

# Exodus 8:16-19 and the Tragedy of Fake Miracles in Nigeria Christianity

Mayowa Stephen Thompson, Oladotun Paul Kolawole

Department of Religious Studies, Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji, Osun State; Department of Biblical Studies and Theology, ECWA Theological College, Kpada, Nigeria  
thompsonmayowa661@gmail.com

Asia Pacific Journal of  
Multidisciplinary Research

Vol. 8 No.3, 79-93

August 2020 Part III

P-ISSN 2350-7756

E-ISSN 2350-8442

www.apjmr.com

ASEAN Citation Index

Date Received: May 14, 2020; Date Revised: August 19, 2020

**Abstract** - *There is no gainsaying that fake miracles used by false ministers to attract, defraud and exploit people are a major problem in Nigeria. This problem has wreaked havoc and ridicule on the value system of Christianity in Nigeria; therefore, the task of this paper is to make a critical scrutiny of the societal ill (with specific attention to the vice of fake miracles) in Nigeria Christianity trying to excavate the reality of this challenge. This study explores the concept of miracle from its etymological meaning, the feasible roots for fake miracle invasion in Nigeria Christianity and the drive behind the issue at stake. Also, this study employs an exegetical and contextual methodology; with Exodus 8:16-19 (Third plague) as the theological framework. In view of the radical emergence of the debacle in question; the reality of genuine miracles is another bone to break; thus, this keeps the mind of a modern-man with perplexity and apparently fill its reasoning with numerous questions. Miracle is an important part of the religious activities that fosters faith in the heart of men; in these wise, contemporary ministers in Nigeria capitalizes on the gullibility of men to scam and swindle worshippers. Thus, Christians should be on the lookout so as not to fall victim; the Bible should be the standard on which every form of supernatural activities is done and judged.*

**Keywords:** *Tragedy, Fake, Christianity, Miracle, Nigeria.*

## INTRODUCTION

Every society has its woes; meanwhile, Nigeria is not an exemption. It is conspicuous today that many Nigerians are daily been hoodwinked in their desperation to free from deluge problem besetting them. As a result, many Christians are victims off also religious ministers. One reads and hears of some fake miracles happening in Nigeria. For instance, it was reported in Punch Online News on 25th of October, 2019.

*Pastors come under fire for alleged stage-managed miracles: The founder of Mountain of Liberation and Miracle Ministry, aka Liberation City, Dr. Chris Okafor, has come under fire on social media after a video clip showing him performing what appeared like a miracle created a controversy. However, the same woman was shown in another video clip claiming she had the same problem as another unidentified pastor prayed for her in the public [1]*

The above scenario on the prevalent challenge of fake miracle in Nigeria is so devastating because it has wreaked havoc and ridicule on the worth-system of Christianity. A critical look of previous report on Gist online News 11/24/2016 also gives an account of a man who allegedly died during fake miracle. The man of God in question had paid the man who is a trader, the sum of N500, 000 to pretend to be dead and to be carried in a coffin to the venue of a crusade where the pastor would perform the fake miracle and “raise” him from the dead. But before the coffin could get to the venue of the event, the trader had reportedly died probably due to suffocation.[2] This ravaging occurrence calls for a cogent need to look at what miracles entails from the biblical perspective so as to address this phenomenon as it goes beyond the borders. Hence, this paper makes a critical scrutiny of the societal ill of the vice in Nigeria Christianity trying to excavate the reality of this phenomenon and affirming whether genuine miracles still exist. Interestingly, God did not leave his people blinded as the Bible is not silent on the issue; this in turn makes the miracle performed by Moses (Ex 8:16-19) a cardinal part of this discourse.

