/Matt 24:43-45 yields some fascinating traits that are not quite dissimilar with the current situation in Nigeria. It is notable that the —*Jesus People*" whose complexion is reflected in the Q — Document were confronted with destabilizing trials, ordeals and tribulations visited on them by the representatives of the —*law-exerting*" persons from Judaism, the official religion of the Jews during the formative years of Christianity; mainly between the 40s and the 50s. Such hoodlums were identified with the strong metaphor: *the thief that comes at an unknown hour of the night* as is stressed more in Matthew. We know what the night robbers do, do 'nt we? They terrorize, brutalize the house owner and his family; ravage and pillage the house and often leave some inmates shot or mortally wounded. That situation was not so much different from what had prevailed in the first century Palestine. Such degrees of violent activities were meted out to Christians of those days because they believed and proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God and Messiah of Israel.

After some 30 years or more, the belief that the essence of the early Christian *kerygma* was *kakos* (evil) continued to be canvassed and upheld. The “Jesus People” were declared *apostynagogoi*, that is, thrown out of the Synagogues [43]. When, in the 90s, the *Jabneh Movement* was increasingly getting consolidated, it culminated in the enactment of the Edict – *Birkat ha Minim* (Benediction Against Heretics) by which the faith and teaching of the “Jesus Group” became publicly outlawed. People identified to have shown sympathy towards or converted to the nascent Christian faith were declared *apostates* whose lives could be taken with every impunity [44]. This period with its orgy of violence on fellow Jews and Gentiles, persons created in the *imago Dei* was when Matthew and Luke finally shaped their gospels. They took over the Sayings tradition of the Q – Community. They re-read the text in the light of the situation that had prevailed in their time [45]. *Redaction Criticism* has assisted me to recognize that both evangelists had reviewed the original *logion* to address the situations of their own congregations. While Matthew has given the text greater eschatological orientation with a call on Christians to live out their every day life in watchfulness of the parousia of the “Son of man”; Luke has added a question from Peter to it in order to give the injunction an apostolic stamp, authority and approval to counter those who had scorned and doubted the imminence of the parousia. Both had instructed the Christians of their time that vigilance and alertness were crucial requirements in times of insecurity; the type that had taken the lives of hundreds of people in Nigeria. Thus the lessons are still relevant in our presentday predicament.

8. Conclusion

This study reveals that from epoch to epoch the Christian Religion had experienced and continues to endure bitter maltreatment and fatal persecutions. The *Boko Haram*’s dealing of death and destruction to Christians, their property and institutions will not be the last of such alarming and despicable situations. The excesses and recklessness of the sect must be check-mated. The letter of the *logion* remains alive till “His Kingdom comes”. Extrapolating from the spirit of the injunction and the significance of the parable I find the call to all Christians to *minister reconciliation* in Nigeria today. This is only achievable, in my mind, through sincere and honest dialogue with the assailants than through retaliation and reprisals. Moreover, the eschatological *proviso* indicated in the ancient text behests Christians to keep in mind the *oneness* and *unity* of all humankind in God, the Father and the Creator of all of us irrespective of race and creed as we live out our lives as followers of Jesus, the Christ. In this light, Archbishop Anthony J.V. Obinna, the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Owerri speaking on the mandate of the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, has so eloquently advised on the egregious situation in these words:

To build a peaceful, just and covivial Nigeria, every single Nigerian must be accorded his inalienable sacred dignity as a person including the unborn child, and respected anywhere and

anytime as such. As human persons there is no difference in sacred dignity between an Archbishop, a President, a Governor, a driver, a clerk, a cook or a cleaner. Their difference in functions as important as it may be, is inferior to the differential dignity of every human person.

It is the failure to equitably accord respect to all Nigerians, the tendency to disrespect and maltreat Nigerians because of their lower functional roles in society and institutions that has hurt in many ways Nigeria’s effort to build an equitable family nation. We are fellow sons and fellow daughters of God and of this nation and of this one world, in short co-filials or co-filiates. As we emphasize our dignified and equally shared identity as sacred persons and co-sharers of human sonship (co-filiates) the peaceful; covivance of Nigeria’s co-filiates will become more manifest [46].

