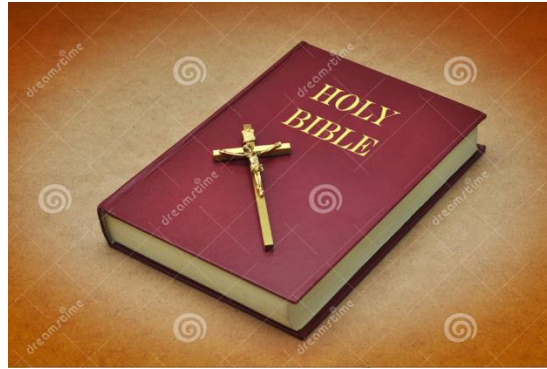


Yoruba Nation Independence: A Biblical and Theological Perspective



By

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“When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.”

Introduction: Self-Determination is Biblical and Theological

And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affection of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;(Exodus 3:7). And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.(Exodus 7:5)

²¹ And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: ²² And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all (Ezk.37:21-22)

The above quotations encapsulate the main thrust of this piece. One of the major central themes of the entire Bible is FREEDOM: freedom from slavery (oppression, sins, etc.) Indeed, one can make a compelling argument that freedom from slavery is the primary theme and message of the Bible. For example, in the **Book of Exodus**, the Hebrew people are delivered from slavery in Egypt to have a separate nation of their own which God had already promised them. This extraordinary moment of freedom is foreshadowed in Genesis and then recapitulated throughout the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures. No doubt, Biblical independence has a theological component that sets it apart. It is the purpose of God for His people who are in captivity to be set free so that they can go and serve Him. Until a captive nation is set free, she will never fulfill the purpose of God and fully exploit and explore the potentials in her land:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me (Exo.8:1; cf.Exo.9:1).

In the New Testament, it is also crystal clear that biblical freedom has a theological component that set it apart. The Bible says God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to the world for the salvation of humanity (John 3:16). He came to save His people (Matt.1:21). Thus, Jesus is our Saviour. This is clearly shown in Gal.5:1:

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery (Gal.5:1, ESV)

We are called to be free:

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. (Galatians 5:13, NIV) .

Self-determination (Sovereignty, Freedom, or Independence) is the right of everyone and this has spiritual and leadership dimensions. And this **MUST** be done and declared by **FAITH**, trusting God who gives freedom to do His work. God can release His Spirit of leadership on anyone in our collective struggle for freedom:

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners. (Isaiah 61:1 – this is the verse Jesus reads in the synagogue in Luke 4:18, NIV, emphasis mine)

Someone **MUST** lead and someone **MUST** pray. Jesus Christ performed both the spiritual and the leadership dimensions of **FREEDOM**. In this Gospel of **Luke**, Jesus stands in the synagogue to declare and inaugurate his ministry by reading from the prophet Isaiah. Jesus says that he has been sent “to proclaim freedom for the prisoners.” Similarly, Paul leads to freedom the people of his days. Jephthah, David, Samuel, Gideon, Barak, and some prophets subdued kingdoms, quenched violence of fire, and dealt with the armies of the enemies by faith (Heb.11:32-34).

There is nothing that stirs a nation’s blood like a liberator. The Biblical Moses led his people out of the land of captivity in Egypt.

Simon Boliver of South America (1783-1830) became a powerful leader for helping nations to become independent from Spain. Gandhi Mahatma of India (1869-1948) led his people to freedom from British rule and subjugation. He launched a successful campaign for India's Independence (a.k.a El Libertador i.e., liberator). Prince Fabunmi Abe Adesoye (a.k.a Fabunmi Okemesi-Ekiti, the Oraralada) and Ogedegbe Agbogunbobo of Ijesaland led Ekiti Parapo-Kiriji War between 1877 and 1893 to revolt against Oyo-Ibadan imperialism to victory to salvage their people from slavery and protect their land when the Oyo-Ibadans' ludicrous cup overflowed on the street of Okemesi-Ekiti. The emergence of a Yoruba-Ekiti illustrious cerebral mini-Paul, "the Moses of African Christianity and pan-Africanism and nationalism", Dr. Mojola Agbebi (1860-1917), like a meteor in the firmament of Christian missions in 1889 with his hard-hitting work titled "Africa and Gospel", his vitriol of tongue and pen became galling to the negrophobic American missionaries. He led his people to Canaan land, away from the Babylonian captivity of European-American racial and cultural imperialism, mental enslavement, and spiritual subjugation, which gave the American missionaries a coup de grace that eventually brought them to their knees to give Africans an identity of their own in regular worship. Today, Africans are free from European-American spiritual subjugation¹. Nelson Mandela of South Africa (1918-2013) also led his people out of Apartheid by fighting against it. Today, Professor Emeritus Adebajji Akintoye, Chief Sunday Adeyemo Igboho, and Madam Dupe Onitiri Abiola to mention but a few, are trailing this leadership path to bring their Yoruba people out of this present 'false marriage of inconvenience' called Nigeria. These wonderful, God-chosen leaders need our prayers and supports.