This study delves into the concept of miracle through the biblical purview. Although, miracle can be examined in philosophical perspective; this is not the focus of this work. It must also be specifically noted that no attempt will be made outside the confined of Nigeria Christianity; this is the bearing of the study. In essence, this study is aimed at excavating the challenges of fake miracles in Nigeria Christianity with reference to Exodus 8:16-19 as a biblical thermometer and thermostat. This work is accurately enshrined on Exodus 8:16-19 as the theological framework to analyze examine and evaluate the societal malady which is ravaging Churches in Nigeria today. Based on the scope and objective of this work, it is imperative that the researcher carefully choose a suitable research methodology for the goal of this work. The study adopts exegetical and contextual methodology for the research.

This research is significant in the sense that it addresses the church on the reality of false miracles occurrences and its multiplicity which is prevalent in the contemporary Nigerian Christianity. The tragedy of fake miracle has a reverberating effects on Christianity and because of this; it becomes significant to add to the update of what others have documented to keep the people abreast and this study also proffers biblical cautions for Christian's as awareness for the observed vice. These occurrence in turn paints the Christianity face black in Nigeria; people now have issue with even genuine miracles; [1] Christians in the recent time are in a state of dilemma as it concerns which is true and which is not, considering the rampant stories of exposed arrange and false miracles across the nation.

Obviously, today people to perform miracles in the name of God and it are not real in the factual sense because it is accompanied by diabolic and deceitful practices. It is sardonic and quite disheartening that some of the so-called miracles alluded to these prophets today are fabricated miracles. They have mixed magical power, syncretism and human wisdom with Christian faith and practice in doing missions. Hence, neglecting the Holy Spirit as tool for effective ministry. This deceitful practice has affected the reputation of the Church in Nigeria as many of these prophets want to make name and recognition. As one thinks of this problem facing the Christianity in Nigeria today, one is moved to ask the following questions; what is the feasible root for fake miracles in Nigeria? What are the fuelling factors responsible for fake miracle invasion in Nigeria Christianity? Are there authentic miracles at

all? The questions raised forms the theoretical framework of this study.

### Definitions of Terms

The study sees the need to take cognizance of the word 'miracle'. Just as Sunday Egwu opines, "Once a definition is given and accepted, it then narrows the boundaries of disagreement, thus enabling all to have a common focus of what the discussion is all about"[3]

**Miracle:** Miracle, is a term used for "wonderful occurrence" and thus derived from the Latin word *miraculum* which means "objectof wonder". Merriam Webster Online Dictionary opines that "miracle is an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs the healing miracles described in the Gospels". [4] With the above definition, one can asserts that miracle can only be a product of supernatural agencies which exceeds human power, natural or scientific explanation.

**Fake:** The word fake is "an object that is made to look real or valuable in order to deceive people". [5] In other words, it means to makesomething or result that is not real look exactly to be factual with the aim to deceive an individual or group of people. Fake has its synonyms such as: forgery, counterfeit, pirate, fraud, sham and copy.

### Background to the Book Exodus

Profoundly, the book of Exodus continues the story line of God's dealing with the descendant of Abraham that began in Genesis. Exodus is of focal importance in the Old Testament history. Janzen claims that to eliminate this book would downfall the Old Testament history as the elimination of the four Gospel would downfall the New Testament [6]. In the same vein, John Muddiman submits that the book of Exodus is in various way the center piece of Pentateuch. Genesis exploration is about the Israel's progenitors while Exodus notifies how they come to be a nation through the act of God. It reveals their foundation history, identity document, informing them where they emanated from and their place in the plan of God's sovereignty [7].

The title "Exodus" is quite appropriate, though that was not the original name in the Hebrew text. The text accompanies the custom of designation of a book by the opening words. That is, "These are the names" (*We'elleh shēmôth*), or more simply, "names" (*shēmôth*). Longman and Dillardare of the view that the title "Exodus" originated from the Latin Vulgate which denotes the book as *Liber Esodus*. "We'elleh shēmôth"

which is the opening word of this book provides a link with Genesis. The book started with the use of conjunction “and” indicating that it continues a previous narrative. On the other hand, Genesis 46:8 used the phrase “these are the names of the sons of Israel (Jacob and his descendant) who went to Egypt during the era of Joseph. The concluding part in Genesis account also provides a link between Genesis and Exodus (Gen. 50:22-26) [8].