When we come to the full realization of this egalitarian theological principle, the obvious recommendation to our political and religious leadership becomes clear. I charge them to attune themselves to the current frustrations, concerns and anxieties being expressed by the international community on the sad situations in Nigeria, the giant of Africa. Instead of seeing our Muslim brothers and sisters as enemies we would rather see all of us as children of the same Godhead working together to promote unity in inter-religious engagements that will go along way to promoting peace and harmony required to prosper the “Vision 20:2020” agenda. Both Islam and Christianity are admittedly religions that preach peace, love of God and love of neighbour. It is a *must* to co-exist. The transformation agenda of former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan cannot but include this spirit of togetherness and collaboration between all sects of Muslim and Christian religions; a challenge for which the newly elected President Muhammad Buhari has taken headlong and had even traveled to USA to request President Barack Obafemi, among other things, to come in fully to assist Nigeria on this war within.

References

- [1] Originally a commissioned paper read at the 2012 NABIS 25th Conference on BIBLICAL STUDIES AND SECURITY ISSUES IN AFRICA held at Imo State University, Owerri, 10-13 July, 2012 now re-worked by two of us in the same Department before commencement of my leave in Southern Africa .
- [2] Take the case of multiple bombings at the Churches in Zaria and Kaduna on Fathers’ Day celebration , 17th June, 2012 which upset the former President Goodluck Jonathan and had generated much furor following his travel to Brazil on Wednesday, 20th June, 2012.
- [3] O. Ogunyemi, Federal Budgets in Nigeria, 1954-1999: A History of the Processes, Policies and Problems, PhD Dissertation, Department of History, University of Lagos, 2008, p. 28
- [4] As an expression of his disgust and to counter the continued existence of this menace, President Goodluck Jonathan had on the 13th of May declared a “state of emergency” in the three north-eastern states: Borno, Yobe and Adamawa where the insurgents have become dreadful in waging war