Yoruba Nation: What Do the People Want?

**When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance
and divided the human race, He set the boundaries of the
peoples according to the number of the people of Israel.
(Deut.32:8, HCBS)**

A nation is a divinely organized community of people, structurally and historically formed based on a defined common territory, ancestry, culture, and language. This is how God started with the first human beings He created on the earth. They did not speak different languages or have different cultures because they came from the same source. This was the situation before they were driven out of the Garden of Eden, their territory, because of disobedience/sin (Genesis 2-3). Though diverse languages may occur as a result of what is linguistically called *anagenesis* and *cladogenesis*, this will not erase the source of the people of the same historical heritage as they still lay claim to one source and ancestor. The genesis of *anagenesis* and *cladogenesis* can be found in the Book of Genesis 11: 1-9:

¹ **And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.** ² And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. ³ And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. ⁴ And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. ⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. ⁶ **And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.** ⁷ Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. ⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. ⁹ Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

The Yoruba are a people with a shared culture of respect, love, generosity, humility, civility, peace, accommodation, religious harmony, and tolerance. Notwithstanding these qualities, the people inflexibly fight terrorism, injustice, maladministration, and tyranny. The people were already an organized nation before the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, the false fusion or marriage of inconvenience of 1914 by the British who did not know the people very well, and finally 1960 Independence. The Yoruba people occupied their present territory before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. That great Greek historian, that is known as the father of History, Herodotus, who lived before Christ from 4824 until he died in 424BC, mentioned Ile-Ife as one of the five ancient cities in Africa between 3000 and 1000BC²

Ile-Ife, the Colony of Oduduwa (the eponymous ‘ancestor’ of the Yoruba), is acclaimed by the Yoruba as the primal birthplace of mankind, claiming to be the primal Garden of Eden the Bible refers to in the Book of Genesis chapter 2. Though no doubt, Ile-Ife is an ancient city, it is not the primal Eden. No human being is living in the Biblical Garden of Eden right now. The place is devoid of man after the first human beings had been expelled. Here is the position of the Biblical Garden of Eden:

²² And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: ²³ Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

²⁴ **So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life** (Gen.3:22-24, emphasis mine)

No doubt, Yoruba culture and religion can be found in Benin Republic, Togo, South America, Brazil, Cuba, the United States of

America, and a host of other countries of the world. Some historians have claimed that the Yorubas have a cultural link with the ancient Mayan civilization. They claim that intrepid adventurers set sail from Ife and discovered the Americas before Columbus. Evidence of this can be seen in the various stone heads with decidedly negroid features found in many parts of Mexico and Peru. It is high time therefore for the Yoruba to have an identity of their own as a great nation by declaring them a sovereign nation within the cosmos, distinct from the present false identity called 'Nigeria'. This is what the Yoruba want!

The first smallest country, independent state in Europe is San Marino with a population of 34,017 (2022 est) until the independence of **Nauru** in 1968, the smallest republic in the world with less than 14,000 residents³. Other small countries that are less than hundreds of towns in Yoruba nation are Vatican City (800 residents, though not a Republic), smaller than our Redemption City in Ogun State, Nauru (10,876 residents), Tuvalu (11,931, residents), Palau (18,169 residents), San Marino (34,017 residents), Liechtenstein (38,250 residents), Monaco (39,511 residents)⁴, and many more.

Yoruba Nation Independence Day Declaration and Celebration: Any Biblical and Theological Nexus?

The answer to the above question is capital YES. For God had determined that he would re-gather his people in Kwara State, Kogi State, and by extension Edo and Delta States and plant them back to join their people in the Western part of Nigeria in the land he had chosen for them. And God promised that this would happen in one day. That day we cannot tell but very soon. Just rejoice with Yoruba Nation, it is a dream comes through by God's grace. It has been settled in the spiritual realm – the day, date, and time we cannot tell but very soon. The Bible says:

⁸ Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. ⁹ Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. ¹⁰ Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: (Isaiah 66:8-10)

Here, God is also speaking to the Yoruba people in Nigeria, including the Yoruba in Kwara, Kogi, Edo, and Delta States:

²¹ And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: ²² And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all (Ezk.37:21-22)

This looked like a dream to the Jews but the dream finally came to pass. God is not a man or a liar, whatever He says He will do, He will definitely do it (Number 23:19):

After being away from their homeland for almost 2,000 years, the Jews were given a national homeland in Palestine by the Balfour Declaration in November, 1917. In 1922, the League of Nations gave Great Britain the mandate over Palestine. On May 14, 1948, Great Britain withdrew her mandate, and immediately Israel was declared a sovereign state, and her growth and importance among nations became astonishing⁵

Faith in God and Unity of purpose: The Ekitiparapo Model as a Catalyst for Yoruba Nation Independence

By the grace of God, the actualization of a sovereign Yoruba nation is certain. God has promised us a nation of our own. What we need is to increase our faith in Him (God) with a unity of purpose it is then we can achieve our vision. The longest civil war in Nigeria lasted for sixteen years. This war happened between the Ekiti and the Oyo-Ibadan from 1870 to 1886. The Ekiti came together as one single indivisible and formidable entity under one umbrella called "Ekitiparapo". This means that "Unity we stand and divided we fall". Unity with Faith in God helped the people to fight, perhaps, the strongest empire (Oyo-Ibadan Empire) in Africa then and became victorious. This "Ekitiparapo Model" will, in no small measure, help us in our collective struggle for Yoruba Nation Independence. Thus, the "Yorubaparapo Model" is a requirement for a successful collective struggle for Yoruba freedom. With unity and faith in God, nothing can stop Yoruba's independence. A vision without faith and unity of purpose will lead to what this writer calls "*televisionization without actualization*". The Bible advises us that:

¹⁰ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ¹¹ For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. ¹² Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ (1 Cor 1:10-12)

In Yoruba Self-Determination Movement, all may work differently but for the same goal – Yoruba sovereignty. The Bible again warns and advises us:

⁴ For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? ⁵ Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? ⁶ I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. ⁷ So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. ⁸ Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. ⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. ¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Cor 3:4-11)

Indeed, the Yoruba are a sophisticated indivisible entity with an urgent need for a separate identity. But, there is a need for a united front in our collective struggle for freedom. A vision is actualized by faith in God. The Bible in Habakkuk 2:2-4 says:

² And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. ³ For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. ⁴ Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Through faith, the entire universe came into existence by God's command (Heb.11:3). The bedrock of Christianity is faith in God, and in His Living Word and Written Word. Faith is the vehicle that drives our visions to their destinations. By faith, great men and women of Bible days actualized their visions (Heb.11:1-40). More than anything else, every step taken towards self-determination or independence declaration of any nation must find expression in one fact: Faith in God – that is, trusting God for freedom. The successful struggle of the United States of America encapsulates in the nation's motto: "In God we trust". America's Founders studied the Bible very well. They believed in God for their Independence. There is copious evidence that political speeches and sermons of their day were filled with stories, examples, and quotes from the Bible which supported and affirmed their political beliefs till today. They drew inspiration from the word of God for political, economic, and educational plans and policies. The entire societal fabric was not unconnected to the word of God. Ours must not be different. No doubt, Abraham Lincoln's definition of Democracy as **"a government of the people, by the people, and for the people"** on August 1, 1858, finds foundation in John Wycliffe's first English Bible (1384), the General Prologue states this purpose:

"This Bible is for the Government of the People, by the People, and for the people"⁶

For our cry to attract God's attention, our faith in Him (God) must occupy a primary place in our continued struggle for freedom. Besides, unity is a veritable tool for achieving our collective goal of self-determination. Thus, Yoruba nation independence is not only Biblical but also theological.



Yoruba National Flag

Blue stands for greatness, as sky is above the earth so shall Yoruba nation stand above her enemies.

White stands for love, peace and unity.

Green stands for surplus food and opportunities.

Footnotes:

1. Wole Adedoyin, “Compilations of Yoruba History, Culture and Tradition”, <https://yorubafactfinder.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/african-history-ile-ife.pdf> Retrieved 19/11/2022
2. Ilesanmi, Dele A (2022), “African Christianity and Nationalism: The Biography of Dr. Mojola Agbebi (1860-1917), The Moses of Africa” see also <https://christopress.org.ng/shop/>
3. <https://www.britannica.com/place/San-Marino-republic-Europe>. See also: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nauru> Retrieved 3/12/2022
4. <https://www.travelinglifestyle.net/smallest-countries-world-by-population/> Retrieved 3/12/2022
5. <https://www.oneforisrael.org/holidays/can-a-nation-be-born-in-a-day/> Retrieved 19/11/2022
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