Traditionally, it is believed that the book of Exodus was written under the direction and superintendent of Yahweh. Merrill posits that the book of Genesis is the primary options for the composition of Exodus which fall into two categories. The first category alleges the use of various sources, gathered and edited by someone long after the Moses and the second views Moses as having some responsibility as the author or source of the traditions [9]. Long and Longman III opines that some school of thought holds that Moses wrote the major parts of Exodus while some additions were later made by a redactor. For instance, the genealogy recorded in 6:14-27 [10]. Extensive third person narrative of Exodus along with various parenthetical insertions were added by someone other than Moses.

Hill and Walton point to the four literary units that were clearly Mosaic regarding the book of Exodus (15:1-21; 17:8-16; 19:1-24; 34:1-28) and he also affirms that Exodus remain substantially as the literary product of Moses.[11] This is obvious within the book itself, there are occasions when it is clearly stated that the Lord said to Moses “Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven” (Ex 17:14); “And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord .... Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people” (24:4, 7); “Then the Lord said to Moses, write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel” (34:27). To date the event of the book of Exodus is somewhat difficult because there are different dates suggested regarding its dating. E.H Merrill opines that no Exodus at all [12]. In the middle of the twentieth century, the two primary options were a late date (c. 1250 BC) and an early date (c.1446 B.C). There ensue a debate between the initial and later dating of the book, thus it become an intramural debate within the purview of the evangelicals. On the one hand, important interpretive issues are involved in the portion one takes that have implications for the way one interprets numerous OT passages. In other words, the debate is not meaningless

or insignificant. Although evangelicals differ in the way they understand OT chronology and certain archeological discoveries, but they share an important common heritage.

Michael noted that two significant passages are pertinent to the dating of Exodus. Considering 1 Kings 6:1, it says “in the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD.” This biblical text places the dating of Exodus to 480 years before King Solomon’s fourth year which scholars date to be 967BC. Exodus is then dated circa 1447B.C or thereabout with the probability of a round-off-number and the related passage in Judges 11:26. However, going by the biblical accounts along with the indications of various archeological discoveries also seems to favor strongly the early date position. [13]

### Exegetical Analysis of Exodus 8:16-19

#### Hebrew Translation

16 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הִשָּׁב בְּבִקְרֹךְ יְהוָה לִפְנֵי פַרְעֹה הִנֵּה יוֹצֵא הַמַּיִמָּה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה שְׁלַח עִמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי: 17 כִּי אִם־אֵינְךָ מִשְׁלַח אֶת־עַמִּי הַנְּגִי מִשְׁלִיחַ בְּךָ וּבַעֲבֹדֶיךָ וּבַעֲמָדָה וּבַבְּתִירֶיךָ אֶת־הָעָרֹב וּמִלֹּאֵי בְּתִי מִצְרַיִם אֶת־הָעָרֹב וְגַם הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־הֵם עֲלֶיהָ: 18 וְהַפְּלִיתִי בַיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת־אֲרָץ גִּשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר עִמִּי עַד עַלֶּיךָ לְבַלְתִּי הַיּוֹת־שָׁם עָרֹב לְמַעַן תִּדְעַ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּקִרְבְּךָ הָאָרֶץ: 91 וְשִׁמְתִי פַדְתּוֹ בֵּין עַמִּי וּבֵין עַמָּךְ לְמַחֵר יִהְיֶה הָאֵת הַזֶּה:

#### English (NIV)

8:16. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the ground’, and throughout the land of Egypt the dust will become gnats.”

8:17. they did this, and when Aaron stretched out his hand with the staff and struck the dust of the ground, gnats came upon men and animals. All the dust throughout the land of Egypt became gnats.

8:18. But when the magicians tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, they could not. And the gnats were on men and animals.

8:19. the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hard and he would not listen, just as the Lord has said.