- against their fatherland and in threatening the corporate existence of the Nigerian nation and as they have begun to menace Cameroon, Chad and Niger neighbouring countries that have agreed to team with Nigeria to root out Boko Haram.
- [5] Nnaemeka, N.A., –The Menace of the New Cankerworm: Boko Haram”, in *The Maryland Enquirer: An Annual Magazine of the Institute of Philosophy*, Owerri, 6th Edition, 2012, pp.32-34, p. 32.
- [6] Ibid.
- [7] J.H. Hayes & C.R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner’s Handbook*, SCM Press, London, 1982, p.6.
- [8] E.J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission: Paul and the Early Church*, Vol. Two, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 2004, p. 1491.
- [9] Scholars have identified since the time of
- [10] Luz, Matthew, *Die Jesusgeschichtliche des Matthaus*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 1993, pp. 73-75; Davies W. D. & D.C. Allison, *Matthew*, Vol I. pp. 143-147; C. B. Puskas & D. Crump, *An Introduction to the Gospels and Acts*, Michigan, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2008, p.101- 102.
- [11] A.F. J. Klijn, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Leiden, Brill, 1980, p. 41 and Puskas – Crump, *An Introduction to the Gospels and Acts*, p. 126..
- [12] D. Senior, *Matthew: A Gospel for the Church*, Herald Biblical Booklets 95, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1973, p.17.
- [13] Ibid., p. 18
- [14] Cf. K. Aland (ed.), *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*, The Greek – English Text, 3rd Edition, UBS, Stuttgart, 1975, pp. 265-269.
- [15] J.H. Hayes & C.R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: ...* p.5
- [16] J.H. Hayes & C.R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: ...* pp.5
- [17] D.R. Law, *The Historical Critical Method: A Guide for the Perplexed*, London, T & T. Clark, 2012, p. 15.
- [18] Ibid.
- [19] Here, see for more details, G. D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd Edition, Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, 2002 and also, J.H. Hayes & C.R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: ...*, pp.5 -14.
- [20] N. Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1969; W. Marxen, *Mark the Evangelist*, ET, by J. Boyce, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1969; R.H. Stein, *Gospels and Tradition: Studies on Redaction Criticism of the Synoptic Gospels*, Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1991.
- [21] Puskas and Crump, *An Introduction to the Gospels and Acts*, p. 63.
- [22] Ibid., p. 94.
- [23] U. Luz, *Matthew 8 – 20: A Commentary*, ET by James E. Crouch, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2001, p. xi.
- [24] Puskas – Crump, p. 64.
- [25] D. Senior, *Matthew: A Gospel for the Church*, p. 62.
- [26] *An Introduction to the Gospels and Acts*, p.126.
- [27] See, for example, I Thes 5:1-3; Rev 3:3 and 16: 15
- [28] M. Boring & F.B. Craddock, *The People’s New Testament Commentary*, Westminster John Knox Press (WJK), Louisville, 2009, p. 92.
- [29] In the 1st century Palestinian rural sociology, it is noted that the –householders” ”did not live in isolated farmhouses on the farm property but in the villages and towns that were located centrally to the cultivated areas. This was done for the protection the village afforded”. See, Malina & Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, p. 122.
- [30] For example see, –Jonathan knows Boko Haram Sponsors – Cleric”, in *International Newstrack*, Vol 1. No. 35, April 16-22, 2012, p. 2.
- [31] This fact is notably drawn attention to by David Mark in his exchange with media men on both AIT and NTA Network News on Friday, 29th June, 2012; namely that the unknowability of the terrorist acts in the Northern part of Nigeria is one of the hardships involved in diagnosing the security challenges of Nigeria.
- [32] W. Baird, –The Gospel According to Luke”, in C.M. Laymon (ed.), *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, Nashville, New York, Abingdon Press, 1971, pp. 672-706, p. 691.
- [33] ¹ Boring – Craddock, *The People’s New Testament Commentary*, p. 230
- [34] ¹ J.A. Overman, *Matthew’s Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1990; J. Riches, *Matthew*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1996; D. C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community*, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1998; C.U. Manus, –Towards an African Christian Theology of Conflict Resolution: A Re-Reading of Matthew 18,15-17” in D. Senior (ed.), *The Gospel of Matthew at the Crossroads of Early Christianity*, BETHL CCXLIII, Leuven University Press, 2011, pp.585 -598
- [35] M. L. Soards, *The Passion According to Luke: The Special Material of Luke 22*, JSNTSS 14, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1987, p. 20.
- [36] Baird, –The Gospel According to Luke”, p.691.
- [37] B.J. Malina & R. L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2003, p. 279.
- [38] J.D. Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus*, New York, Harper & Row, 1973; S.M. TeSelle, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1975, N. Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom: Symbol and Metaphor in NT Interpretation*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1976; J.R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1988.
- [39] F. Neiryneck, *Minor Agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark*, with a Cumulative List, Gembloux, Duculot, 1974.
- [40] Here is a case of a *logion* with an apostolic name attached to it. The tradition supposes that the *logion* originated in the era of the Apostle Peter, when the Chief of the Apostles was still active. See, Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3: 1.1; also, Baird, –The Gospel According to Luke”” p. 691.
- [41] Puskas – Crump, *An Introduction to the Gospels and the Acts*, p. 64.
- [42] Baird, –The Gospel According to Luke”” p. 691.
- [43] –The Death of Jesus (JN 19, 28-30): Contextual Hermeneutics of Life and Death in the HIV/AIDS Era in Africa”, in G. van Belle, (ed.), *The Death of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*, BETHL CC, Leuven University Press, 2007, pp. 859-872; p. 863.
- [44] C.U. Manus, –The Death of Jesus (JN 19, 28-30): Contextual Hermeneutics of Life and Death in the HIV/AIDS Era in Africa”, p. 863.
- [45] H.C. Kee, –The Gospel According to Matthew”” in C.M. Laymon (ed.), *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary*, pp. 609-643; p. 639 who has correctly lent weight to my position by indicating that the passage –in its present form reveals more of the situation of the church in the midst of conflict and persecution than it does of the time of Jesus”
- [46] Most Rev. Anthony J.V. Obinna, *Reconciliation, Forgiveness and Peace: Building a New Nigeria*, Owerri, Assumpta Press, 2012, p. 12.