The ten plagues of Egypt recorded in the book of Exodus are ten disasters that God brought upon the Egyptians when Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go to worship their God. The presentation of the plague narratives is quite patterned. The ten plague are divided into three sets and noticeable warnings are given in the

previous plague before the occurrence of ‘gnats plague’. Walvoord also agrees that unlike the previous two plagues, this one came without warning. This was also true of the sixth and ninth plague possibly because of the false promises of Pharaoh to release the Israelites in vs. 8, 15. Interestingly, the Israelites were explicitly exempted from all the plagues. At this point, the judgment was sudden when Aaron struck the dust of the ground with his staff and gnats were on men and animals. The term ‘Gnats’ is derived from the Hebrew word ‘*kinnim*’ which signifies a species of insects and it occurs only in the account of this miracle. Although, its meaning has been much disputed which many consider that the insect was a lice or mosquito [14].

Ex. 8:16. This verse begins with the Lord giving a command to Moses, of course, to Moses to give to Aaron in carrying out the third plague. In this plague there is no prior warning given to Pharaoh, God only told Moses and Aaron to strike the ground unannounced. The verb “*Nakâh*” in this verse literally means “to smite” an object with non-fatal strike. Strike, followed by accusative can mean to smite animals such as an ass (Numbers 22:23, 25, and 27). He may also “hit” man on the cheek (Lamentation 3:30; Psalms 3:8). Therefore, the theological importance is the fact that God is often the subject of *Nakâh*). Fleming opines that God demonstrate His power in the consecutive plagues; thus, the magicians were propelled to confess defeat. The magicians saw that Moses and Aaron were not just sorcerers or magicians who had the power to perform tricks, but they received direction from God and the protection of Israelites also affirmed that [15].

The plague of gnats were produced out of dust contrasting the plague of frog that was a product of water. This indicates that God is sovereign and can use any part of His creation to afflict and correct those who rebel against him. If the dust of the earth can obey him then He can use anything as an instrument to accomplish is task. This can be seen as a blow against ‘Set’, the Egyptian god of the desert. Also, there may have been a pun here, for the Egyptian word “*Pharaoh*” is similar to the Hebrew word “*aphar*” which means dust. The mention of dust also brings Genesis 2:7 to mind; an abrupt reminder of human insignificance before the creator. [16] Therefore, it is logical to think that this man-god is insignificant as dust.

Ex. 8:17. This verse reveals how Moses and Aaron harken to the command of the Lord as directed and ordered, by striking the ground to bring forth gnats. The gnats that came upon men and animals is another

warning from God against the Egyptians resistance of allowing the Israelites to worship God. It was a miraculous operation since gnats do not usually spring from dust. The scale of this plague is vast because it affects every men and animals and covers the whole land of Egypt.

Ex. 8:18. “The magicians did so with their enchantments (i.e., smote the dust with rods), to bring forth gnats, but could not.” Looking at this verse one could see that the intention of the magicians here was to call creatures into existence, and not merely to call forth and change creatures and things in existence already, as in the case of the staff, the water, and the frogs. They attempted to fake of the miracle like the previous ones they performed but they could not at this time. Therefore, this verse reveals the failure of the Egyptians magicians for the first time. The reason why the art of the magicians were put to disgrace was that there is no magic that is equal to the power and God is omnipotent. Thus, it was never told that they again attempt to compete with Moses and Aaron.

Ex. 8:19. Keil (2002:313,314) articulates that seeing the omnipotence of God, the magicians professed and admitted that “this is the finger of God.” [17] Although, their confession is not set out to ascribe glory to God himself but it has an undertone of protecting their own image and failure before king Pharaoh that Moses and Aaron perform the miracle not by their own power but God’s finger is involved. To further emphasis this assertion, the magicians said that to discredit the superiority to Moses and Aaron in the virtue or knowledge and power. From the above assertion, it is clear, that the “finger of God” used in this text unveils that God is the most powerful being. Elwell also opines that the magicians are unable to produce the “gnats” but said to Pharaoh “this is the finger of God.” Thus, they are up against a superior force. The magicians now recognize that they are being confronted by divine action, not human magic [18].

The term ‘finger of God’ is an anthropomorphism; that is, it is using a human physical description or designation to indicate some truth about God. It does not suggest that God has a body or a finger. It is a way of designating God’s supernatural involvement in an event in human history. The word “*Elohim*” used in this text means is a theological power which denotes that their gods has failed them, and that the ‘God of Moses’ was different from the gods of the Egyptians. From the analyzed text, the study observes that there are two crews which can be tagged; genuine and fake. The former is attributed to Moses and Aaron, why the later

can be attributed to the Egyptian magicians. Therefore, the study posits that the availability and reality of the genuine will spur the non-genuine. Thus, the dimension with which the two crews works and operates places them in two different and conflicting pedestals; meaning that any miracle that doesn't come through the divine channel of the Almighty God is sham and a scam at that.

The study posits that in the analyzed text, the crews of Pharaoh have been known and identified as magicians obviously associated with what and who they actually stand for; no deceit attached. This in turn brought about their remark at the end. But in Nigerian Christianity, reverse is the case; fake and non-genuine miracles are done under the canopy of Christianity; during Christian meetings, gatherings, and services.

### **Feasible Roots for Fake Miracle Invasion**

One of the stark factors militating against Nigeria Christianity is fake miracle invasion. In view of the radical emergence of the debacle in question; what comes to mind is the source of this dilemma. Lugwanya opines that the evangelism strategy used by the missionaries in colonial Africa, to root out sufferings, ailment cum diseases was regarded as the most successful approach. Hence, missionaries and African evangelist who proffer healing and protection for people gained more converts. [19] This is because the major challenge of a typical African is about the physical, spiritual, economic and psychological needs. For instance, the people believe that every hardship or unpalatable occurrence comes from demonic power such as witches and wizards. Considering the religio-cultural situation of Nigeria everyone is captured by the yearning to free themselves from this pathetic condition such as diseases, poverty, unemployment etc.

The grip of this dilemma is so rooted that it has not been totally eradicated by religion and modern education. To accompany the above, Harry articulates that women are overwhelmingly the better customers of the church business in Nigeria. The reason is obvious; women are more emotionally vulnerable than men. For instance, Nigeria women have so many peculiar problems such as a search for suitable responsible husband, the supply of which is getting shorter by the day, or she has a husband but no children, so she is desperate for the fruit of the womb etc [20].

The act of performing miracle is now the demand of the day. In our contemporary time any ministry or denomination that does not operate in the miracle ministry is marginalized by people (with the saying

“the church is not fire branded”). That is, for your ministry to make wave it must be linked with the manifestation of miracles and the power to deliver people from opposing forces because it will win people's attention. In view of this, Abogunrin makes an observation that the appearance of thousands in place of worship today (Christians and non-Christians) are not after spiritual growth or Christ but for miracles [21]. Unfortunately, without contradiction many people today now run after miracles from one location to another believing in these prophets for their solution rather than God.

### **Factors Responsible for Fake Miracle Invasion**

There are several factors responsible for fake miracle invasion in Nigerian Christianity. The aim of the research here is not to justify such factors, rather to explore possible causes for miracle in Nigerian Christianity purview.

### **The Lust for Materialism**

Many Christian religious ministers today in their quest for materialism have deviated from the gospel as it was in the beginning. Since they could not maintain the divine principle in Matthew 6:33 which says, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”. They sing “Me I no go suffer, I no go beg for food, God of miracle na my papa o.” to justify their attitude. Its translation goes does; I will not suffer or beg for food since God of miracle is my father. In view of this, Zachariah opines that the rise of materialism among some pastors has led to their being described as “Men of Gold” rather than Men of God. He also describes them as “gospel merchants” who possess predatory skills akin only to carnivorous animals that lie in wait for their prey with the intent to pounce on them at the slightest opportunity. [22] These Materialistic ministers use self-employed skills for manipulation, coercion, threats, and dictatorial behavior to squeeze more financial and material wealth from their congregations. Because of materialistic pursuit in their ministry, they put themselves in the position of being enemies of God (Mal 1:6; Micah 3:9–12). Ayantayo is also of the opinion that the mentality of the young ones in Nigeria today is the get rich quick syndrome which has affected their religious values like contentment, honesty, and truthfulness [23]. In addition, these ministers have turn the church to a lucrative business not minding the integrity of the pulpit but the idea of getting rich quick has now take

over in the ministry, every pastor must be rich and make things to happen. The lust for wealth has made them to engage in a materialistic ideology, to the detriment of the laity and to the discredit of the ministry. As a result, they have shifted from the basics of winning souls and working hard to build up the faith of church members to a desire to derive material benefits from the ministry.

**The Lust for Fame:** A number of these so-called Christian religious ministers (pastors, prophets, evangelists etc.) who engage in this fake miracle are in ministry not because they are called to the ministry by God but they see as a business center to escape joblessness and poverty. They only force themselves into the pastoral ministry for self-gain, self-seeking. Basically, Scripture reveals the pastoral office as a called one. As Robert asserts, a pastor is an individual who knows the Lord as His personal savior and has knowledgeable the call of God upon his life for full time service, possessing some scriptural character requirement for pastoral office [24].

On the contrary, these self-seeking ministers in their quest for popularity they have resorted to bizarre rituals of healing and luring more people to their church by performing prearranged illusions with people acting as blind, deaf and dumb and cripple people, with this they are more known on social media which goes viral. Onwuka asserts that these kind of false ministers engage in boasting, and defining ministerial success in terms of the quality of clothes they wear, the type of cars they drive, the amount of salary they earn, and even in some cases the type of television they have in their parlor [25]. Paul described such people in 2 Cor. 11:13 as “false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostle of Christ. They peddle the word of God deliberately setting out to distort the truth and devour their prey (Matt 7:15; 10:16).

**The Lust for Crowd:** In the contemporary time, one can see several ministers in their quest for crowd now fabricate countless claims. Crusades is now a forum they project false assumptions, dish out captivating half-truths, articulate promises, self-adulation, exaggeration, false testimonies towards the aim of attracting the attention of people. Some of these ministers involve in cultism, rituals, and all kinds of voodoo practices to attract members to their churches or ministries. From the above, Kalu observes that these so-called pastors engage in all forms of unholy practices to attract members of the society, who esteem them as prevailing men of God. [26]To gain attention to themselves they introduce series of pranks,

gimmicks, dramatize stage managed session of exorcism where they fake the expulsion of demons in form of reptiles or insects from the bodies of their members and create all divers of manipulative scenes that make people believed that their claims are real and factual. These are aims to bring gullible folks to the church or to attract crowds to their crusade, in regard to this Nigerians should be vigilant so as not to be exploited by the fake prophets.

### **The Effects of the Vice on the Gospel in Nigeria**

The purpose of the gospel which is Christo-centric is to transform the society at large, but the approach and failure of some Christian religious ministers as greatly impede the effective spread of the gospel. The emergence of these false ministers has marred the face of Christianity and detracts or removes from the expected positive effects of Christian testimony and the gospel in the eyes of bewildered watching public. As a result, Nigeria society sinks deeper into corruption and decay and even worse, many souls are being lost because of the spreading of this falsehood in the faith and encouraging believers to be lukewarm in falsehood. This has made many growing believers become spiritually bankrupt because they scarcely unravel good from bad or differentiate between false and true prophet; thus, anything that is thrown at them is accepted as good. The loss of integrity of the church has made the effectiveness of the gospel fast losing their grip on society because Christianity in contemporary Nigeria has become anthropocentric rather than Christo-centric by the false prophets.

### **Are There Genuine Miracles Today?**

The study argues that the denial of miracles in our contemporary time because of the bastardizing of miracles is logically inappropriate. Miracles are real and they have foundations in the Bible which is evident in the biblical passage above that God used Moses and Aaron to perform miracle in the land of Egypt. The question as to whether outside the biblical times miracles still do happen, more so in our contemporary time, can be answered in the affirmative. To deny the reality of miracles in our time is a denial of the power and goodness of God in our time. Miracles are acts of God not only to confirm the truth and holiness of his message and messenger but also for the benefit of his children in need of His favors. Although, there may be many fake and fraudulent miracle claims in our time, many of them may fall under the classification of magic, sorcery, and witchcraft, and many though

amazing, they are naturally explainable. Importantly, that does not mean there are no genuine miracles which have been verified and authenticated by the experience of individuals today. It is on this note that Nigerian Christians should be cautious of fake miracles by false ministers of the gospel.

Hence, it is only when such act or event are unexplainable and is proved to be an act of God either directly or through his messenger that such can be called a miracle. One will therefore affirm after such quantum of authenticated miracles can also be attested to by experts such as medical professionals. Some of these credible miracles include: spiritual (instantaneous and sudden conversion), physical, emotional and mental healings; extraordinary occurrences in the lives of saintly people in the form of spiritual gifts; marvelous phenomenon in places of worship to build faith and other favors spontaneously received by devotees after prayers. These prove the power and goodness of God in our time.

### **Biblical Caution for Nigerian Christians**

The Bible is not silent on this dilemma, thus provide helpful insights which should be taken seriously. As a result of this, both the Old Testament and New Testament lay emphasis on these warning cautions so as not to be hoodwinked. Jeremiah 23:13-14 expose the source of their prophecy which is from man-made gods. Ezekiel 22:25 such prophets exploit the people by taken precious things from them through deceptive techniques. 2 Peter 2:1-3 opines that false teachers will masquerade destructive heresies with false words to manipulate people. Matthew 7:15 speaks about Christ's warning against false prophet who appear in sheep's clothing. 1 John 4:1-6 there is a need to test every spirit to know whether they are from God or the devil. Revelation 20:10 explains what will become of the false prophet including the devil who will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

### **CONCLUSION**

Although the discussed issue in this research paper has to do with a current resurging trend in the African context; of which many Christians have cried out, lamenting concerning the debacle of the activity in African Christianity. Thus, this study basically explores the confine of Nigeria Christianity. This study delves into the concept of miracle through the biblical purview and recommends that Christians should not be swayed by the advertisement of false miracles. The crux of the matter is that Nigeria is not exempted in the

ravaging deception of the devil and the manipulation of false gospel which rampage the universe; thus, there is need for the Christians to be very sensitive since this malady has entered the nook and cranny of the country. Nigerian pastors as well as the Christian Association of Nigeria should watch out for lust of materialism, lust for fame and lust for crowd; because, these indirectly sways a standing minister into false activities. God is still in the business of working miracles for those who genuinely believe in him; therefore, ministers in Nigeria context should stick to the correct biblical template for reaching out to people in the contemporary mission. Christians must take heed to those biblical warning seriously about false prophets, false miracles, teachings and lets precautions centers on the word of God. The Church should promote the kind of biblical literacy and discipleship that addresses the contemporary problems that lead congregants to these prophets in the first place.

### **REFERENCES**

- [1] Folarin, S. *Woman Arrested for Controversial Healing*, <https://punchng.com/i-regret-being-used-by-pastor-okafor-others-to-stage-fake-miracles-woman-arrested-for-controversial-healing/>, March 14, 2020 (Accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2020). Iwuchukwu C. <https://www.pulse.ng/gist/bad-market-man-allegedly-dies-during-fake-coffin-miracle/r239gsw> (Accessed on 22nd December, 2019).
- [2] Folarin, S. <https://punchng.com/pastors-come-under-fire-for-alleged-stage-managed-miracle/> (Accessed on 22nd Dec, 2019). A 44-year-old woman, Mrs. Bose Olasukanmi who was used by several 'fraudulent' pastors to perform fake miracle has been arrested by operatives of the Inspector General of police Intelligence Response Team (IRT) in Lagos after months of trail on her by the undercover operatives. According to a source close to IRT, the suspect Olasukanmi used to relocate to another church after being paid for every successful performance so that their trick would not be exposed by people or relations who may see her in the drama. Her relatives would not be able to reach her to find out whether she is the Olasukanmi they know or somebody who resembles her. Her first performance was at a Lagos Church followed by a church in Port Harcourt and the church in Abakaliki before the cat was let out of the bag. Oditia Sunday, <https://guardian.ng/news/end-of-road-for-woman-used-by-pastors-to-perform-fake-miracles/>, 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. (Accessed on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2020).
- [3] Sunday, E.U. (2010). *Biblical Studies and Rebranding Nigeria campaign in Dorcas Akintunde 9th* (ed), The Nigeria Association for Biblical Studies, 188.

- [4] Merriam Webster Online Dictionary Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/miracle> on 26th December, 2019.
- [5] Cambridge Online Dictionary, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fake> (Accessed on 26th December, 2019).
- [6] Janzen, W. (2000). *Exodus: Believers Church Bible Commentary*. Waterloo, Ont.; Scottsdale, Pa: Herald Press.
- [7] John, M.& John, B. (2010). *The Oxford Bible Commentary: The Pentateuch*. New York: Oxford University Press, 92.
- [8] Tremper, L. & Raymond B.D. (2006). *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 63-70.
- [9] Merrill, E.H. Mark F.R. & Grisanti, M.A. (2011). *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 190-206.
- [10] Provon, Long V.P. & Longman, T. (2003). *A Biblical History of Israel*. Westminster: John Knox Press, 97-115.
- [11] Hill & Walton, (2001). *A survey of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 104.
- [12] Merrill, E. H. (2008). *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel 2nd ed*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 140-147.
- [13] Grisanti, M. A. (2011). *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 190- 206.
- [14] Walvoord, J. F. & Zuck, R. B. (1985). Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 120-126
- [15] Fleming D. (2005). *Bridge Way Bible Commentary: A Running Explanation of the Biblical Text for the people of Today's World*. Australia: Bridge Way Publication, 123-133.
- [16] Fleming. (2005). Bridge Way Bible Commentary.
- [17] Keil, C.F. & Delitzsch, F. (2002). Commentary on the Old Testament. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 313-314
- [18] Elwell, W. A. (1996). *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 34- 39.
- [19] Lugwanya, L. (2000). *Medicine, Spiritual Healing and African Response: Concerns of Christianity in Africa in Twenty first century*” African Theological Journal 23, NO 1, 30.
- [20] Harry, A. (2010). *The Invasion of the Funky Pastors: Church Business at War With African Culture*. USA Bloomington: Author House Press, 3-10.
- [21] Abogunrin, S.O. (2004). *Preface to Biblical Healing in African Context, Bible study series, eds.*, Ibadan: A Publication of the Nigeria Association for Biblical studies, ix.
- [22] Zachariah, C. (2013). *Men of Gold: Rescuing the Church from the Throes of Material “Men of God”* Bukuru, Nigeria: Hamtul Press Ltd., 34-41.
- [23] Ayantayo, J.K. (2010). *Prosperity Gospel and Social Morality: A Critique in David Ogungbile & Akintunde Akinade eds.*, *Creativity and Change in Nigeria Christianity*. Lagos: Malt house Press, 208.
- [24] Robert, C.A. (1985). *The Effective Pastor: A Practical Guide to the Ministry*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody, 4-13.
- [25] Onwuka, C.J. (2011). *The True Minister of God: 3rd Ed*. Bukuru: ACTS Publishing, 34.
- [26] Kalu, V.U. (2008). *Unholy Prayer: Saturday Sun*, August, 23, 12.

#### COPYRIGHTS

Copyright of this article is retained by the author/s, with first publication rights granted to APJMR. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4>).